

Tackling Fishing Trafficking

THA-IJM-TFT-P03



Bangkok, Thailand



Combatting Trafficking

Total Budget \$75,000

Project Timeline

FULLY FUNDED

JUN 19

JUN 21



Overview

This 3-year project assisted vulnerable migrant workers and impoverished people who were trafficked for slave labour in the Thai fishing and seafood industry through deception, debt bondage, threats and violence. Thailand is a source, transit and destination country for traffickers making profits through slave labour. The aim was to reduce the prevalence of forced labour through improved performance of the criminal justice systems and multilateral enforcement mechanisms in Thailand and the source countries of Cambodia and Myanmar. Entrust supported the funding equivalent of two local social workers to provide care and support for survivors. The focus has also expanded to vulnerable migrant workers from other sectors.

Objectives

Impact



Aftercare services for victims

Trafficking survivors were supported through the process of official victim identification to qualify for government shelter and protection. Increased identification success, post-rescue employment and influence over policies of victim care.



Survivors rescued, arrests made

10 fishermen were rescued from trafficking and forced labour, and at least 7 arrests were made. The aftercare team assisted with food, counselling and care plans as well as evidence gathering for prosecutions.



Trauma informed care training

Training in trauma-informed care (TIC) was provided to NGOs, government bodies and criminal justice actors to infuse TIC principles across each stage of the criminal justice system and improve safety of and confidence in the system.



Expanded sector focus

Migrant workers face increased vulnerability and risks from COVID-19. The rescue focus has expanded to other sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture and construction. Two rescue operations with Thai law enforcement (23 rescued).



Life change

- People rescued from trafficked situations, cared for and reunited with their families
- People learning what to look out for and becoming advocates to others within their communities
- Rescued victims empowered and aware of their rights and better able to look after themselves and their loved ones



Confectionary Factory Rescue

In January, our partner was informed by Thai authorities of reports from the Myanmar embassy that a group of migrant workers were locked in a confectionary factory in Bangkok. The Aftercare team was present to assist with the rescue operation of 18 workers (including two 16 year olds) and later interviews with police and Thai officials. One by one the workers had climbed from the upper floor and over a locked gate to a waiting ladder below. They were given health checks, including COVID-19 tests, and taken to a safe location. The Aftercare team has continued to provide support and care to them as the victim identification process continues.



Rescue of migrant workers from confectionary factory, Bangkok

Sitha's Story

Sitha* was promised regular wages on a Thai fishing boat, but it soon became his prison – denied freedom to leave, often harshly abused and deprived of food, and never paid. He was desperate to leave and one day seized the chance to escape, contacting our partner for help. Since then, the broker who arranged the job has been convicted and the boat owner was arrested in April on charges of trafficking and enforced labour. Back in Cambodia, when Sitha heard the news he was elated, “I’m so grateful for those who pursued justice for me”, he said. Our partner successfully sought government compensation for lost wages and abuse.

