

# SPOTLIGHT

## USAID, MTV Fight Human Trafficking in Asia

By Hal Lipper



..Film star Lara Dutta fields questions about human trafficking as MTV EXIT Campaign Director Simon Goff looks on at the launch of "Sold: An MTV Special" in Mumbai. The MTV EXIT campaign is a partnership between USAID and the MTV Europe Foundation.

**BANGKOK**– USAID’s Regional Development Mission in Asia and the MTV Europe Foundation have united in a unique public-private partnership to raise awareness about and prevent human trafficking in Asia.

The MTV EXIT – or End Exploitation and Trafficking – campaign has on-the-air, online, and on-the-ground components. Its cornerstones are a pair of edgy, fast-paced documentaries telling the stories of three people plucked from poverty and thrust into a world of exploitation with traffickers, police, and end-users in the trafficking chain.

The drive, which was launched in September, will include anime and live-action shorts, public service announcements, an anti-trafficking website, and events that highlight the dangers of trafficking in the Asia-Pacific. The region accounts for half the people trafficked in the world.

“This campaign is meant to save lives. Through MTV, it will reach millions of young people, the group most at risk in Asia, and support more effective law enforcement efforts against trafficking,” said Mission Director Olivier Carduner.

The broadcasts will blanket all of Asia and reach more than 380 million households on MTV networks. USAID contributed \$3 million to finance the campaign. MTV’s local affiliates are providing roughly \$7 million in airtime. The partnership uses USAID’s Global Development Alliance model to leverage funds, increase involvement by the private sector, and help ensure the program’s sustainability.

“USAID is providing the money for development and production, as well as expertise in trafficking-in-persons issues. MTV is attracting internationally-known artists to work on the project, lending it ‘street credibility,’ and providing the means to spread this message across all of Asia,” Carduner noted. “The success of this campaign is due to our alliance.”

The films are hosted by local stars speaking in their native languages. Artists who volunteered for this project include pop singers Rain, Tata Young, Karen Mok, and Christian Bautista in South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan/China, and the Philippines.

U.S. film star Lucy Liu is hosting the English-language version of “Traffic,” the Asia-Pacific documentary covering all of Asia except the subcontinent and surrounding countries. “Traffic” was recently launched in Bangkok, Beijing, Seoul, Jakarta, and Manila. It will soon premiere in Tokyo, Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur.

Film star and former Miss Universe Lara Dutta hosts the second documentary, “Sold” – focused on South Asia – and appeared at its launch in Mumbai.

The movies are available rights-free and are being picked up by independent television stations for translation into additional languages. A Mongolian version has aired.

MTV is also establishing an Asian MTV EXIT website in eight languages at [www.mtvexit.org](http://www.mtvexit.org). It is an expansion of a website MTV founded in 2004 to combat the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Europe.

The on-the-ground phase of the Asian campaign is planned to take MTV EXIT to major cities and rural communities next year. The goal is to sponsor events where the films will be shown and NGOs, who will have free copies of the documentaries, can distribute leaflets and audio-visual materials about human trafficking.

USAID’s Regional Development Mission in Asia is looking for additional partners to help underwrite this critical part of the MTV EXIT campaign.