



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

THAILAND

CASE STUDY

Teaming Up Against Traffickers

Training encourages agencies to fight trafficking cooperatively



Photo: USAID/Suzanne Ross
Human trafficking targets poor, vulnerable populations.

Challenge

A trafficked woman is rescued from a brothel and is sent home for reintegration. An indentured beggar is removed from the streets and placed in protective custody. A child rented for labor is given a safe haven while a search for parents or guardians is conducted. At USAID's office in Bangkok, Thailand, these scenarios are only the beginning of the story. The prosecution of traffickers can be put in jeopardy by the country's limited capacity to support victims as they wait for their cases to go to trial. There is also a lack of trust among victims and a lack of coordination among social workers, police, border control and the judiciary. Victims are often too traumatized to testify, and just as often, police and prosecutors criminalize the victims, particularly prostitutes, illegal aliens and vulnerable children.

Initiative

In response to these challenges, USAID is supporting the Chiang Mai Model, a five-year activity that brings together law enforcement, social welfare and judicial professionals in workshops that help them gain a broader perspective on trafficking. The training aims to improve understanding of multi-agency and interagency processes, legal tools, case management systems and support services. With better delineated roles and responsibilities for evidence collection, witness protection and trial preparation, investigative processes can be streamlined and cooperation encouraged.

Results

As a result of USAID assistance, more than 25 trafficking victims have testified against suspected traffickers. By September 2006, more than 540 people, including 300 prosecutors, will have been comprehensively trained in laws and techniques to combat trafficking. Prosecutors now work with police during victim questioning and help 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.