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## Raising Awareness of Trafficking

### Officials learn techniques to combat human trafficking



Photo: USAID/Phakatip Chungbhivat

***“We were not even aware of human trafficking laws on the books before the training,” said Sakchai Assaynirad, a prosecuting attorney from the Thai Attorney General’s office.***

Organized human trafficking syndicates target people with limited education and income as opportunities to be exploited with limited risk of reprisal. At the same time, police and prosecutors treated trafficking victims such as prostitutes and migrant workers as criminals. The judicial and law enforcement systems lacked an understanding of what distinguishes trafficking from illegal labor as well as the needed systematic approaches for prosecuting violations.

With support from USAID, Thai prosecutor, Sakchai Assaynirad, formed the Chiang Mai Model, a five-year activity that offers a full curriculum of courses on trafficking to law enforcement, social welfare and judicial professionals. The participants, divided into teams of professional groups, broaden their perspective on trafficking by learning about the causal economic, social and political factors. The workshops also cultivate a better understanding of anti-trafficking laws and encourage cooperation in prosecuting perpetrators.

“We were not even aware of the human trafficking laws on the books before the training,” said Sakchai.

By September 2006, more than 540 people will have been comprehensively trained in laws and techniques to combat trafficking. According to Sakchai, prosecutors now work with police during initial questioning, helping victims communicate their experiences to the authorities. A dozen multi-sectoral teams have been formed and are involved in the majority of trafficking prosecutions, and better evidence collection techniques have allowed courts to expedite trials of trafficking suspects.

#### Telling Our Story

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