



## An approach towards combating trafficking in Asia: Youth empowerment through vocational trainings

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Young People Against Prostitution and Human Trafficking:

The Greatest Violence Against Human Beings

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### Introduction

Human trafficking is one of the most popular forms of global exploitation these days. Trafficking is increasing dramatically in Cambodia, where increased economic globalization has resulted in an increased feminization of poverty, forcing a greater number of women and young girls to end up as victims of illegal and unscrupulous trafficking networks. Such migration in Cambodia is characterized by movement from rural areas to urban centers and across borders. Women and children's vulnerability and the low status of females generally, combined with poverty and expanding global markets for sex and cheap labor, are at the root of trafficking. The acceptability of violence against women within many societies contributes to a dynamic through which traffickers and clients see women as expendable, and the women themselves are so beaten down that they are unable to resist their captors. The social cost of trafficking to individuals, families, communities and countries is immeasurable, and, more importantly, this form of modern-day slavery is an abuse of fundamental human rights that degrades all our humanity.

### The scale of the problem

In Cambodia, a developing and one of the poor country in the world, the trafficking of women and children is a thriving business especially in Phnom Penh, and increasingly so in urbanizing border areas such as Battambang and BanteayMeanchey provinces. Poipet, Sihanoukville, Koh Kong and the other fast growing provincial capital of Siem Reap are also following the same trend. However, reliable estimates are few, and empirical data is limited to the number of women and children who are trafficked, from where and to what destinations. However, Cambodia is known to be increasingly important as a sending, receiving and transit country. Existing studies in Cambodia provide only a partial picture of the extent and magnitude of the problem, often limited to the numbers involved in sex work who have been internally trafficked to meet the demands of the country's rampant sex industry. According to the *Cambodian Human Development Report* it is estimated that there are from 80,000 to 100,000 sex workers in Cambodia. In Phnom Penh particularly, there are around 17,000 sex workers with 30% under 18 years old. Despite these alarming figures it has to be kept in mind that the actual situation is likely to be worse as the nature of this work means accessibility to victims is limited. Significant numbers of Cambodian women and children are also trafficked within and across national borders for purposes other than sexual exploitation but research and data remain sketchy.

### Caritas Cambodia

Caritas Cambodia is an official social development arm of the Catholic Church in Cambodia, has been built on the values of Love, Concern, Peace, Unity, Sharing and Brotherhood. Caritas Cambodia established in 1990s to assists the poor, disadvantages and displaced people of Cambodia. Caritas works in solidarity with all people of good will and similar vision to promote human dignity alleviate human suffering; promote the development of people, foster charity, justice, and peace in the country and of the world. Caritas assists the poor solely on the basic need, not creed, race or nationality and maintains strict standard of efficiency and accountability. Caritas Cambodia currently operates its facility in 11 provinces and cities all over Cambodia and technical and financial support to over 300 Village Development Association in Cambodia.

### 2.1. Caritas Cambodia Vision and mission

Caritas Cambodia has a clear mandated to follow the mission as the following:

#### VISION

Realization of a just society, where rights of people are respected, integral development of people is promoted. Renewed and Empowered communities are built.

## **MISSION**

Build a sharing and caring community in solidarity and partnership for the well being and to restore human dignity of the poor through an empowerment process.

### **2.2 Caritas Cambodia target province**

Presently Caritas Cambodia has been working in 11 provinces:

- Kandal
- Siem Reap
- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Thom
- Preah Vihear
- Takeo
- Monduliri
- Katie
- Rattanakiri
- Phnom Penh

### **2.3 Caritas Cambodia program operation**

Caritas Cambodia now working on the main activities such as:

- Community Integrated Development Program
- Community Health Program
- HIV/AIDS Program
- Prison Health Program
- Center for child and Adolescent Mental Health –CCAMH
- Preventive Eye Care
- Emergency Response Preparedness and Rehabilitation
- Right Based Approach and Advocacy-RBA
- Gender and Anti-Human trafficking Program
- Vocational Skill Development

*(Ref: Caritas Cambodia Annual Report)*

## **Caritas Cambodia and YDP program contribute to Prevent Trafficking**

### **3.1. The brief of Youth Development program**

Youth Development Program (YDP) has been established since 1992, it is a national program is being working on skill development in which the program dedicates to build and develop capacity of the poor, marginalize and vulnerable youth from rural and urban areas. This program is dedicated poor young people to acquire skill knowledge and able to get employment opportunity through technical and specific skill training as well as value education in order to engage them into social context. As we already believed that youth are the powerful human resource of country and nation to build peace and justice and also a part of development source as well.

With the long working experiences YDP has been reached 2,556 youth (653 females) attended and successfully graduated from program. Among the total mentioned, there were 80 percents of youth employed in different sectors such as 5% to government, 10% NGOs sector, 35% to private sector, 10% running own business and 20% other. Additionally, the target group which program reaching are the young people from 17- 25 years old; young boy and girl come from the poor and marginalized families; orphanage are given priority; school dropout youth from rural and urban areas; minimum primary School level education; vulnerable boys and girls from rehabilitation centre; unemployed youth/ unskilled youth; garment factory worker and migration youth. *(Ref: Youth Development Program Report)*

### 3.2. YDP Goal and Objective:

#### Goal

The poor and vulnerable youth from marginalized families in Cambodia obtained employment opportunity and become civic engagement and self-reliance through offering vocational training courses and value education by 2017.

#### Objective:

By 2017, provide vocational training for long course and short course skills on 11 skills to youths of the poor and marginalized families in order to assist them to find employment and ability of earning a living.

By 2017, to enhance the capacity building the trainees in order to own and manage their small scale business.

Promoting network, peace, justice and hope of the graduated Caritas youths through involving social activities either in the family, community and society.

### 3.3. The contribute to prevent Trafficking

Caritas Cambodia acknowledges that the lack of education and inadequate of specific skill expose the poor young people to the risk of trafficking due to their lack of economic empowerment and participation in decision-making within the family and community and also fall in the trap of brokers. As a result, young people may be trafficked by their own family, neighbors, "friends", middle man and unscrupulous agents.

The unskilled youth create market for the brokers and employment agency and migration, with poor who are grossly exploited, creating an intractable supply of poor young people. To reduce such demand, traffickers should be dealt with as criminals, whilst the survivors should be treated as persons with rights to be respected and protected, not as illegal migrants or criminals. Personal and economic empowerment are key factors in both resettlement and prevention strategies. Returnees, young people at risk need support to empower themselves so that they gain increased control over their lives. This requires personal empowerment of young people themselves, as well as creating a supportive environment in the family and community so that it is able to accept, not condemn and discriminate against these persons.

Economic empowerment is equally essential as a preventative strategy of the program in order to reduce the attraction of trafficking. This is particularly difficult in poor countries like Cambodia, with poor communities, and requires more than the conventional vocational training projects. The potential earnings on offer need to be able to compete at some level with expectations of earnings compared with the risks known to be associated with trafficking. Such a differential can be addressed through higher income and better knowledge about the risks involved in being trafficked. More active and enhanced participation of young people in the economic and political life of the country towards an equal right and an equal society which will help stop trafficking and exploitation from continuing.

Addressing these challenges the Caritas Cambodia has set up program to prevent the trafficking of poor and vulnerable people such as youth, women and children by concerning program from national to program level.

#### 3.3.1. National Level

##### Prevention

**Mainstreaming through information and awareness raising:** The mainstreaming and awareness raising is being done to all Caritas Program in each regional offices. It is the empowering community to prevent women and children on combat human trafficking in person. This program is ongoing activities through the project of integrated Community Development Program based in 7 target provinces of Battambang, SiemReap, Kampong Thom, PhreahVihea, Kandal, KampongCham and MondulKirri Province and its target to vulnerable people, youth and especially women in the community.

**IEC material:** Develop Information Education Campaign (IEC) material related to trafficking issue and posted in public so that people will aware on that.

##### Protection

**Protection through provide shelter for victim and survivor:** Caritas Cambodia has 3 centers where located in Kandal province, Battambang province and SiemReap province. These centers are use to received the victim in temporary period, as safe and healthy as possible and through counseling encourage them to turn to normal or finding partner to transferring them to safe place.

**Networking/ Cross Border Networking (National and Program level):** Caritas Cambodia has commitment to fight against human trafficking by join hand with NGOs likeminded and relevant stakeholders in local and

cross border collaboration to assist the trafficking victim. The cooperation and networking with NGOs and stakeholders is being used for referrals, for exchange of information, for cooperation on common projects now and then for exchanges and training on capacity building. Presently, Caritas Cambodia is a network in national and internal such as MARYKNOL, CARAM CAMBODIA, CWCC, HARGAR, LICADO, ILO, ECPAT, CATHOLIC, CHURCH/RELIGIOUS, CARITAS THAILAND AND CARITAS ASIA. For international network we collaborated with COATNET, ACRATH and AT GMS Task force ...etc.

### **3.3.2. Program Level (YDP and Friendly Vocational Training Skill Development for Women and Young Mother with Children- Second Chance Centre's, Drop in Centre for vulnerable women and youths "The Bridge of life experiences)**

**Empowering youth through skill training:** YDP program has been providing the poor and vulnerable youth to acquire 11 specific skill training. These training help them able to find employment and improve their family economic with better living condition. Moreover this is also to empower themselves so that they gain increased control over their lives by not falling into broker's traps to any further extent.

**Employment and income generation:** This activity is helping the poor and vulnerable youth who learn appropriate skill have opportunity to run small business through integrated them into young entrepreneur so that youth will be able to earn income and living in dignity life.

#### **Empowering poor and vulnerable youth through value education:**

**Youth Club:** Youth networks are developed ( youth being trained and successful graduated) to promote and empower untrained youth in community in order for them to have awareness of counter trafficking activities and plan where there view and voice are accounted for.

**Empower the youth in Community role play:** The youth created the drama and show related to concern topics such as Domestic violence, gender sensitization, illegal migration, human trafficking... etcwhere the youth will also participate on the development of an art installation with the youth group formed. The drama and show will be displayed in public areas and community in caritas target village to further spread anti-trafficking and other key messages.

**Day of prayer:** The prayer conducted to all youth on the aim to draw the attention and feel how the victim and survivor are in struggle whilst there is human dignity, the perspective of human right protected and promoted to traffickalso in the regards of the trafficking.

**Rehabilitation and Reintegration:** For the people who are suffering from Human Trafficking, they lose almost everything in their life. The program has been conduct counseling, motivating, service support for health, support for livelihood activities both skill and capital would provide to them because it can help them live with new hope of life.

**Friendly Vocational Skills Development fur Young Women and Young Mother with Children:** This project based in Battambang Province, the project targets young vulnerable women from extreme poor family, young mother with children who live in difficult condition and young women who are victims of trafficking both inside country and who were sending back from neighboring country.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

In conclusion, an approach towards combating trafficking in Asia: Youth empowerment through vocational trainings – the Caritas Cambodia experience" not only provide specific skill to youth but also promote the protection of human trafficking through all awareness that integrate in course curriculum. Vocational program also know that difference aspect of youth from difference area can exchange great experience to each other and promote understanding of human protection. Through their regular reflection during their training session, all youth could learn much on protect themselves, other friends and whole community against trafficking. So, through learning and reflection within our routine task, we can say some recommendation to prevent the youth from human trafficking that:

Vocational skill training has played a vital role engaging youth with their specific skill training. We encourage at risk and poor youth to access this opportunity to restore their hopeful after their unaffordable to continue the study. All skills are fit to the current social circumstances and all graduate youths can use their training skill to earn their need and spread to other in their community. Then, promote vocational training is not mean that we provides skill to youth but we also add up to youth on dignity of life, restore their hope, prevent them from being exploited , and gathering for social action in community and as a whole.

There is a need for greater awareness of human trafficking among the general public, potential first responders (including community leaders, child welfare, caseworkers, law enforcement officials, teachers, and school

resource officers...etc). There is widespread agreement that training to make stakeholders more aware of human trafficking increases the number of case identified and accounted for.

Youth's voice and strong functioning network in all regions: In order to have a strong voice, the youth should be build a functioning network to fight against trafficking in all regions. The voice should sound in ONE and develop strong action toward the youth group, the obligation toward themselves and various youth group to which they belong can have a significant change especially the voice will be heard. All above, the linkage of youth from every social background can be bring the common sense and make the issue become scorching, so that there will be able to draw attention to all public.

Government and all intergovernmental organization shall ensure that their interventions have also addressed the factors that increase vulnerability to trafficking, including inequality, poverty and all forms of discrimination especially the law enforcement on anti-human trafficking which already existing.

#### **Sources:**

- Caritas Cambodia Annual Report 2011
- Annual report of youth development program 2011-2013
- Source: from Cambodia over view: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview>
- UN-V Youth situation: [http://www.un.org.kh/unv/cambodia\\_youth](http://www.un.org.kh/unv/cambodia_youth)
- UNIAP homepage <http://www.no-trafficking.org/>
- The Cambodia Remains on US 'Watch List' for Human Trafficking <http://www.voacambodia.com/content/cambodia-remains-on-us-watch-list-for-human-trafficking/1943046.html>

#### **ABBREVIATIONS**

YDP: Youth Development Program

NGOs: None Government Organization

AT GMS: Anti- Trafficking in Greater Mekong Sub Region

MARYKNOL: Name of a Catholic NGOs in Phnom Penh

CARAM CAMBODIA: Coordination of Action Research of AIDs and Mobility

CWCC: Cambodia Women Crisis Centre

HARGAR: An organization who walks the whole journey with each woman and child.

LICADO: Cambodian League For the Promotion And Defend Of Human Right

ILO: International Labor Organization

ECPAT CAMBODIA : End Child Prostitution, Abuse and Trafficking in Cambodia

COATNET: Christian Organizations Against Trafficking In Human Being

ACRATH: Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking In Humans