

Rays of Hope: Emerging Good Practices in the Provision of Economic and Social Reintegration Programs for Victims/Survivors of Trafficking



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Foreword

There is insufficient data and research on return and reintegration of victims of trafficking. Yet it is one of the most challenging stages not only for victims and survivors of trafficking but for service providers in origin countries as well. Existing efforts in this area are sometimes limited to, or provide strong emphasis on, psychosocial services, losing sight of the equally important need to address the economic needs of victims and survivors upon their return. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has strongly advocated that economic interventions are as just as important as psycho-social preparation.

To demonstrate the viability of this approach and respond to the challenge, the ILO has conceptualized, developed and implemented a Project on Economic and Social Empowerment of Returned Victims of Trafficking in Thailand and the Philippines. Funded by the Government of Japan through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (HSF), the Project sought to provide economic and social reintegration assistance to a number of returning victims of trafficking and in the process develop institutional mechanisms to support their successful reintegration. In doing so, the ILO has partnered with government and non-government institutions to test new and innovative ways to facilitate the economic and social reintegration of victims and survivors of trafficking.

Similarly, documenting good practices and lessons learned is a common practice of the ILO. It promotes learning, sustainability and replication that will eventually benefit a larger group of beneficiaries.

Through its implementing partners, the ILO has documented a number of “*emerging*” good practices and lessons learned in working with victims and survivors. They are considered “*emerging*” as the Project has been implemented only for less than three years, and these practices have yet to be validated and assessed by more rigorous research. But even at this time, they have already shown promise in terms of yielding good results and some degree of effectiveness.

This publication, thus, outlines the significant accomplishments, approaches and learnings of the ILO and its implementing partners in the Philippines in working with victims and survivors and in developing national systems and tools to facilitate the efficient delivery of reintegration services.

This work would not have been possible without the commitment of the implementing partners who have untiringly supported and assisted victims and survivors at practically every stage of the reintegration process – from their identification to rebuilding their lives through economic and social empowerment interventions.

Our appreciation also extends to the Psychosocial Support and Children's Rights and Resource Center (PST-CRRC), especially to its researchers, Arnie Trinidad and Emily Palma, for facilitating the process of identifying emerging good practices, documenting them, and putting them all together. Our gratitude is also given to Mitchell Duran for his invaluable help in the production phase of this publication.

In the final analysis, it is our sincere desire to contribute to the body of knowledge about “what works” and “what does not” in the area of return and reintegration for trafficked persons, especially on the aspect of economic empowerment, with the end in view of improving programming and practice. We hope that you will find this publication interesting and useful in your work for victims and survivors of trafficking, now and in the future.

Linda Wirth
Director
ILO Subregional Office
for South-East Asia and the Pacific

Introduction

The papers included in this packet chronicle the emerging good practices of the ILO partner organizations in running the Economic and Social Reintegration of Returned Victims of Trafficking in the Philippines, a Project of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) together with partner government and non-government organizations, which sought to address the social and economic needs of victims/survivors of trafficking upon their return. The Project aimed to assist the women in their reintegration in their families and their communities.

Such assistance is important because these women had harrowing experiences abroad that have negatively affected the various dimensions of their lives: personal, social, psychological, emotional, mental, and financial. The effects of their experience may be contributing to present instabilities in their lives. These women, for instance, may be heavily in debt from their traffickers or from creditors and loan sharks whom they borrowed money from to fund their trip. This is worsened by the fact that they may have no source of income or livelihood upon their return given their low educational attainment and the lack of skills that fit the needs of industries. They may also have little access to credit to start a business.

On the emotional and psychological plane, the women have to deal with their failed migration, their traumatic experiences abroad, the prospect of being unable to provide for their families and failing again for the second time, and a whole gamut of other fears, disappointments, concerns, and trepidations.

On the level of the social, they may be facing stigma from their families and the community, which inhibits them from functioning normally on a day-to-day basis.

The ILO sought to address these issues and problems by supporting the economic and psychosocial programs of government and non-government organizations such as the Batis Center for Women and Batis-AWARE, Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), Kanlungan Centre Foundation, and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).

The economic projects ranged from the provision of livelihood and financial and business management training programs to the provision of business and enterprise activities. The economic projects were done in tandem with psychosocial services for the women such as counseling, legal services, employment assistance, scholarship grants for children, among others.

The ILO also supported the creation of a database to systematically document the interventions and services that are being provided to the victims of trafficking and the development of a referral system to make the referral of cases to appropriate service providers possible. It has also supported the production of a Manual for Coaching geared for service providers who provide financial and career coaching/counseling to trafficked migrants and the Catalogue of Skills and Livelihood Training Programmes and Other Support Services to improve service delivery and the referral of cases of trafficked migrants. This is in tandem with the database and the referral system.

It is from these programs where the *emerging* good practices of the partner organizations were drawn from.

What are good practices?

The series of papers adapted the IPEC Good Practices Guidelines' definition of good practices as "anything that works in some way" in helping victims/survivors of trafficking in achieving reintegration upon their return. The practice, "whether fully or in part...may have implications for practice at any level elsewhere."

The good practice can represent any type of practice, small or large:

It can represent a practice at any level.

It need not represent an overall project or programme.

It could be a very specific "nitty-gritty" process of activity.

It could represent something that only emerges after comparison across multiple settings.

Why emerging good practices?

They are emerging good practices because the Project has only been running for less than three years. It is too early to conclude that these practices are best practices because they have yet to be validated by rigorous research. Despite this, the practices have started to show promise in terms of yielding good results and in terms of showing some degree of effectiveness. The practices have also been proven by the partner organizations to have contributed in meeting the objectives of the Project and in effecting positive impact in the lives of the beneficiaries.

However, while good practices imply that they have been tried and shown to work, some practices have already been included even though they have only begun to be implemented. The practices already show, this early, a lot of promise or potential in terms of increasing the efficiency and efficacy of service delivery to survivors/victims of trafficking. The Projects or strategies represent works in progress and already yield some important preliminary findings.

What makes a practice an emerging good practice?

This paper used the IPEC Guidelines Criteria to determine, which of the practices of the program partners should qualify as an emerging good practice. To qualify as an emerging good practice, the practice should have met some or all of the following criteria, which served guidelines in looking into the practices of the partner organizations:

Innovative

Effective and has shown positive impact

Replicable

Sustainable

Relevant

Responsive and Ethical

Efficient in terms of implementation

The Practices of the Partner Agencies

The following section gives a brief overview of the practices of the partner organizations that have qualified as emerging good practices. The practices can be broadly categorized into four categories: 1) economic programs, 2) psychosocial programs of the partner agencies, 3) Systems improvement, and 4) local networking.

Economic Programs

The economic programs have to do with practices that the partners used to empower women economically and to facilitate the success of the economic ventures the women engaged in. Although it is still too early to say if the women will succeed economically and that they would remain in the country rather than opt for remigration, the gains of the Economic Programs already show signs that some women would eventually succeed.

Kanlungan Centre Foundation's techniques in helping women achieve economic empowerment by properly utilizing the available financial grant to set up a business enterprise from the Project and preventing the grant to turn into a dole-out venture;

DAWN's efforts in helping its clients to set-up a Multi-Purpose Cooperative to enable the trafficked women a measure of economic independence, stability, and empowerment;

DAWN's creation of a Wellness Center that provides women who were trained in the Cosmetology program of Splash Foundation a venue to practice the skills they learned and to augment their income in the process.

Psychosocial Programs

The practices identified under this cluster mainly have to do with helping the women get over their negative experiences as migrants and to help them move on with their lives. Often, these practices are in tandem with the economic programs as these serve as ways to prepare the women socially for their economic reintegration.

Batis Center for Women and Batis AWARE Women's Organization's peer-to-peer approach in helping women recover from the negative effects of their trafficking and exploitation experience;

Batis Center for Women and Batis AWARE Women's Organization's use of psychosocial programs to complement its economic programs to ensure the success of the women in their chosen enterprise.

Systems Improvement

The practices under this cluster mainly have to do with improving the system in terms of case management and the referral of cases. These are critical to ensure the social and economic reintegration of trafficked women as improvements are made in how cases of women are handled and are referred to proper agencies.

The DSWD's development of a referral system and systematic documentation of services to trafficked women to improve the services for the victims and survivors of trafficking and to track down the interventions provided to the victims;

OWWA's improvement of its case management system to make service delivery for women more effective and efficient from repatriation, recovery to reintegration levels;

The ILO Project's Catalogue of Skills and Livelihood Training Programs and Support Services to help increase the efficiency of service delivery (particularly determining appropriate economic training programs for the women) and referral of cases to the appropriate agencies.

The ILO Project's *Coaching Returned Victims/Survivors of Trafficking Toward Gainful Careers: A Manual for Coaches* to help equip service providers with the skills they need as competent and capable coaches to trafficking victims.

Local Networking

Local networks serve as important conduits in running programs for trafficked women. This is especially true because these women are not just concentrated in one location and service providers mostly have limited manpower or capacity making it difficult for service providers to access them for initial contact or for the provision of services. The building of local networks (government, NGOs, and people's organizations) that could serve as partners, which service providers can tap to ensure that the clients are reached and served. This also includes the advocacy among the business community to encourage them to reach out to victims/survivors of trafficking, which is also a way of networking.

Kanlungan Centre Foundation's tapping of local government and people's organization networks to identify victims of trafficking and to address illegal recruitment and trafficking in the local community;

Batis Center for Women and Batis AWARE Women's Organizations use of community outreach programs to identify and reach out to trafficking victims/survivors who have not received any reintegration interventions;

ECOP's advocacy among the business community to include trafficked women in their corporate social responsibility programs.

Glimmers of Hope

In a large sense, the practices of the organizations offer rays of hope to both trafficking victims and other services providers who help these women.

The practices are rays of hope because they have already shown in a preliminary way positive impact to the lives of women and have shown that the practices have achieved a measure of effectiveness on different levels.

But more than this, these practices could serve as sources of inspiration for other service providers in finding ways of making their programs for trafficked victims more effective. Thus, there is a chance that these practices could be replicated elsewhere thereby helping more trafficked victims to achieve social and economic reintegration.

Economic Programs

Clearing the Path Towards the Financial Independence for Victims/ Survivors of Trafficking

~ **KANLUNGAN CENTRE FOUNDATION, INC.**

How Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. worked to ensure that the financial grant for the trafficked women will be properly utilized for their economic empowerment and that it will not simply turn into a dole out venture.

THE EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

The socioeconomic empowerment program of Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. enforced safeguards to ensure that the grant money given to the trafficked women to set up a social enterprise or livelihood will be put to good use by the women, that the women will succeed with their economic venture, and that the grant will not turn into a dole-out venture.

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE

One of the perennial reasons why Filipinos seek greener pastures abroad is the lack of viable income in the country. This is because of a host of complex reasons among which include the lack of gainful employment, problems in the education system that produces graduates with skills and knowledge that do not fit the needs of industries, the lack of qualification of people, poverty and the lack of access to good education, among others.

With the number of Filipinos wanting to go abroad, some Filipinos fall prey to unscrupulous individuals who force the migrants to situations of trafficking and abuse. Women are the most vulnerable to this.

The women who have benefited from the socioeconomic reintegration program of Kanlungan and the ILO are married and single parents from La Union, Pangasinan, and Metro Manila. All have experienced trafficking and various forms of abuse in their destination country. Most are young.

Often, the difficulties of these trafficked and abused women have not ended in their destination country. In fact, a bigger challenge lay ahead after their return to the Philippines.

This is because they were in the process of making sense and getting over their experience of abuse, trying to lead as normal a life as possible in their home and their community, and achieving economic stability and independence for themselves and their family after their harrowing experience.

However, the reality is that many found themselves in a precarious economic situation, often with little or no source of income after their return. Many times, these women were thrust in a worse economic situation than their pre-migration experience because the migrants often do not have the requisite education nor experience to find well paying jobs after their return. There is also no available employment for them given their qualifications. Or, they are heavily in debt from relatives, loan sharks, or banks because they may have borrowed money to go abroad.

Their indebtedness exacerbates their economic condition because they not only have to worry about providing for their family's needs, they also have to worry about facing their angry lenders and facing the mounting interests of their debts. One woman shared, "The institution I borrowed money from still torments me and threatens me with lawsuits. I cannot pay the amount because I do not have enough money. I only have enough for the daily needs of my family. The said thing is that I have already paid the principal amount, but the interest has just accumulated over these years."

While a number may desire to go into business, they have little or no capital to use. More often than not, these women have no access to further credit to start a livelihood or enterprise for their family. And even if they have access to credit, these former migrants do not have the necessary knowledge or skills to ensure the success of their enterprise.

It is a common experience among credit cooperatives in the Philippines to encounter borrowers who are unable to pay back their credit because the borrowers may have used the credit for another purpose. The same could be true with the trafficked women because at the start they may have little concept of putting borrowed money to good use especially if they have pressing payments to make. It is also not uncommon for the borrowers' business to fail because they lack business savvy or know-how to make their businesses profitable and to ensure that they are able to recoup their capital.

Thus, the goal of the women to achieve economic empowerment and independence through business or employment does not happen. In a sense, the women experience double failure as migrants and as return migrants because they have failed in both situations to achieve economic empowerment and independence. These are some of the very things that the project tried to address.

THE RESPONSE

Kanlungan Centre Foundation, a Philippine-based NGO concerned with providing various services to migrant women, with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) tried to address these challenges through its socioeconomic reintegration project for the survivors of trafficking, which it started to implement in the last quarter of 2007.

The project is a holistic project in that it not only provides the women seed capital for their business; the women are also prepped by Kanlungan socially and psychologically to engage in enterprise.

The preparation involves providing the women the menu of psychosocial services Kanlungan offers like counseling; legal services; training and seminars on illegal recruitment; international labor migration and basic migration orientation; gender sensitivity, and human trafficking; psychological and psychiatric intervention; and when needed, medical assistance.

These menu of psychosocial services are important because the women have to be in the proper frame of mind to start their enterprise. These also serve as support mechanisms for the women as these provide for their psychological, medical, and social needs.

Counseling, for instance, helps the women make sense of their experience, move on, strengthen their resilience, and gain a better perspective of their future. This is especially true if they have experienced domestic violence or abandonment, which could be an added millstone to their sense of self and ability to take charge of their life.

For Kanlungan, the social and psychological preparation of the women serve as an important foundation before the women can engage in any enterprise because this will ensure that they can think clearly, they can recognize their capacities as an individual, they can deftly plan for their future, and they are in the proper frame of mind to engage in enterprise.

The women only qualify to the business enterprise education and training and to receive the grant money to set up their business enterprise, only when they have been certified by the social worker as socially and psychologically fit to engage in such an endeavor. The criteria for this is that the women must be able to exhibit that they have moved on or at least started to move on from their harrowing experience, they are able to talk about their experience with ease or at least they are already willing to talk about their experience with a degree of detachment, they exhibit clear thinking and show that they can already plan for their future, and that they are already interested to start picking up the pieces. This is important considering the goal of the project.

The end goal of the socioeconomic reintegration project is not simply for the women to have livelihood, which means they would have enough money they could use for their daily needs, but to develop a social enterprise that would allow them to expand their business to serve as a steady source of income for their family.

THE PROCESS

To qualify for the grant, the women go through psychological assessment and counseling to ensure that the women are prepared emotionally and psychologically to engage in enterprise. This phase could last anywhere between a few months to years depending on the capability of the woman to rise above her experiences.

Once they have been assessed by the social worker or psychologist and have been certified to be prepared to engage in the entrepreneurial program, the women attend a 9-day training program, which is spread over a period of 2.5 months with classes held on weekends in Quezon City and La Union.

The training started with the women learning more about themselves, their personalities, and their temperaments to help them not only to understand themselves better but also to help them assess their strengths that they could use when they engage in enterprise. The women also learned about their weaknesses to help them address these as these could serve as possible hindrances to achieving success in the business venture.

The second day allowed the women to learn about the concept of multiple intelligences. This helped them assess how they could best use the intelligences they have in order to succeed in their enterprise.

The next session involved making the women chart their vision for the future and to help them believe in themselves and in their capacity to change their life.

The training took care of the psychosocial well-being by assisting them to go through a stage of self-discovery. While Kanlungan already does this through individual counseling, doing this in the context of the training allows the women to share their experiences in a group where they learn about the experiences of others. This facilitates healing among the women because a feeling of solidarity with people with the same experiences is engendered.

The last five sessions introduced the women to the concept and practice of entrepreneurship and the requisites of a successful enterprise including market research, business planning, pricing, knowing their competition, business management, and financial reporting.

The training allowed the women a lot of room for reflection and gave them numerous exercises to ensure that there is optimal understanding of the concepts of business being taught. As a capping exercise, the women came up with a plan for a business they are interested to engage in and have the capacity to handle. Their business plan had to be sound and must properly account for the capital they need. This business plan served as the basis for the awarding of the financial grant. Only well crafted business plans merited the receipt of the grant money.

After the grant had been given, the women were expected to start their business. The women must be able to demonstrate their ability to manage their business, to maintain their capital, to keep some savings, and hopefully to have their business grow into an enterprise.

What is good about the program is that Kanlungan continues to monitor the performance of the women well after the training. Unlike other entrepreneurial training programs that end on the last day of the training, Kanlungan constantly follows up on the women to ensure that the women are not failing in their business venture. Kanlungan's two social workers visit or call the women to find out how their business is doing, how much the women are earning and saving, or how they are carrying out their business plans in actual practice. This is also a venue for the social workers to speak with family members who may be helping in the business venture.

Such supervision ensures that the women continuously receive tutelage in handling their business. This is important especially because the women are just starting out a business and could definitely use advice in handling the business. The two Kanlungan social workers have also undergone the training the women engaged in. One of them has an experience in running cooperatives.

OUTCOMES

As of August 2008, 80 women have been identified and reached, with 60 receiving capital assistance and receiving psychosocial support. These women have received various forms of services such as psychosocial intervention and related services, career counseling and occupational guidance, and other similar services.

The financial grant ranges from PhP6,000 (USD125) to a maximum amount of PhP15,000 (USD313), which the women have to use for their business.

The women have been able to come up with a business plan with some assistance from the Kanlungan social workers.

The seed capital they received has enabled the women to start anew after their devastating experiences abroad. It has also enabled them to engage in a business they are interested in and they are capable of managing. The women buy and sell vegetables, fruits, and root crops; vend fish; tend mini-eateries; raise hogs; sell charcoal; accept subcontract work (bag making); and other similar business ventures.



TOWARD FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE. *Clients of Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. – victims/ survivors of trafficking – undergo a social entrepreneurship training.*

The financial management skills of the women were improved. The training has also helped them to prioritize their needs in order to cope with their everyday expenses. One woman said, “Before I used to spend my earnings on anything I could get my hands on, now, I know how to set my priorities and needs.”

The improvement is not only in their financial management skills. Women have also seen improvements in how they view themselves and their capabilities. One woman said that the grant has given her the confidence that she could make positive things happen in her life.

Some women, instead of attending the 9-day training have received individual coaching from the Kanlungan social workers. Some women have found it difficult to attend the training because of the distance of the training location to their house or their schedule. Because of such difficulties, Kanlungan decided to send its two social workers to individually coach the women who cannot join the training session or those who cannot complete the whole series of trainings.

Most women have been able to keep their capital intact, which they use to continually run their business. Some have also been able to save, although the savings can not really be described as substantial at this point.

An exception was one grant recipient from La Union who has turned her business into a very profitable enterprise with her business continually growing. She is now involved in the delivery of vegetables in wet markets in her province. However, most women have only succeeded to turn their business into a livelihood; however, it is safe to point out that there are those who can potentially succeed to turn their business into an enterprise like the grant recipient from La Union.

The women have realized and recognized that it is possible to earn money without having to go abroad. For those who have been given this opportunity, they now find staying in the country an acceptable prospect.

It is not only the women who have benefited from the training. Family members have also been seen to participate in the business venture and have also learned in the process about business and financial management. For instance, the women usually consulted family members about the type of business they would engage in to make sure that family members would be supportive of their endeavor. Some family members have participated in running the women’s business. This has contributed to strengthening the relationship among family members.

The participation of family members has made it more likely for the women to achieve success in their business. One example was the woman from La Union, whose husband has become an effective partner of the grant recipient in her business venture. The couple’s abilities complement each other—the woman has good communication and personal skills while her husband has financial management savvy. The husband’s participation has contributed a lot to the success of ex-migrant’s business venture.

The women also pass the things they have learned to other family members. This could potentially also spell success for family members in the future. For instance, one woman from Quezon City said “I tell my son that he would have to pay for the goods that he takes from the store so that my capital will remain intact and that we could make our capital grow.” Thus, the child is now learning principles of business

the woman has learned from the training. The child also helps market some of the goods she sells.

ONGOING CHALLENGES

The distance between the location of the women and the training venue has made it difficult for some to complete the 9-day entrepreneurial training program.

The distance is also making it difficult for the two assigned social workers to follow up the status of the business of the women. They either pay the women a visit or they call them to follow up on their status.

Some women are content with making a livelihood out of their business venture instead of turning the business into a business enterprise. A lot of this is dependent on the interests, capabilities, willingness, and availability of opportunities for the women.

The short time the project was run has also resulted in rushing the psychosocial preparation of some women. The short time the program has also been running also makes it difficult to tell at this point whether the women will achieve economic success. The La Union woman who succeeded in her vegetable buying and selling business is still an exception to the rule. Most have only managed to turn their business venture into a source of livelihood rather than a social enterprise.

LESSONS LEARNED

Although trained as social workers and not as business entrepreneur trainers, it helped that the social workers were made to attend a 12 day business entrepreneur training program similar to the one attended by the women. This has allowed them to understand and gain knowledge of the important concepts and skills in managing a business. Their attendance to and the assistance they lent in the training sessions for the women have also enabled them to further master the concepts and skills taught in the entrepreneurship training program. These have made the social workers capable and competent coaches to the women when they coached the women individually.

The individual coaching was a very valuable exercise because the trafficked women learned hands on about running their business. It also gave them the opportunity to correct their mistakes through the tutelage and advice the social workers were giving them.

Follow-up was also a key practice. It is not enough that the women simply go through a training program because a lot of the things they would learn from the training would be forgotten after some time. Follow-up allows them to refresh their memories and to cement the knowledge and skills they have learned from the training program.

The constant supervision also ensures that the grant will not turn out into a dole-out venture and that the women will achieve a measure of success.

The group sharing women engage in to tell about their experiences as trafficked women and now as business women serve as inspiration for each other to do well in their business venture.

Uniting Women for Economic Empowerment: DAWN's Multi-Purpose Cooperative

~ DEVELOPMENT ACTION FOR WOMEN NETWORK

How the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) facilitated the creation of the DAWN Multipurpose Cooperative to enable the trafficked women a measure of economic independence, stability, and empowerment.



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT. *Members of the Multi-Purpose Cooperative of the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) participate in a training workshop on expanding business opportunities.*

THE EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

Although in its incipient stage, the DAWN Multipurpose Cooperative shows a lot of potential in terms of supporting women economically through various ways. The Cooperative shows promise in terms of helping the women augment their income, acting as a buffer in times of economic need and emergencies, and helping the women develop entrepreneurial skills to set up their own enterprise.

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE

During counseling and training and workshops for the individual economic projects of the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), the clients of DAWN shared, among others, “their experiences in putting up small businesses,” the things they know and have learned from their “ventures,” and

their “failures to make their businesses grow and their apprehensions in putting up a new one.¹”

Most women attributed their failure to the “lack of knowledge and guidance, lack of confidence in one’s self, and lack of capital.”² This does not come as a surprise because many of the clients of DAWN have started out as entertainers in Japan who may have had little opportunity to get an education, get trained in business management, let alone run a business venture. Putting them in a setting that requires management skills, these women found themselves as having inadequate skills and know-how in making their business venture succeed.

Another problem that faces these women upon their return is finding gainful employment given the lack of skills that industries require. The added stigma of being a “Japayuki” aggravates their situation.

These women also find themselves fraught with difficulties after their return. Although they may have earned good money while working as entertainers, very few have really saved for their eventual return in the country. More often than not, these migrants prioritized the acquisition of material trappings or sharing their earnings to family members over investing their earnings in a business venture that would allow them to earn income upon their eventual return. Either they have not saved money or their savings and acquisitions eventually peter out given their lack of employment and sources of income upon their return.

¹ *Development Action for Women Network. DAWN Multipurpose Coop.* <http://www.dawnphil.org/dawncoop.htm>.

² *Ibid.*

This is not helped by the fact that many of the clients of DAWN return as single mothers who get little or no support from their Japanese husbands or boyfriends who fathered their children. There are also few available sources of credit especially in situations of emergency or need.

These situations leave many of them in a very insecure economic situation after their return.

Although some may engage in business, many find themselves in a Catch-22 since few are really prepared to enter into a business venture. A number of those who go into business fail in their business venture because of the lack of skills, leaving them in the same dire economic situation that prompted them to go abroad in the first place.

Given such insecurities, some women have explored the idea of “pooling resources and doing projects” as a group to help them earn or augment their current income. The idea was supported by DAWN because this could address the needs of women to have a source of income and capital and to gain skills or knowhow to manage their own enterprise.

THE RESPONSE

The situation of and the “discussions, sharing, and consultation” with the women gave birth to “the idea of putting up a cooperative for the women beneficiaries of the [Social and Economic Reintegration] project³” of DAWN and the ILO. Thus, it was really the women who clamored for the creation of the cooperative.

DAWN Executive Director Carmelita Nuqui shared, “they are interested to set up a business but they were worried it might be difficult to do it on their own. They expressed the need for support so they thought it would be a good idea to band together. However, the cooperative is only the beginning for these women because eventually, they plan to set up individual enterprises. The cooperative will serve as an important support mechanism for the women in many ways.”

The International Cooperative Alliance defines a cooperative as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.⁴”

Because the women share common economic, social, and cultural needs, coming together and working as a group was a rational approach to address their economic dilemmas.

As a response to the women’s clamor, a series of seminars on cooperativism were sponsored by DAWN in June 2008. The aim was for the women to better understand what and how the cooperative works and to explore the possibility coming together and setting up their own cooperative.

DAWN tapped the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) College of Cooperatives to help them with the task. Teachers from the College delivered “a series of lectures on the whole idea and process of putting up a cooperative” to help the women decide whether this was indeed a feasible option for them. The women were convinced.

³ *Ibid*

⁴ *International Cooperative Alliance. Statement of the Cooperative Identity <http://www.ica.coop/coop/principles.html>*

Their decision to set up their own cooperative was followed by another series of workshops and seminars, this time, on processes involved in the formation of cooperatives. By “August 27, 2008, the DAWN Multi-Purpose Cooperative was officially registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).⁵” The cooperative is wholly managed by the women themselves, with elected officers coming from their own ranks.

THE PROCESS

DAWN clients, staff, and volunteers now serve as the members of the group. To become a member, the women have to invest a minimum share capital of PhP2,000 (USD42), which will be used for the projects and services of the cooperative for women. The share capital can be paid in cash for those who can afford to pay in outright cash or in an installment basis for those who have no or little extra cash to spare.

The Cooperative envisions itself to become a “self-reliant, influential, productive, and strong multi-purpose cooperative of women in the Philippines” and to “help and empower every member as well as others [to] become productive members of the society.⁶”

To empower the members economically, the cooperative provides commodity loans, business opportunity seminars, and entrepreneurial seminars to members. It has also recently introduced loan assistance.

The commodity loan is a novel loan program approach. Instead of getting monetary loan, members could purchase basic commodities from the cooperative at very reasonable prices, which they pay within 15 days. This helps the women stretch their income until the next pay day because they do not have to shell out money right away.

To make the sale of cheaper goods possible, the cooperative invited manufacturers of soap and cleaning products, condiments, beauty products, and clothing to supply the cooperative with goods. DAWN converted a portion of one of its office space as storage for the goods.

The cooperative makes sure to continuously monitor and guide the women to help them remain responsible for the payment of their commodity loans.

Recently, the guidelines and policies for the loan assistance were also completed. A maximum amount of PhP2,000 can now be borrowed by members in times of need, which they could pay over a period of time. However, there are plans to increase the available loan as the cooperative capital increases over time. This will also be dependent on the women’s commitment in paying their loans.

The loan program is an important program considering that in the Philippines, low or no interest credit is hard to come by. People who have no properties to use as collateral to borrow money, often find themselves at the mercy of unscrupulous loan sharks. Thus, the cooperative could serve as a source of economic support in times of need or emergencies.

⁵ DAWN. *Multipurpose Cooperative*. <http://www.dawnphil.org/dawncoop.htm>.

⁶ *Ibid.*

But more than sources of commodity or monetary loan, the cooperative engages in activities that would have long term impact to the economic condition of the women. This is done by providing training and workshops on different entrepreneurial activities women can engage in. It opens a world of possibility of women to engage in different kinds of business that would be a source of their income. Through the cooperative, DAWN continues to provide entrepreneurial and business opportunity seminars to the women and other similar beneficial training programs.

OUTCOMES

The DAWN Multipurpose Cooperative was formed by the women to help them with some of their economic needs. Currently, it counts among its members 46 DAWN clients, 6 DAWN staff, and 4 DAWN volunteers.

A new set of Board members and officers from the ranks of DAWN clients have been elected. Although new, the cooperative has accomplished quite a number of things already. The cooperative provides credit assistance (monetary and commodity) and entrepreneurial and business opportunity training seminars to its members.

The commodity loan program allows the women some leeway to stretch their incomes until the next pay day. Enterprising as they are, the women have not only purchased goods from the cooperative for their own needs, instead, a number of them resell their purchases to their communities for profit. Thus, the commodity assistance has enabled some women to augment their income and to earn in the process.

During the height of the rice crisis, the cooperative purchased rice in bulk so that it could provide its members a steady supply of affordable rice in the midst of rice shortage.

The cooperative has tapped Avon and Natasha, companies that sell clothes, cosmetics, underwear, etc, for the sale of various products. Women get these products from the cooperative, which they sell in their communities. The women get a 25 percent commission from the Avon products they sell. For instance, a woman who sells PhP2,500 (USD53) gets a PhP625 (USD13) commission from her sale.

The cooperative also helps women who produce goods to sell their products. Some women who have been trained in fan making, slipper making, and other livelihood activities now pass their products to the cooperative for sale.

The rewards are not only in monetary terms. Women have reported that selling in their communities has helped boost their self-confidence and has helped hone their interpersonal skills. They also report of losing their timidity and introversion.

The sharing sessions of cooperative members about their experiences in earning profit from selling the commodities sponsored by the cooperative has helped encourage other women to engage in a similar endeavor. Thus, the spirit of enterprise is engendered among peers.

The cooperative continues to provide entrepreneurial and business opportunity training and seminars to its members. Plans include the provision of training in candle-making, catering, and food processing.

The Cooperative has assisted in the setting up of a Wellness Center in the DAWN office that provides massage, foot spa, manicure and pedicure, and other similar services

to clients. This is now manned by DAWN members who received free Cosmetology training from Splash Foundation Philippines.

The DAWN Multipurpose Cooperative engages in the continual training of its members to ensure the optimal functioning of the organization. Cooperative members went on an “exposure trip to New Vision, a cooperative being run by the blind” and attended “a leadership training seminar.”

The DAWN Multipurpose Cooperative has formalized its partnership with the PUP College of Cooperatives by signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the University to provide continuous trainings, guidance, and assistance to the cooperative. The MOA was signed on 10 November 2008.

In the first quarter of 2009, the DAWN Multi-Purpose Cooperative held a workshop seminar on Value Transformation and Effective Work Ethics for Cooperative Operation for its members. It was during this time that the group also finalized the vision, mission and goals of the organization and set its goals for the next three years.

DAWN reports that the cooperative will continue even after the project with ILO has ended.

ONGOING CHALLENGES

At the start, women exhibit strong enthusiasm, support, and interest for the activities of the cooperative; however, over time, some are waylaid and lose steam for various reasons. The reasons could be because of the distance of their residence from the DAWN office, the women have different levels of understanding and acceptance of the ideas and services provided by the cooperative, or their interest may have shifted to something else. Those who live nearer to the office are the ones who are more active in the cooperative. The challenge lies in being able to fan the enthusiasm and interest of all members of the cooperative.

Another challenge lies in how the cooperative would encourage the members of the cooperative to engage in a social enterprise more than just engaging in livelihood activities that augment their income.

Another challenge lies in increasing the share capital so that the cooperative can provide more services and bigger loans for its members.

The cooperative also has to find markets for the products being produced by its members.

Right now, the women only get marginal augmentation of their incomes from the businesses they are able to do with the help of the Cooperative. The challenge lies in how the Cooperative can help these women get substantial gains in income.

LESSONS LEARNED

DAWN realized the importance of tapping experts from the PUP College of Cooperatives before venturing to set up its own cooperative. The seminars and workshops they conducted helped the women understand the intricacies of setting up and running the cooperative. Thus, the women went through an important preparation stage to help them make an informed decision in setting up the cooperative.

When they have already come to the decision to set the cooperative, DAWN has also realized the importance of continuously training the members in the management of cooperatives to ensure the success and sustainability of the organization. This is done through continuous training and supervision from the PUP, through exposure trips to other cooperatives, and other similar activities.

Monitoring and guidance are an important component in ensuring that the members pay their loans to the cooperative because non-payment of the loans could spell disaster to the cooperative.

The election of officers from the ranks of DAWN members is important because this is the embodiment of the spirit of the cooperative, which is the democratic control of the cooperative by its members.⁷ Although the DAWN staff members are also members of the cooperative, they have given way to the women to take the cudgels of leadership. This gives the women space to be trained as leaders and managers. However, their advice and monitoring of the performance of the officers still come in handy to ensure that the cooperative is being adequately and deftly run.

The different payment schemes for the share capital allow all women to join the cooperative, including the less privileged ones. This opens the opportunity for those who are truly in need of the services of the cooperative to join the program.

⁷ International Cooperative Alliance. *Statement of the Cooperative Identity* <http://www.ica.coop/coop/principles.html>

Going the Extra Mile: Setting up a Wellness Center for the DAWN's Women Clients to Give them Economic Opportunities

~ DEVELOPMENT ACTION FOR WOMEN NETWORK

How DAWN went beyond providing skills training to its women clients by creating the DAWN Wellness Center, which is manned by DAWN members who received Cosmetology Training.

THE EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

DAWN takes the Social and Economic Reintegration Project a step further by establishing the DAWN Wellness Center, a salon that offers beauty and spa services to its clientele. This allows women who trained in the joint cosmetology program of Splash Foundation and DAWN to practice what they learned. It also provides them the opportunity to earn income from the venture.

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE

The difficult experience of former entertainers in Japan does not end in Nippon country where they may have been forced into prostitution and may have experienced varied forms of abuses such as physical, sexual, emotional, and other forms of abuses.

When they finally return to the Philippines, many find themselves faced with the prospect of needing to raise their children and support their family at the same time. However, employment may be hard to come by for many of them. As most of these women have only graduated from high school that has equipped them with the skills they need to be absorbed by the labor market. The situation is worsened by the fact that in Japan, save for entertaining, the women have not learned any skills they could use for when they return to the Philippines for good.

The women do not think of investing their earnings from Japan to fund their formal or vocational education. For most, they think that there will always be the opportunity to go back to Japan to earn good money. However, reality hits them in the face when for various reasons related to age, difficulties in securing the Artist's Record Book, or their experience of abuse, these women can no longer go back to Japan and earn as they used to.

In the Philippines, their savings dwindle as their stay in the Philippines lengthens. With their lack of gainful employment the women are forced to dip their hands into their savings, Gina, a client of DAWN, shares, "The series of misfortunes in my life continued. Slowly, I lost the investments I made. And I had three children to think of."⁸

Gina's story is not an uncommon story. In fact, the stories of many of these former entertainers are similar with some differences in the details of their stories. For instance, although Mary Joy was able to set up a small business, the business eventually folded up. She shares, "I paid attention to the small investments that I have made. I had a small store and I bought a tricycle." However she adds, "...my family misspent all my savings. The small investments I had were gone."⁹

⁸ *Adrada, Gina. 2006. "Picking Up the Pieces." Sinag. February.*

⁹ *Barcelona, Mary Joy. 2006. "Moving On." Sinag. February.*

The stigma attached to being a “Japayuki” also quells opportunities they are seeking for upward mobility. Joy further shares, “I went back to school in Isabela. I worked as a student aid. But in school, some people ridiculed me. They called me names like “Japayuki. At first, I endured all those remarks. But eventually I gave up.¹⁰”

For those who are able to acquire skills through training, not all will land an opportunity to find a job.

THE RESPONSE

Helping stabilize the economic situation of its clients is nothing new to DAWN. It has been providing skills trainings, workshops, and seminars for former entertainers as part of its alternative livelihood program for over 10 years now. But DAWN brings their program a step further by creating livelihood for the women and hiring women to run the livelihood program of DAWN themselves.

In 1996, DAWN started its Sikap-Buhay or Sikhay program with six women as its first beneficiaries.¹¹ The women were trained in sewing and were initially provided with “two borrowed sewing machines and several batik cloths for its sewing project.” However, the program has grown not only in terms of the acquisition of new machines but also the expansion of their program to include tie-dying and the production of tie-dyed shirts and handloom weaving.

Today, the women “produce quality table runners, place mats, colorful scarves, shawls,” “batik dresses, backpacks, passport and eyeglass holders, shirts, and dresses.” DAWN helps the women sell their products locally and internationally with part of the profit from the venture going to the allowances of the seamstresses and weavers.

More recently, DAWN set up another livelihood program for its clients, the DAWN Wellness Center. The DAWN Wellness Center came into being after DAWN saw the need to find employment for the women who were trained in Cosmetology by Splash Foundation. The women were trained through the assistance of the Employers’ Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) that facilitated the agreement with DAWN and Splash Foundation to have 15 DAWN clients be trained in hair cutting, hair perming, manicure, pedicure, footspa, and reflexology.

DAWN staff share that during the “discussion and follow-up” after the training, the women expressed the desire to practice but did not have enough space or equipment at home. As a response to their expressed need, DAWN converted part of its office into a beauty parlor that also offers reflexology and massage services, hence, the name DAWN Wellness Center.

Eight women are now manning the Wellness Center. They go to the Center by schedule to make sure that there is always someone present to take care of the Wellness Center’s clients.



GOING THE EXTRA MILE. Trained at Splash Foundation, a Project beneficiary of the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) now works at the DAWN Wellness Center.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Sinag. 2006. “Sikhay: Dawn’s Alternative Livelihood Program for Women.” February.

THE PROCESS

DAWN's decision to set up employment opportunities for the women who have been trained under their alternative livelihood program is laudable. This is because women who have been given training on livelihood skills do not necessarily find employment or they may not have enough monetary or material (equipment) resources to set up their own business. Such was the case with the women who were trained under the Splash program.

The Cosmetology Program called *Ganda Mo, Hanapuhay Ko* (Your beauty, my Source of Livelihood) involved a partnership agreement between DAWN and Splash Foundation. Splash provided training and training materials for the participants while DAWN was expected to guarantee the attendance of a minimum of 15 participants per schedule of training, ensure 100 percent attendance of participants during the actual training, conduct a *Libreng Gupit* (Free Haircut) Activity to an elementary school at its own cost, and gather (at its own cost) the graduates of the program two months after their graduation to conduct Kamusta Na (How are you) to determine the effectiveness of the program and whether the women have been using the skills they have learned.¹²

The women who are now manning the Center went with seven other women on a five-day Cosmetology training sponsored by Splash Foundation. After the five-day training, the women rendered community service for added practice. DAWN also provided additional opportunities for the women to train. The women gave beauty services to a barangay in Paco, the communities of the women, and also the other women and Japanese Filipino children members of DAWN.

Because the women could not set up their own shop, DAWN set up the Wellness Center to give them the opportunity to practice what they have learned and to earn a modest income in the process. Right now, the Wellness Center counts among its clients, tenants of the building where they hold office.

OUTCOMES

The DAWN Wellness Center is now fully operational, with eight of the original fifteen women coming over to man the center. DAWN used the remaining funds from the Social and Economic Reintegration Project to buy equipment and supplies for the Wellness Center. It has bought a reclining shampoo chair, foot spa equipment, cabinets, other salon equipment, and beauty products for the center.

The women have the opportunity to practice the skills they learned and at the same time earn a modest extra income from this.

The women have gained confidence in themselves because they have learned a livelihood skill. One of the recipients of the program who had exhibited unusual behavior before now serves as one of the Center attendants. Her colleagues and the DAWN staff share that there has been a lot of improvement in her behavior lately.

DAWN is seriously committed to continue this project even though the project with ILO has already ended.

¹² Memorandum of Agreement for the Conduct of the Basic Cosmetology Training between Splash Foundation, Inc. and DAWN Philippines.

ONGOING CHALLENGES

Because the Wellness Center is just starting out, one of the bigger challenges is how to spur the growth of its client base. Right now, only the tenants of the building know of the services of the center.

Because the client-base is still small, this means that the women's income is still small. Related to this is how DAWN will be able to keep the women committed to manning the Center given the present earnings they have. Another challenge is how to increase the earnings of these women to make them more economically empowered.

The women have only been trained in basic Cosmetology. They may require additional advanced training to make them better prepared to handle a larger clientele.

LESSONS LEARNED

DAWN realized that it is not enough to train the women to have skills they can use to earn extra income; the women should also be given opportunities to practice and earn from the skills they have acquired from the training. DAWN has gone the extra mile by providing the women livelihood opportunities since they could not practice at home where they do not have enough space or equipment to work with.

Although the women now have regular customers from the building where DAWN holds its office, it would be good for the client base to increase because the Wellness Center will only be sustainable if it has enough clients. DAWN should be able to explore how it can better market the Wellness Center to the larger public. It could also explore the option of home treatment services where they would field women to go the homes of clients.

Since the women have only been trained in Basic Cosmetology, they could use updates in their skills. Splash still offers advanced courses in cosmetology, which are still open to the women members of DAWN. DAWN still has plans of sending its women members to the advanced cosmetology courses.

Psychosocial Intervention

A Friend in Need – Lending a Helping Hand to Rebuild Lives ~ **BATIS CENTER FOR WOMEN/ BATIS-AWARE**

Employing the help of peers to facilitate the psychosocial recovery of women victims of trafficking and exploitation

THE EMERGING PRACTICE

Facilitating psychosocial recovery of women victims of trafficking through group sessions and community clustering by women counselors who were also victims of trafficking and exploitation.

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE

Batis Center for Women has been providing assistance to returned women migrants who experienced trafficking and other negative migration incidents. The Center's effort is directed at forging a long-term relationship with the women by helping them come to terms with their harmful migration experiences and by rebuilding their lives.

In fact, Batis AWARE Women's Organization was borne out of Batis Center's hard work in empowering its initial group of trafficked women to rebuild their lives. It was organized to provide a venue for the women to support each other and other women who have gone through similar situations. The women in Batis AWARE were eventually provided by Batis Center with the opportunity to be trained as peer counselors to attest that it was possible to overcome experiences of exploitation and violence, rebuild their lives, and work towards personal transformation and empowerment.

Batis Center and Batis AWARE have been partners in providing peer support to the Center's recent group of trafficked women since 2005. It was only at the stage of working with the International Labor Organization that the strategy of bringing peer counseling closer to the community of origin of the women was implemented.

Initially, peer counseling and other activities of Batis AWARE were center-based. The alternative functional community established at the center provided a safe space for the women to heal from their experience and to be supported in the process. However, both organizations saw the need to expand their services at the community level due to distance and limited interaction. Some recent generation of trafficked women could not sustain their participation in the sessions due to immediate demands from their families (eg. child-rearing, income generation) and other priorities. The lack of available psychosocial and counseling services and interventions at the community of origin is also a challenge.



A FRIEND IN NEED. *Community outreach of peer counselors spearheaded by Batis Center for Women and Batis-AWARE.*

THE RESPONSE

The strategy of getting women to reach other women has its advantages. First, women who find themselves in similar situations have a way of knowing each other's experiences. Second, trafficked victims would be more comfortable speaking to women who come from the same community. Third, getting empowered women vis-à-vis peer counselors speak candidly about their past and current situation is a source of inspiration and encouragement to build up the victims' self-worth and self-confidence.

To efficiently facilitate the social recovery and reintegration of women at their communities of origin, Batis Center and Batis AWARE decided to work in clusters. Although initial sessions or orientations are conducted at the center, from time to time follow-up sessions are conducted at the area of residence of victims of trafficking. The women were clustered in three groups: one center-based and two community-based. The peer counselors (survivors of trafficking) believed that the activities and sessions they conduct in the center can be replicated at the community level.

In addition, Batis AWARE employed a popular education approach to the group work sessions that facilitated the sharing of experiences and the acquisition of skills in life planning and self-centering. The modules used in group work sessions were basically developed from the experience of the peer counselors themselves.

THE PROCESS

Each cluster consists of between 12 and 16 women. To ensure proper coordination and communication among members, a coordinator is selected in each cluster. The women undergo four sessions of group work towards transformation and reintegration. The sessions or the healing process is facilitated by the peer counselors, that earlier group of survivors of violence against migrant women or those who were trafficked. Peer counselors use modules that they themselves developed based on their own experiences of going through the process of recovery or healing as well as trainings in module development.

The group work sessions provide a venue for the other women to heal from their experiences towards a road to recovery. Aside from group work sessions, the newly identified trafficked women are given individual counseling. The level of distress is assessed by both Batis Center and Batis AWARE — composed of social workers, peer counselors, Center staff, and community organizers. Batis Center has its own case management protocol including a model of recovery and reintegration interventions. If the person continues to exhibit psycho-social or psychiatric symptoms, she is provided with professional help through the partners of Batis Center.

Also, the facilitators themselves went through a lot of trainings and seminars in order to be more effective in dealing with the situation or distressing experiences of the newly identified victims. Capacity building seminars in the areas of leadership, public speaking, management, organizational development, life skills, and peer counseling were conducted. Awareness raising activities and seminars on women's rights and gender sensitivity were also carried out.

The newly identified trafficked women, on the other hand, are closely monitored by Batis AWARE peer counselors. They continuously conduct home visits as and constantly communicate through phone calls or text messaging. This

process is vital in the program as a means of following-up, strengthening and sustaining the relationship initiated by the group work sessions and other activities. The peer counselors of Batis AWARE are supervised, mentored, and guided by a professional social worker.

OUTCOMES¹³

A total of 58 identified survivors of trafficking were able to attend at least one of the following group sessions: orientation and sharing of experiences, appreciative life planning, follow-up on efforts/successes in reintegration, and self-centering.

Majority of the women who participated in the group work sessions were able to unburden themselves of psychological, emotional weight as victims of trafficking. This enabled the women to be more hopeful and to have a more positive outlook in life.

Some of the women who have undergone the group work sessions now serve as testimony speakers in several fora conducted on women migrant workers. Some of the women are now members of Batis AWARE and have undergone peer counseling training.

Capacities and confidence of the new peer counselors have been enhanced and reinforced.

Peer counselors have grown to be reliable, dependent, confident, and have shown feelings of self-worth.

LESSONS LEARNED

Building peer support groups at the community level is an empowerment activity. Batis believes that the psychosocial recovery of the women victims through peer support is an important component in building a strong foundation in the women for their economic reintegration. It is important that the well-being of the individual is renewed or restored to prepare her in more challenging duties and responsibilities. In fact, upon assessment of Batis Center staff, a trafficked person who has shown indicators of recovery can avail of economic reintegration services such as enterprise development and skills training from Batis Center.

Sustaining women's interests in the face of the various demands on the women continues to be a challenge. Thus, activities need to be more creative, dynamic and more relevant to the needs and interests of the victims.

¹ *Batis Center for Women and Batis AWARE Women's Organization ILO-HSF Draft Report.*

Watching their Every Step

~ **BATIS CENTER FOR WOMEN/ BATIS-AWARE**

How Batis Center/ Batis-AWARE closely supervise women to ensure success in their economic ventures

THE EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

Survivors of trafficking are closely supervised to ensure success in their economic ventures. The close guidance involves not only skills building and business entrepreneurship seminars, it involves the social preparation of the women, as well through psychosocial intervention programs.

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE

Batis AWARE Women's Organization is an off-shoot of the efforts and advocacy of Batis Center for Women to empower migrant workers who were victims of trafficking. Batis AWARE became an independent organization composed of earlier generation of clients now advocating for a rights-based framework of migration and more importantly providing counseling to center-based and community-based victims of trafficking. Based on informal discussions with the peer counselors, trafficked women articulated their desire for livelihood and other economic assistance as part of the healing or recovery process.

While Batis Center and Batis AWARE recognize the importance of economic reintegration as an empowering mechanism, it presents the challenges in making the women capable and sensible in handling a business. Starting an enterprise or business requires knowledge and skills which may not be present yet on the part of a distressed person. The readiness of the victim to undertake such activity is first and foremost a priority. Self-knowledge, self-improvement and other psychosocial healing activities for survivors of trafficking have to be initially addressed before their economic reintegration plans materialize. She should be able to know her skills, limitations, capacities, and resources before venturing into business or income-generating activities.

THE RESPONSE

In order to balance the need for economic reintegration and personal healing of distressing experiences, the women go through a number of individual and group counseling sessions. The usual practice in Batis Center is that any rescued migrant is encouraged to participate in four sessions that facilitate the sharing of experiences, bringing self-awareness, and life planning. The modules used were basically developed from the experience and process of healing of Batis' peer counselors themselves.



WATCHING THEIR EVERY STEP. *Women beneficiaries of Batis and Batis-AWARE undergo a 12-day "Start Your Business" training-workshop.*

Using a case management protocol, developed as a result of Batis' years of experience in handling cases of distressed returned women migrants, Batis Center and Batis AWARE assess the level of distress an individual is experiencing after going through all the counseling and group work sessions. Based on the feedback of the staff including peer counselors and social worker, if a victim has recovered from her distressed situation and has exhibited readiness in improving relationships with her family and community, she is now more prepared to get involved in empowering activities, one of which is enterprise development or skills training.

THE PROCESS

The participants in the enterprise development or skills training program are identified by carefully assessing their needs, skills and their readiness to face challenges in becoming economically productive. This is generally done through a group discussion or feedback composed of Batis Center social worker, Batis AWARE peer counselor, and Batis Center officers (ie. Director and Finance Officer). Peer counselors also confer with the participants' capability and interest in the program. Such mechanism is important to determine the interest and skills of the participant in either running an enterprise or engaging in a new skill.

Once their capacities to carry out economic reintegration services are assessed, Batis Center looks for suitable partners (mostly from corporate foundations, business franchises, or livelihood or skills training agencies) to work with them in conducting training programs. Exploratory and preparatory meetings are established, and then partnerships are forged. One of their partners is the Center for Small Entrepreneurs (CSE) which conducts a 12-week Character Formation and Start Your Business Right course for women interested to venture into business.

Another partner is Splash Foundation, a corporate foundation on beauty and health products that conducts training in basic cosmetology. This partnership was facilitated by the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, one of the International Labour Organization's partners. Other trainings were on sewing and cooking. This strategy emphasizes that Batis matches the interests and needs of their participants to potential partners and not the other way around.

Due to budgetary constraints, a participant can only enroll in as much as possible only one session or training program. This is why Batis staff is strict at the assessment level. However, there are a few incidences where participants attend an additional skills training program for cases where the person was not successful either in using her skills for income generation or in establishing a business. This, of course, cannot be prevented. Batis ensures that the needs and competence of these women are thoroughly reassessed.

In the case of starting a business, each graduate of the CSE course is required to submit a business plan to Batis Center. They should, as much as possible, apply the things they learned by putting into practice all the tools and skills in starting and managing a business. Batis staff carefully reviews each business plan which includes interviewing the proponent, site visits, and looking at the feasibility of the plan based on the training and experience of Batis Center and Batis AWARE in establishing and operating and sustaining its enterprises.

Once approved, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is forged between Batis Center and the proponent. In the MOA, Batis Center for Women's role is defined as an operations partner, that is, to provide guidance and technical assistance to the women as they initiate their enterprise.

This mechanism was instituted after an assessment of the earlier enterprise. It showed that even with the capacity building trainings, women would benefit from the guidance and experience of Batis Center in continuing to provide assistance in a more structured manner. A grant is provided but handed over in tranches or installments - to ensure that the funds will be spent wisely for the fruition of the business.

Part of the agreement too is the close monitoring of the progress of the business by Batis staff. This includes assisting the beneficiaries in buying items for the business and regular monitoring of their sales record for three months only. It is essential that at the early stages of establishing a business the women should be properly guided in managing their business, and overcoming challenges and uncertainties.

OUTCOMES

Individual and group enterprises, and trainings have been established by project beneficiaries:

A few project beneficiaries are currently being trained to handle the burger shop operated and owned by Batis AWARE. Such hands-on experience hopes to enhance their skills and knowledge in managing small businesses.

Seven women graduated from the Basic Cosmetology training course in partnership with Splash Foundation. The women were provided by Splash Foundation with a cosmetology kit where they apply newly learned skills.

A group of women are currently undergoing training in managing and operating a laundry shop. Batis Center provided a grant to put up the laundry shop. In a few weeks, the laundry shop will be open for business.

LESSONS LEARNED

“Success” stories of women who have tried their hand in entrepreneurship and overcome the challenges serve as inspiration and living proof that economic empowerment among victims of trafficking can be done.

There is still a need for innovation in exploring and implementing economic reintegration activities. Expanding Batis Center’s and AWARE’s networks to corporations and other training programs in business and skills based on the assessed needs of the women should be considered in especially sustaining the program.

The mechanics of providing grants to the beneficiaries needs to be reviewed. Batis AWARE and Batis Center need to consider issuing capital loans instead of giving grants. In this way, project beneficiaries will be obligated to work hard to make the business a success, to have a sense of ownership and accountability, and to value economic independence.

Indicators of successful economic reintegration should be established. At the onset, looking at sales records and savings incurred may not be enough indicators of success. Probably, in the future, the impact of economic intervention in the lives of the women and of their families can be looked at.

¹ *Batis Center for Women and Batis AWARE Women’s Organization ILO-HSF Draft Report.*

Systems Improvement

Creating a Menu of Options: The “Catalogue of Skills and Livelihood Training Programmes and Other Support Services”

~ INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)

How the “Economic and Social Empowerment of Returned Victims of Trafficking in Thailand and the Philippines” Project of the ILO has come up with Catalogue that has the potential to improve Service Delivery and Referral of Cases of Trafficked Migrants among service delivery agencies

THE EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

The *Catalogue of Skills and Livelihood Training Programs and Other Support Services* has the potential to improve the delivery of services for trafficked migrants and return migrants in general and to increase the efficiency of the referral of cases among concerned agencies. The Catalogue aims to help service providers facilitate the economic reintegration of trafficked persons through the proper assessment of the “needs and aspirations” of the individuals; the comprehensive listing of available services offered by government and non-government organizations for return migrants; and guaranteeing the fit between the interests and capacities of migrants with the available skills, vocational and enterprise development trainings and the market demand. It also serves as a potential tool to facilitate the effective referral of cases to concerned agencies.



THE INITIAL CHALLENGE

The return and reintegration of trafficked, abused, and exploited migrants are fraught with difficulties as they deal with the psychological scars brought on by their dire experiences in their host country; their experience of failed migration; the current problems they face as they try to reintegrate themselves in their family and their community; and the barriers that impede their chances of achieving economic stability and success in their home country.

Some of these barriers include the lack of requisite skills to find employment, the unavailability of gainful employment or enterprise, their challenged sense of self, sense of competence and ability to plan for future; and a host of other things that may be preventing them from getting on with their lives in their home country. A number feel the only option is to re-migrate to another country because they have already run out on options in the Philippines. According to the Catalogue of Skills, “many returnees and victims of trafficking resort to a new cycle of re-migration—reflecting in part the failure of interventions for their social and economic reintegration and the lack of opportunities for sustainable livelihood.”

Clearly, many of these trafficked migrants could use formal help from service providers; however, very few get the help they need. Either they have escaped the gaze of service providers or they are not aware of available services even though they need and want to be helped.

On the end of service providers, not all offer a whole range of services that returned migrants need. Usually, they only specialize in some services. It is necessary

for them to collaborate with other agencies offering services they do not have. Although there are already a number of agencies that provide services to return migrants, it is a challenge for service providers to be aware of these services especially when the agencies are not part of their network. And even if the agencies are part of their network, there is no assurance that they are acquainted or familiar with the services offered by these agencies.

Another problem has to do with the lack of skills of service providers in effectively giving counsel or guidance to the migrants as to alternative enterprises or careers they could get into in the home country as many of them may not have had the proper training for this. This has profound effects on the reintegration of migrants as many of them need expert advice on possible alternative enterprises or livelihoods they could get into in the home country.

Thus, the needs of trafficked migrants are two-fold: they need to get helpful advice in terms of possible career alternatives and to be referred to the proper agencies where they could get the social or economic help they require. The service providers, on the other hand, could use information on available programs for trafficked migrants offered by other government and non-government agencies.

THE RESPONSE

The *Catalogue of Skills and Livelihood Training Programs and Other Support Services* aims to address the issues outlined above. It addresses in a sense, both the needs of the return migrants and the service providers who are tasked to help the trafficked migrants find better social and economic options to aid them with their reintegration.

It “seeks to develop realistic options for skills trainings, livelihood opportunities, and other remunerative activities including support services for returned victims of trafficking towards their full economic reintegration. It also aims to facilitate referral for skills and livelihood training and other economic options to partner agencies and organizations and other stakeholders including the private sector.”

The principal users of the Catalogue of Skills are government or non-government social workers or case managers. It aims to assist them “in facilitating the economic reintegration of trafficked persons.”

However, the end users would be the trafficked migrants who are the beneficiaries of the guidance that would be given by service providers. The catalogue “seeks to provide trafficked persons with wider options to address their economic difficulties upon return” by learning appropriate skills and getting livelihood training based on their interests and competencies

The Catalogue is described by Batis Social Worker Beryl Cruspero as a Bible of sorts that service providers consult when they are referring return migrants to the proper agencies either for training services or for Support Services.

THE PROCESS

The Catalogue is a product of a limited survey of existing professional skills and livelihood training programs and support services by ILO partner agencies.

Aside from the survey, interviews were also conducted with key informants “to get additional information, develop linkages, and facilitate referrals in the future.”

Aside from the survey and interviews, a focus group discussion (FGD) was also conducted among 10 female returned trafficked victim clients of DAWN, Kanlungan, and Batis “to determine their personal aspirations and primary needs and identify viable micro-enterprise and common sources of income in the localities where the participants came from.” This was done to “provide guidance and inspiration [for] the development of the catalogue.”

A consultation-meeting with implementing partners and other stakeholders was also conducted to solicit comments on the first draft, after which the draft was revised and finalized.

The information that was had from the survey, interviews, and other pertinent methods were incorporated, catalogued, and categorized to make for a coherent and user-friendly catalogue.

The Catalogue is divided into four Chapters. The first chapter gives an overview of migration in the Philippines and discusses the objectives, scope, and content of the Catalogue; the processes involved in its creation, and a guide for using the Catalogue.

The second chapter provides a listing of the trainings offered by the different agencies that participated in the development of the Catalogue. The aim of the second chapter is to facilitate the identification of suitable or interesting training programs for the migrant. To make identification easier, pertinent information is provided such as descriptions of the training, the targeted trainees, age and educational requirements, duration of the training, fees, and other useful information. The training courses have been categorized depending on the type of training program: Agricultural and Aquatic Business Courses, Beauty and Wellness Courses, Business Operations Management Courses, etc.

The third Chapter provides information about other psychosocial services that the trafficked victims may require such as “counseling, legal assistance, temporary shelter, medical and other health interventions, micro-finance and other support services that will help victims of trafficking recover from their experiences and prepare them for some economic undertaking.” The services have also been categorized by type: Counseling Services, Enterprise Development Assistance, Legal Assistance, and others.

The fourth Chapter provides information on the participating government and non-government agencies that provide training and support services for trafficked migrants including contact numbers and point persons.

Two important tools are included as an appendix. The first tool is the Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies Assessment Instrument that helps migrants make an initial self-assessment of their capacity to engage in an entrepreneurial activity. The client answers 55 brief statements translated into Filipino that would allow the case manager or social worker to recommend the appropriate training programs and support services for the migrant.

The other tool is the Career Interest Assessment Instrument based on a tool developed by John Holland of the Johns Hopkins University. It measures the interests of the clients and consequently the apt enterprise for them to pursue.

The tools are meant to be self-administered; however, interpretation of the results is done by social worker or the case manager who also helps the migrant go over the list of services and courses that they have an interest in and aptitude for.

As a capping exercise to the development of the Catalogue, a “workshop was also conducted among social workers and case managers of implementing agencies

to acquaint them on the career and skills assessment tools.” This is to equip them with the skills in using the tools effectively.

OUTCOMES

A Catalogue that comprehensively lists down available training services and psychosocial services for trafficked victims has been produced that is not being used by ILO partner agencies.

The catalogue is described by its users as easy to navigate and easy to understand. It also provides all the pertinent information they need for when they give career advice to the women or when they need to refer them to particular agencies.

The Catalogue along with the Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies Assessment Instrument and the Career Interest Assessment Tools are now being used by the ILO partner agencies.

According to one of the social workers of the partner agencies, the availability of the two tools has made it easier for them to identify the skills and interests of the clients. This has made it easier for them to give career coaching to the women.

The Catalogue has been organized using a database. It will be linked to the National Referral System and Reintegration database to facilitate the more efficient referral of cases to different agencies. DSWD was assigned the task of continually and periodically updating the information contained in the database.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Catalogue will not only be useful for return trafficked migrants but can also be potentially used in helping return migrants in general achieve economic reintegration in their home country.

The linking of the Catalogue with the National Referral System and Reintegration database has the potential to maximize the efficiency of the delivery of services to return migrants not only in terms of pointing them to enterprises that would fit their interests and capacities but also in terms of identifying the services and agencies that are available to them. When its use is maximized, it acts as an important resource for service providers especially in referring cases that they may not be equipped to handle.

The Catalogue will only live up to its promise of increasing the efficiency of service delivery and the referral of cases if the contents are constantly updated and the partner agencies are provided with the updates.

The network of participating agencies should also be broadened to include agencies outside Metro Manila. Although some agencies, particularly the government agencies have local offices outside Manila, it would also be good to invite the participation of province-based NGOs and people’s organizations to make the services inclusive of migrants who can live in the provinces.

Some women, according to a social worker, find it cumbersome to answer the 55-item Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies Assessment Instrument and 61-item Career Assessment Instrument. However, the women start to appreciate the assessment tools when the service providers discuss the results of the assessment. This is because the women start to discover things about themselves that they may not have realized in the past.

Tracking Recovery and Reintegration – National Referrals and Follow-ups for Victims of Human Trafficking

~ DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD)

How the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) developed a referral system and systematic documentation of the services provided to trafficked women to further improve the services to the victims and survivors of trafficking and to improve the referral of cases of women to proper agencies.

THE EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

The DSWD together with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other project partners have recently developed a referral system and a systematic documentation of the interventions or services being provided to the victims of trafficking, which it hopes would improve the delivery of recovery and reintegration services to victims of trafficking. The system would not only be used by the DSWD but also by other service providers and networks of service providers. Although relatively new and in its initial stages of implementation, it has a lot of potential in terms of being able to provide apt reintegration and recovery services for the victims of trafficking.

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE

The provision of return and reintegration services to victims of trafficking has been a challenge to many countries including the Philippines, especially on the part of service providers.

It is a fact that most service providers have limited services and interventions for the return, recovery and reintegration of the victims. Because service providers are not really expected to be ready to provide services at all levels of recovery and reintegration, it is important for the service providers to be able to refer the victims of trafficking to service providers that deliver services that they cannot provide. Such a system would, in the end, benefit the client most.

Another challenge lies in the fact that a number of victims return to the country with little or no knowledge of and access to assistance and protection services (including access to justice) to ensure that the women's physical and psychosocial well-being, and economic and legal needs are appropriately met. This is especially true of those who have not been reached by any service providers.

Some women may also encounter several service providers after their return. Each of these service providers expectedly subject the women to different in-take interviews, many questions of which may have already been asked by other service providers from the women.

Thus, the women tell their stories repeatedly, and possibly relive their traumatic experiences over and over again as a result. It must be pointed out though that the repetitive recounting of their experience could also contribute to their faster recovery.



With this, it is important that a standardized initial assessment be conducted not only to identify where assistance is much needed but also to spare the victims or survivors the trauma of having to repeat their story over and over again. There is also a need to properly identify agencies that could deliver the apt services they need.

The delivery of service is exacerbated by the lack of a systematic documentation of returning trafficked persons. This contributes to the lack of an accurate monitoring not only of individual cases but also the monitoring of trafficking cases in general. For instance, there is an absence of an accurate figure on the number of returning trafficked persons. This may result in the deprivation of the needed support and intervention programs for these people.

It is important, thus, to develop a centralized mechanism of documentation and reportage to know more about what happened to a trafficked person who returned to his or her country of origin and to provide accurate statistical figures to give service providers a general and more complete picture of the status of trafficking victims.

A multi-disciplinary, comprehensive, and inter-agency approach to delivering services for trafficked victims is necessary to ensure appropriate responses and interventions for trafficking victims. To do this, there is a need for a well-established referral system and efficient database system to track down the returnees and effectively monitor their progress.

THE RESPONSE

As the primary government agency responsible for the welfare of Filipino citizens, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) formulates policies and plans, develops and enhances current programs and services for children, women, families and communities, and provides social protection to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups such as children, women, people with disabilities, among others.

The mandate has been expanded with the enactment of Republic Act (RA) No. 9208. Under RA 9208, the DSWD is mandated to comprehensive rehabilitative and protective programs to trafficked persons. DSWD currently co-chairs the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) with the Department of Justice. At the regional level, DSWD chairs the Regional Inter-Agency Committee Against Trafficking in Persons and Violence Against Women and Children (RIACAT-VAWC).

In light of the gaps in assisting trafficked persons, DSWD's goal is to develop and institutionalize a system and a tool on reporting, referral, and documentation of the cases of trafficking. DSWD also aims to enhance the capacities of service providers in facilitating psychosocial recovery, social- and economic reintegration of returned victims of trafficking.

DSWD together with the ILO, and project partners from government and non-government agencies developed two new tools to help achieve these goals: (1) Referral System on the Recovery and Reintegration of Trafficked Persons, and the (2) National Recovery and Reintegration Database (NRRD).

The Referral System is a comprehensive mechanism among government and NGOs to facilitate the immediate access and/or referral of trafficked persons to appropriate support services. Relevant government agencies and organizations have been identified and their roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined as well.

Procedures and protocols for referrals have also been formulated to create uniformity in case management.

To supplement the referral system, the NRRD was created to know the profiles of trafficked persons, to track the status of their cases, and to ensure that appropriate services are provided to them. With these tools, it will be easier to monitor the progress of the reintegration and recovery of the victims of trafficking.

THE PROCESS

Referral System. Cooperation and collaboration from various government and non-government agencies are vital factors in developing a Guideline and Protocol on a referral system on the recovery and reintegration of trafficked persons. Because of this, the DSWD consulted NGOs working for the rights of trafficked women such as the Batis Center for Women, Batis Association of Women in Action for their Rights and Empowerment, Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), and the Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc.

The experience, expertise, and resources of the government agencies such as the Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA-OUMWA), the IACAT, and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) were also tapped. A series of consultations, dialogues, and workshops with the stakeholders were conducted since the project commenced in 2007.

The Referral System presents a “framework on intervention from the post overseas (receiving country) to the provision of services at the local level. It enumerates the possible services to be accorded to the trafficked persons and provides guidance to the service providers in dealing with the trafficked persons.”¹⁴

Recovery and reintegration forms (RR) were developed to ensure uniformity of documents and avoidance of repetitive interviews to trafficked persons. An inventory of existing reporting forms and referral procedures from relevant agencies were gathered and integrated. A total of seven standard referral and reporting forms were generated. One of the forms, RR Form 1 – Client’s Card, is now used for the database system. This makes data entry efficient and consistent. The Client Card is simply passed to agencies where the trafficking victim/survivor has been referred to, which would allow the receiving agency to easily review the case of the victim and to decide on the appropriate services they would provide these women.

In addition, DSWD sought a participatory approach in the development of indicators for successful reintegration. This includes consultation from service providers and trafficked women who have “recovered” and are now living a “normal” life. Indicators were developed at two levels: recovery and reintegration of the trafficked person, and assistance and services pursued by the service providers – in the areas of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behavior.

National Recovery and Reintegration Database. It must be noted that the database is still in its pilot stage. Although trainings about the database and capacity building workshops on recovery and reintegration services were conducted since December 2008, the database only became operational in January 2009. Not all non-government and government agencies have access to the database at this point, only those who

¹⁴ *Innovative Tools in Helping Trafficked Persons. Draft write-up. April 2009.*

provide services to trafficked persons. Because the system contains confidential information, the NRRD has security features and concerned agencies on trafficking needs to sign a Nondisclosure Agreement before DSWD gives them access. As of the moment, ILO-HSF project partners, DSWD field offices, and other relevant agencies with permission from DSWD are the only ones who can use and have access to the database. The database is currently being pilot tested in four regions across the country.

As the coordinating agency, DSWD maintains the database system. Each project partner, on the other hand, is required to assign a focal person to do data entry, updating and monitoring of the cases as well. Any information entered into by the partners is similarly monitored by staff from the Social Technology Bureau of DSWD. Data is examined in terms of technical errors and most especially in following up the assistance and interventions given and to be provided to the trafficked persons. Any error or missing service update is referred back to the partner for correction and case follow up.

OUTCOMES

The project has successfully produced (1) Referral System on the Recovery and Reintegration of Trafficked Persons, and the (2) National Recovery and Reintegration Database (NRRD).

The Guidelines on a Referral System continues to be applied at the local level. However, only authorized organizations in selected pilot areas have access to the database system. Last March 27, 2009, the Referral System was finally approved by the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking of the Department of Justice. This signifies that the Referral System can now be utilized nationwide, and that relevant government agencies are mandated to implement it.

Since the database was made operational in January 2009, there were a total of 450 cases entered into the database.

LESSONS LEARNED

Inter-agency or multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approaches are crucial factors to ensure that a range of services are available for victims of trafficking and to ensure that the victims are fully recovered and reintegrated socially and economically. Although pertinent government agencies have already collaborated in the development of a referral system, the support of the local government units still need to be pursued in the effective implementation of RA 9208.

The referral system could make the delivery of services efficient because services that cannot be provided by particular agencies can be covered by other agencies that deliver such services. The inventory of the services of agencies concerned with trafficked women is an important step to make the services efficient because this means that victims can now be given apt services. The referral system would also be important in turning over the cases to proper authorities should the victim move to another location.

The database could be modified for use by other clients who are not necessarily victims of trafficking. The potential of the system is immense in making systematic the delivery of services to various sectors of society. In other words, service providers providing services to children and other marginalized sectors of society could very well adapt the system for their own use.

In the database system, it is imperative that the system is user-friendly because staff from government agencies and NGOs may not necessarily be computer savvy.

As for the Referral System, the use of the trafficking forms should be filled-up and utilized properly to have a better understanding of the interventions provided towards recovery and reintegration.

Although the database system is maintained by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, it should be stressed that ownership of the database is a responsibility of all involved parties.

Improving Case Management for Trafficked and Severely Exploited Women Migrant Workers

~ OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION (OWWA)

How OWWA enhanced its case management system for trafficked and severely exploited women migrant workers who are OWWA members.

THE EMERGING PRACTICE

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration developed a case management system specifically for trafficked and severely exploited women migrant workers, who are OWWA members. It has also continuously strived for the improvement of the performance of its Case Managers/Officers to allow them to deliver responsive services in all phases/stages of case management towards the trafficked victims' recovery and reintegration.

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE

As a government agency, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration is in charge of protecting and promoting the welfare and well-being of Filipino migrant workers and their dependents.¹⁵ Even though many migrant workers go through the migration process thru proper and legal means, some of them end up getting deceived and exploited by their employer once they enter the country of destination.

Deception also occurs at the recruitment stage. This form of deception and labor exploitation is considered trafficking by the OWWA. The agency realized that the issue on trafficking seems to be permeating the legal system and procedures of OWWA, and cases are escalating.

To address the needs of trafficked migrant workers, procedures were set in place but standardization of the processes in conducting rescue of the victims varies depending on the host country laws and regulations. More often, it entails risk on the part of the case officers¹⁶ as they may be required to decide on a matter of life-and-death situations of the victims – something beyond the parameters of the host country's laws and regulations. Case officers also needed to be competent in handling and responding well to voluminous number of cases in a day. This includes providing the trafficked person specific recovery and reintegration services within the resources, facilities, capacities and partner institutions of OWWA.



IMPROVING CASE MANAGEMENT. *Welfare Officers of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) are trained on how to effectively handle trafficked and severely exploited migrant workers.*

¹⁵ All workers who went through the proper and legal process to work overseas are encouraged to be members at the OWWA.

¹⁶ OWWA staff assigned to handle cases of migrant workers who are victims of trafficking and distressed workers.

THE RESPONSE

In response to the challenges, OWWA decided to have a more focused and distinct course of action for migrant workers who are victims of trafficking. Actually, procedures are already in place since OWWA handles different and various cases on labor abuse and violation of rights. However, in the case of human trafficking, OWWA sought to resolve such in a more responsive and specific approach.

As a welfare agency, OWWA responds to trafficking cases in a more rapid manner. With support from ILO-HSF, OWWA's case management procedures and guidelines were improved taking into consideration the return, recovery and reintegration interventions of trafficked persons. The project strengthens OWWA's case management at three posts or welfare offices: overseas post (on-site or host country), home office (upon return to country of origin), and regional welfare offices (community level). This means that victims of trafficking are given assistance starting from the host country and continues to be provided until he or she is reintegrated back to his or her community or area of residence. The victim's well being is assessed and re-assessed every step of the way. Various services of recovery and assistance are also made available to the victim in all three posts.

Together with strengthening the case management process, the project pursues to provide adequate and relevant OWWA reintegration assistance to at least 100 returned trafficked and severely exploited migrant workers. This includes improving the competence of case managers or case officers in handling the cases, and adopting a more structured individualized treatment plan with focus on their psychosocial and economic recovery.

THE PROCESS

“In the design of strategies to address the plight of victims of trafficking, there is a need for sound information from scientific study on existing practices, experience and available literature. The resulting information can serve as a guide not only in the formulation of strategies but also in determining effective case management, the skills required for the persons and institutions providing assistance.”

In order to manage the cases of trafficking properly, OWWA resolved to standardize and institutionalize the procedures. To do this, OWWA conducted first a series of consultations and meetings with OWWA Case Officers from the overseas posts, home office, and regional welfare offices. Experiences in handling trafficking cases and practical means of managing the victims were culled from the case officers. These practices are the basis for the crafting and development of the case management manual that hopes to address the needs of trafficked and severely exploited migrants.

While procedures and guidelines are being enhanced, OWWA collaborated with both government and private institutions to ensure that services in all three levels are available. To secure the safe rescue/recovery and return of trafficked persons, OWWA overseas posts coordinate with the Philippine Overseas Labor Offices, Philippine embassies and consulates, and local authorities of the host country. At this point, rescue operations, psychosocial assessment procedures, medical assistance, legal assistance, temporary shelter, repatriation services, and preparation for reintegration are already conducted.

The wellbeing of the victim continues to be evaluated upon return to the Philippines. Psychosocial interventions such as stress debriefing, counseling, skills assessment and other related activities are intensified at this level. OWWA (Home

Office) also facilitates the transfer of victims experiencing trauma to medical institutions such as the National Mental Health and the Philippine General Hospital.

Counseling sessions are conducted either individual or by group to prepare and guide the victims in their reintegration. Counseling sessions even continue at their areas of residence which are facilitated by case officers at the Regional Welfare Offices. In fact, some regional offices organize so-called Family Circles for migrant workers and their families. Family circles are social gatherings of returned migrant workers and their families within a certain community or village. It is sort of a support group that is open to migrants including victims of trafficking.

At this stage too legal counseling is offered. This includes filing cases against the local employment agency and referring the case to appropriate authorities such as members of the Regional Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Trafficking (ie. Department of Social Welfare and Department, Department of Justice, Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, etc). Cases are also filed against the perpetrator or employer abroad in coordination with OWWA overseas posts. OWWA also ensures that the victims are updated about the status of their cases through text messaging, invitation to meetings, and attending in court hearings.

Reintegration programs and services are, moreover, offered by OWWA. Migrant workers who have experienced trafficking can avail a variety of programs and benefits. This includes capital or credit assistance for business, skills training, scholarship grants for their children, and employment assistance among others. The regional welfare offices, on the other hand, monitor the status of the trafficked migrant and continue to identify reintegration needs through home visits and constant communication.

What is notable in OWWA's case management is that the channels of communication are very open and constant from the first contact with the trafficked victim to full recovery and reintegration. Each person's case is documented and that an individualized treatment plan is prepared based on the needs of the victim. Also, a number of recovery and reintegration options are presented to the victim in all stages of assistance.

To avoid duplication in database management, OWWA linked up with the National Recovery and Reintegration Database of the Department of Social Welfare and Development – a national referral system that enlists and tracks down the recovery and reintegration progress of trafficked persons.

OUTCOMES

Development of a case management manual for trafficked and severely exploited migrant workers to serve as reference or standard operating procedure for case officers. Training on capability building from 80 to 94 case managers or case officers from all OWWA posts – overseas, home office and regional welfare offices. Social and economic reintegration of 164 trafficked persons since 2008. Some examples are the following:

- Ten were provided with capital assistance for businesses such as poultry production, accessory-cart, sewing machines, and variety shops
- 102 women were provided with counseling on safe migration
- 13 women have successfully completed a six-day skills training on cosmetology using established networks
- Ten women are scheduled for skills training under the Skills-for-Employment Program; one currently enrolled OWWA facilitated the employment of six women in local factories
- Three women are undergoing orientation for loan assistance through an OWWA partner-cooperative

- Legal assistance is on-going for all victims; filed cases are pending or awaiting decision; some accused local employment agencies have settled the cases with the victims.

One of the women who benefited from the economic reintegration programs of OWWA said that she felt relieved and reassured after going through a series of counseling and stress debriefing sessions with the case officers. She felt the genuine and immediate support from OWWA.

Another beneficiary mentioned that getting a small-enterprise business loan from the program generated feelings of hope and optimism. She felt determined to work for her future rather than focus on her past experiences. According to her, that even though she may not be earning big yet, the fact that she was able to put up a business is already an indication of recovery.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Continuous and holistic approach in service delivery/intervention in all stages of employment of a migrant worker including case documentation from the first contact with the victim to full recovery and reintegration.
- Continuous capability building training of OWWA employees to sustain a more responsive, sensitive and appropriate services for the trafficked and severely exploited migrant women to ensure sustainability of the output of the project.
- Each case of the women should be treated as unique using individualized treatment plan.
- Strengthening of linkages with other service providers outside of OWWA to expand resource base (e.g., manpower expertise, facilities) especially at the regional level or area of residence.
- Viability and sustainability of alternative options of the women other than going back to overseas employment.
- Development of a livelihood assistance program that is more accessible to the women.
- Strengthened follow-up counseling for women who decide to re-migrate despite their experience of being trafficked and exploited to come up with informed decision to assure a safer re-migration. (About 80 percent of the 164 women documented for the project still prefer to re-migrate.)
- Level of a person's competence and coping mechanisms are important factors to recovery and reintegration.
- Defining and identifying indicators of successful reintegration especially in the context of psychosocial recovery due to past experiences of relapse.

Helping Service Providers become Adept Career Coaches to Trafficked Victims/ Survivors: The “Manual for Coaches”

~ **INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)**

How the Coaching Manual can be used to make service providers competent and capable career coaches to the trafficking victims

THE EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

Coaching Returned Victims/Survivors of Trafficking Toward Gainful Careers: A Manual for Coaches addresses the need of social workers, case managers, and service providers to be equipped with the know how and skills in facilitating the economic reintegration of trafficking victims/ survivors. It equips them with the “basic principles, concepts, strategies, practical tips and tools on [career] coaching...to help victims/survivors of trafficking become economically and socially empowered.”¹⁷

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE

While most social workers, case managers, and service providers are skilled in giving psychosocial intervention programs to victims of trafficking, the same can not be said with their skills in “providing meaningful guidance on careers and occupations, skills recognition and assessment, job search and job placement,” “entrepreneurship, managing money, micro-finance, and networking.”

While some may have learned on the job to give some forms of career advice to women having worked with women on some economic projects with their organization, they could still use updates on their knowledge and skills in dealing out career advice. Career advising is something that they may have already been doing already given the kinds of programs that they deliver, but they were not formally trained for the task.

As the International Labour Organization (ILO) Project entitled “Economic and Social Reintegration of Returned Victims of Trafficking in Thailand and the Philippines” had its run, the ILO realized that service providers need to be equipped with skills in career guidance especially that the Project ‘s thrust is to facilitate the social and economic reintegration of trafficked women. To be effective, they must be prepared for the task.

There is a pressing need on the part of trafficked women to receive “expert” advice on possible alternative careers now that they have returned to the country. A lot of these women faced precarious economic situations upon their return, often with debt or no source of income, while burdened with the “duty” to provide for the economic needs of their families. Given such situation, some of these women see re-migration as a key solution to their plight. While some women may be interested to remain in the country to engage in



¹⁷ Cruz-Mante, Loree. 2009. *Coaching Returned Victims/ Survivors of Trafficking Toward Gainful Careers: A Manual for Coaches*. ILO Manila.

entrepreneurial activities, they may have no access to information about the kinds of entrepreneurial activities available for them and ones that would suit their skills and their interests.

This makes career counseling an urgent service that must be provided them to give them a whole range of possible career options now that they have returned.

On the part of the service provider, three of the challenges they face are convincing the women not to re-migrate, try their hand in engaging in entrepreneurial activities in the country and giving the women credible and reliable career advice to help them achieve economic stability and reintegration, and should the need arise, help them women make the right choices should they opt to re-migrate again.

THE RESPONSE

Recognizing the need to equip the service providers with the skills to facilitate the economic reintegration of the returnees and to increase their capacity in empowering the women economically, the ILO along with Project partners endeavored to produce the Manual *Coaching Returned Victims/Survivors of Trafficking Toward Gainful Careers: A Manual for Coaches*.

The Manual “is intended to help service providers, social workers, case managers, and all who help victims/survivors of trafficking learn the basic principles and techniques of career coaching.¹⁸”

The Manual purposefully uses the term coaching rather than career counseling because counseling is usually given by professionals. But because most of the service providers have not been formally trained for the task, they cannot be considered as career counselors. The more apt term would be coaching.

The Manual’s objective is to prepare service providers to acquire the necessary coaching skills in order for them to be competent coaches when they walk the women towards the path of economic reintegration:

Just as the players turn to their coaches for help on how they can improve themselves in the game, so do the people that you help. It is often difficult to limit your coaching to those areas that you are really competent in because you are a person they can logically go to for help. Rather than turn them away, it might be best for you to acquire the necessary coaching skills to help them, not just with their psychosocial, medical or health-related concerns, but in their economic reintegration, as well. This includes career and occupational guidance and other work-related issues.¹⁹

The skills they will learn will help them get the return migrants “back in the job market in jobs and careers that are hopefully safer and more satisfying...” It will also equip them with the necessary skills “to provide professional support by way of career guidance” and “provide emotional support for the often discouraging search for meaningful careers.²⁰”

THE PROCESS

A consultant specializing in Human Resources and Organization Development Practitioner and a practicing career coach was hired to produce the Manual.

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

The Manual is divided into six modules: The first module gives a broad introduction of the issue of trafficking to get the module users to understand the issue of trafficking better and to serve as a starting point for their discussions with their clients.

The second module discusses the six basic themes in coaching victims/survivors of trafficking toward gainful careers. These are key themes that are “commonly needed in career guidance situations where help needed revolves around career management, job search, and job satisfaction.” However, these themes are to be adapted “to the unique situations of trafficked persons” as “the trauma of their experiences” makes their situation different from the situation of ordinary jobseekers who have not had the same experience. These help the clients “to appreciate the need for a structured way of looking at their circumstances on the aspect of careers.”²¹

The third module covers a very important topic (A Look-See at Entrepreneurship) as most trafficked migrants venture into entrepreneurship as an alternative career recourse after their failed migration. This was most visible with ILO’s experience with its women clients under its Social and Economic Reintegration Project where almost all the women chose to engage in business. This is because this is the only viable option for them given their lack of skills and higher education. Because failure is an ever present reality, the Manual notes that going into business must be approached intelligently. The Module tries to address the issue of how the return migrants can assure the success of their endeavors.

The fourth module on the other hand covers the management of money. It covers how values affect one’s spending habits, financial literacy, the relationship between income and expense, saving money, setting financial goals, among others. This is an important module to ensure that the end users can wisely manage their financial resources and harness this for the success of their enterprise.

The fifth module (Understanding Micro-Finance) covers the importance of credit or financing in achieving one’s financial goals, microfinance as a source of economic empowerment, accessing microfinance schemes, applying for credit, the importance of paying one’s loans, and exploring the expansion of one’s enterprise through credit.

The final module (Protect yourself from trafficking: Legal and Safe Re-Migration) addresses the issue of the possibility of remigration and the ways one could protect oneself should this option be taken by the return migrant once more if the decision to come back has not worked to her advantage.

The Manual also includes inspiring stories “that can help provide a continued dose of inspiration and soothing for the often physically exhausted and emotional drained coaches.”²² It also has a list of additional resources that the coaches can consult in case they want to deepen their knowledge on the topics covered by the Manual.

The author prescribes that the Manual be studied following the sequence “since the ideas build upon each other.” Knowledge of the previous modules is important before the other modules could be understood.

OUTCOMES

The Manual has gone through a presentation and training workshop where the ILO partner organizations gave valuable comments, suggestions, and insights on the

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

contents of the Manual (most especially on the issue of trafficking) to ensure that the Manual is user-friendly and covers topics that are useful for the service providers.

Almost all social workers say that the Manual is useful for them because it codifies practices they have been engaging in in their organizations. The Manual is an important tool that can be used when new social workers come in to work for their organization. The manual can be used by these social workers to acquaint themselves with practices of the organization without necessarily having to undergo training. It also serves as a material the social workers can consult in case they need to review some concepts about career coaching.

ONGOING CHALLENGES

One of the NGOs said that the concept and skill of financial management included in the discussion of the Manual are difficult to teach given that most of their clients actually do not have sources of income nor savings to manage. The challenge lies in convincing these service providers of the importance of teaching financial management to the trafficking victims/survivors especially when working on their economic empowerment.

Moreover, the introduction of the concept of coaching to service providers and to victims and survivors as well would be a challenge as opposed to counseling to which they are already familiar with.

LESSONS LEARNED

ILO realized the importance of training the social workers, case managers, and service providers on career coaching because most have only had training or experience on psychosocial intervention programs. As was experienced in the Project, the economic programs are an integral aspect of the reintegration of trafficked women. The success of the women are hinged on the capacity of the service providers in giving credible and up-to-date advice on the financial and career status of the return migrants.

Most social workers of the different partner organizations agree that the Manual is useful for them because it has codified the practices they have already been engaging in in their respective organizations and also provides new useful information to enrich their career coaching duties. On the other hand, one social worker advocated the use of examples in the Coaching Manual that are related to the experiences of trafficked migrants. Although it is the service providers who will use the Manual, the examples should be close to the realities of their clients to make the examples they will give more relevant and more in tune with the realities and needs of the clients.

The coaching manual is a fitting companion to the *Catalogue of Skills and Livelihood Training Programs and Other Support Services*. Together with the assessment tools and the list of services and training courses available, the service providers will be able to give competent career advice to the women.

Although at this time the women might not have any financial resources to manage, the economic lot of the women could change in the future especially because they are starting to learn to engage in enterprise. Putting it this way, preparing the women for the eventuality of them having monetary resources to manage would then be seen as a useful exercise rather than a waste of time and resources.

While not all women will have financial resources to manage later, some eventually will. And it is these women that the service providers should be able to target. It would be defeatist to think that the women should not learn financial management just because they are currently penniless. It will not be any different from the thought that the women do not have the capacity to make improvements in their financial status.

The concept of coaching can be easily explained to women. It would be beneficial to the women to believe that they have the capacity to expand their vocabulary and to learn new concepts. Coaching is an apt term that captures the differences in the nature of career counseling and coaching. In the final analysis, the content of the advice is still more important than this minor problem of semantics. NGOs should be at liberty to choose the term, which they think captures and does justice to what they do for the women.

Local Networking

Building Local Networks to Address the Needs of Trafficked Women and to Address the Problem of Illegal Recruitment

~ **KANLUNGAN CENTRE FOUNDATION, INC.**

How Kanlungan tapped its local network to identify victims of trafficking in La Union and worked with the network to address illegal recruitment and trafficking in the local community

THE EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

Kanlungan builds local networks to help them with their program for former migrants in La Union. Moreover, it maintains partnerships with the local government and the Bannuar Ti La Union (Heroes of La Union), a local people's organization it helped organize in 2001, to address the needs of migrant workers and their family. It taps these institutions for the delivery of services to the community, in general, and to migrants and their families, in particular, to prevent and suppress human trafficking and to identify trafficked women who qualify as program beneficiaries.

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE

Although trafficking victims in the country number in the thousands, it is not an easy task to identify returnees needing of assistance. This is especially true of victims of trafficking who manage to escape from their trafficking experience with little outside help.



BUILDING LOCAL NETWORKS. *A community education session in La Union conducted by Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc.*

Unlike women who have received institutional help in their destination countries (i.e. NGOs, embassy or consulate, the police), these women do not get the benefit of being referred to government or non-government agencies upon their return to their home country. Thus, the women face their troubles and burdens on their own. Sometimes, their family offers support; however, the family can only deliver limited assistance. Many victims of trafficking usually require specialized institutional help to aid in their recovery from their harrowing experiences.

Unfortunately, many of these women may not be aware of the existence of government and non-government organizations that deliver the services and assistance they need. These women may also be loathed to approach agencies thinking that their problems are personal problems that they alone should face.

While the local government agencies, particularly barangay structures, have knowledge and access to these women, these local structures may not have the necessary resources (monetary or human) to address the needs of these women.

The problem is also not just confined on the women's end but also on the part of the NGOs as well. Reaching out to these women is also a challenge to non-

government organizations as these women could be coming from various locations where the NGOs may not really have a direct reach.

Because trafficking victims are not just concentrated in one locality, NGOs are usually faced with the logistical nightmare of needing to reach, deliver services, and monitor the status of these women from various localities, some of which are far flung rural communities. Most NGOs operate with a lean staff making it difficult to reach a wider coverage.

The dilemma also lies in the fact that NGOs are dependent on funding coming from international agencies, which will not be available forever. The challenge lies in how the programs could be sustained in the local communities well after the funding has already run dry.

THE RESPONSE

Kanlungan found some solutions to these dilemmas through fostering working relationships with a local people's organization and the local government units in La Union. It helps that its network not only helps in identifying project beneficiaries but also in assisting them in the delivery of services to the public.

For the ILO/ HSF-sponsored Project, Kanlungan tapped the Bannuar Ti La Union (Heroes of La Union) a province-wide federation of OFWs, returnees, and their families to help them identify trafficked women to become program beneficiaries. Bannuar Ti La Union is a people's organization that Kanlungan helped organize in March 2001 and now works with it to oversee the welfare of migrants in the province.

It was rational for Kanlungan to tap Bannuar's assistance because the people's organization can be found province wide. Because of the members' grass roots base, they have access to information about possible victims of trafficking in the communities, which normally Kanlungan will not have given the limitations in its reach. Kanlungan only has one part time social worker assigned in La Union who is assisted by the full time Manila-based social worker from time to time.

Aside from Bannuar, the local government units especially the barangays have also helped identify returned trafficking victims in their localities. This is because the barangay officials are in the know when it comes to knowing what is happening to the people in their localities.

But more than just tapping the people's organization and the local government units to refer clients, Kanlungan involves these two groups in the bigger endeavor of solving the problem of illegal recruitment (and in a large sense trafficking) in the province.

For instance, Kanlungan, the provincial government of La Union, and Bannuar have formed a tripartite body that runs a program that aims to reduce illegal recruitment in the province. The project is called the *Zero illegal recruitment iti La Union!* [(Zero illegal recruitment in La Union)], which received an award from the Philippine Development Innovation Marketplace in 2008.

This is part of Kanlungan's aim to mobilize the local community leaders and officials to take the initiative in providing programs for migrants and would be migrants.

THE PROCESS

Kanlungan has been laying the ground work for the Social and Economic Program way before it inked a partnership with ILO. Kanlungan has been building networks in the province by performing community organizing work in La Union

for over a decade now, fostering trusting relationships with local government units and the different communities they reach.

Kanlungan set up its extension office in San Fernando, La Union in May 1996. The aim was “to organize multi-level (from the barangay to the provincial and regional levels) formation/alliances of returned migrant workers and families towards engagement in local governance.”²³ Organizing these people involved the delivery of education and training in the community such as the Basic Migration Orientation Seminar (BMOS), Migrant Rights and Legal Remedies, and Gender Awareness and Sensitivity Training (GST).²⁴ Direct organizing and partnership with existing organizations in the community facilitate the formation of migrant workers organizations.

Kanlungan’s community organizing activities resulted to the formation of the Structures of Care and the Bannuar Ti La Union in the province. Currently, Kanlungan continues to work with Bannuar by providing training and transferring of social skills to the organization. It does this with the hope that Bannuar will assist Kanlungan in their work in La Union in the short term, and perhaps, even take on the work of Kanlungan in the long term.

In a way, Kanlungan has already accomplished this aim as Bannuar already assists Kanlungan in organizing local communities, echoing the training they have received from Kanlungan to their local communities, referring women to Kanlungan for its project with ILO, helping monitor the status of the recipients, and assisting in the Anti Illegal Recruitment project of Kanlungan, Bannuar, and the provincial government of La Union.

Kanlungan also continues to work with local government units by providing them training, pressing them to address the needs of migrants from La Union, and by partnering with them in certain projects.

OUTCOMES

Raising the awareness of its partners on issues regarding migration and trafficking enables Kanlungan to sustain a steady base of supporters who would assist them in their work for migrant women and their families. The education and training the local partners get from Kanlungan makes them more aware of the plight of migrants and engenders commitment in them to lend their support to the projects and programs of Kanlungan.

The community organizing work of Kanlungan has resulted to the formation of the people’s organization, which serves at the same time as structures of care composed of ex-OFWS and their families that help “alleviate, resolve and prevent from happening again the adverse consequences of international labor migration, like violence against women (VAW) migrants.”²⁵

“Kanlungan and Bannuar Ti La Union continue to challenge the Local Government Units (LGUs) in La Union to craft and implement policies and programs for OFWs and their families. Bannuar Ti La Union is now a partner of Kanlungan²⁶ in setting-up OFW Action Centers in their respective areas to respond to the needs of the sector.”

Bannuar and the local government units have been the source of referrals of Kanlungan for the program beneficiaries of the ILO Project. Moreover, they have

²³ Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. Community Extension Services Program.
<http://www.kanlungan.ngo.ph/cesp.htm>

²⁴ Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. Programs and Services.

<http://www.kanlungan.ngo.ph/services.htm>

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. Community Extension Services Program.
<http://www.kanlungan.ngo.ph/cesp.htm>

also acted as partners in making sure that the women beneficiaries receive the services they need from the Project.

Kanlungan has recently enlisted the help of Bannuar members to assist them in monitoring the status of the women in their communities who benefitted from the Economic and Social Reintegration of Returned Victims of Trafficking in Thailand and the Philippines Project of the ILO. The social worker of Kanlungan assigned in La Union helped train the Bannuar members to do the task. This has saved the project money as the social worker no longer has to spend fare to visit the women. This is in turn beneficial for the Bannuar members because they learn important skills in monitoring the progress of projects and possibly in running programs for migrants on their own later.

The local government units including the provincial government have recognized Kanlungan's role in addressing the needs of migrant workers and potential migrant workers in their province. This was made possible because of Kanlungan's effort to reach out to the local government, to include them in their advocacy and education campaigns, which resulted in the local government officials' increased awareness on the plight of migrants and their increased participation to address some of the problems being encountered by migrant workers.

OFWs are now allowed to join meetings at the Sanguniang Bayan at some municipalities and are given the chance to express their views on issues that affect them. Thus, the local units have become more open to hearing out the sentiments of its constituents.

LGUs recognize the plight of the returned trafficked women and are helping in raising the awareness of the community on how they could support them.

One of the bigger outcomes of the partnership of Kanlungan with Bannuar and the local government is their tripartite partnership in the project Against Illegal Recruitment (AIR) in the province. The provincial government has allocated over PhP100,000 (USD2,100) to fund this project.

LESSONS LEARNED

Kanlungan capitalizes on the importance of empowering local organizations and local government units because it realizes that fact that it cannot remain in the communities for the long term. A more sustainable and viable option is to train people in the local communities who can take the cudgels of leadership at some later point.

Working with local community organizations and local government units help the organization become more efficient in running its programs. The network or organizations and LGUs helped Kanlungan and vice versa a lot in identifying program beneficiaries, in providing training to communities, monitoring the welfare of the beneficiaries, and the like.

The attempt at influencing good governance however is still far from reached. Some incumbent Bannuar leaders admit they need more skills and need to muster enough confidence to deepen their engagement in any political exercise with the LGU partners.

With the right prodding from civil society, the government can do its share to address the problems of migrants and would be migrants. It shows that given the opportunity to learn about the plight of migrants, local officials can be willing collaborators in addressing the needs of migrants.

However, despite the efforts, Rose Bayan, the social worker of Kanlungan assigned in La Union shares that there is still a lot of work to do in terms of capacitating Bannuar and the local government units to become competent partners that can sustain the programs for migrants in the absence of Kanlungan. The challenge lies on the shoulders of Kanlungan to ensure that both organizations can be independent players in addressing the needs of migrants.

Identifying Victims of Trafficking through Community Outreach Programs

~ **BATIS CENTER FOR WOMEN/ BATIS-AWARE**

How Batis Center/ Batis - AWARE identified victims of trafficking by gaining access to the community through the personal social contacts of existing Batis clients, eventually creating networks with the local government and community members

THE EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

In selected municipalities with a considerable number of cases of trafficked women and migration of women in the provinces of Nueva Ecija and Bulacan, Batis Center for Women worked over a period of time to establish a social and economic support reintegration network for identified victims of trafficking by conducting fora at the community level and mobilizing the support of the local government. This broadened the services of Batis Center from center-based to community-based.

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE

In its years of experience, Batis Center for Women (Batis Center) has been extending its services to returned distressed women migrant workers through channels from different institutions or stakeholders, and from direct referrals. Its partnership with the local government as well as local and international partner institutions have repatriated a number of women victims. Recovery and reintegration interventions are continuously provided through coordination and collaboration with relevant institutions and agencies.

From the existing client list, Batis Center for Women observed that a substantial number of cases of trafficked women come from two provinces: Nueva Ecija and Bulacan. This prompted Batis Center to pin down areas or barangays (or village) in these two provinces with the goal of promoting safe migration and more importantly identifying victims of trafficking.

It was difficult to identify victims of trafficking considering that Batis Center just started its work in these areas and the process required time to yield results.

THE RESPONSE

Batis Center for Women utilized as a starting point its existing clients in Nueva Ecija and Bulacan to identify possible areas of high migration of women. The stories and cases of existing clients triggered Batis Center to study more closely the clients' areas of residence. In areas with high migration of women, there is a possibility that a number may have gone through illegal or misleading means of migrating. It is most likely too that the returned migrants may have experienced distressing situations while working overseas.

Batis Center thus thought of gaining access into these communities by working together with their clients. Victims of trafficking were identified through the personal social networks of the clients. In addition, the community organizer and/or the

social worker of Batis Center established relations with local government officials at the barangay, municipal, city and provincial levels as a means of identifying trafficked women whose experiences would otherwise remain invisible. By conducting outreach activities at the community level, Batis Center spotted women who may have not received or given any recovery and reintegration services.

THE PROCESS

Batis Center utilizes various strategies in identifying possible victims of trafficking. They make use of informal and non-direct approaches in looking for migrant women who had a distressing experience and had never been given any sort of assistance. Initially, the social worker or community organizer of Batis Center would consult its existing clients about other trafficked women living in their communities of origin. This also serves as identifying areas or villages where possible victims of trafficking are clustered.

After the initial identification of villages or areas, the community organizer then establishes working relations with the local government officials – from the village level to the provincial level (in the case of Nueva Ecija) to know more about the social and political situation of the areas. The personal social networks of Batis clients as well as the referral of the local government make the identification more efficient. Depending upon the gravity of trafficking incidences, the presence of the community organizer vis-à-vis Batis Center may sometimes be known by establishing a satellite office at the provincial level (in the case of Nueva Ecija) and at times be known through word of mouth (in the case of Bulacan).

Batis Center makes use of discreet means of getting the attention of the community to learn more about safe migration and to identify victims of trafficking. In both target areas, Batis Center conducted a community forum on migration where community leaders, local government officials, and community members especially women who have worked overseas were invited. Women planning to migrate also attended such seminar but based on experience when trafficking issues are discussed, the women participants tend to disclose people whom they have known to be victims of trafficking. Referrals are established and the Center's social worker traces these people.

The social worker then conducts home visits and introduces herself to the identified victim. Follow-up home visits are carried out to establish Batis' community organizer and social worker as credible supporters in the lives of the women. When rapport has been established, community organizers then share with the women the work of Batis Center and invite them to participate in self-improvement and self-assessment trainings as well as psychosocial and healing sessions.

Because a satellite office was not established in the case of Bulacan, the community organizer makes use of indigenous means of relating with people in the community oftentimes getting indications or information about the situation of women victims. Once the community organizer has the support of the village council, permission is granted to visit women and their families who have migrated and/or were trafficked. The community organizer utilizes "kwentuhan" or a Filipino social activity where people gather informally to share stories with each other.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH. *A social worker from Batis Center for Women conducts a community outreach to assist the family of a potential trafficked person.*

Within this social gathering, social workers make use of “patanong-tanong” or a Filipino way of interviewing people in an informal manner. Such methods of gathering information enable Batis Center to learn more about the situation of the women and extend their services based on the assessed needs of the women.

OUTCOMES

Around 30 victims of trafficking were identified in the two target areas. Batis Center for Women established a working relationship with the Department of Social Work and Development at three levels – municipal, city, and provincial – in target areas in Nueva Ecija to assist trafficked women.

The Provincial Social Work and Development Office allotted a desk in the provincial capitol to serve as office space of Batis Center.

A core group of women, between five to six members, were established in Nueva Ecija and Bulacan. It is an informal group that offers advice, guidance and psychosocial support to women in the community (whether trafficked victim or those planning to migrate). Members of the core group were chosen based on a skills assessment tool developed by the International Labour Organization. They were also provided with trainings on group work facilitation and gender sensitivity.

LESSONS LEARNED

The challenge is to raise the level of awareness about the migration and trafficking among the community by including advocacy work as another responsibility of members of the core group.

The roles and responsibilities of Batis Center and partner government agencies in providing service to trafficked victims need to be further clarified. As a duty-bearer, the assistance and resource of the local government should be tapped and that community members should be empowered to demand proper service. Batis Center’s work in the community is limited.

According to Batis Center, the project is sustainable because of the solidarity and support that Batis Center staff established at the beginning among the women.

Addressing Human Trafficking: A Corporate Social Responsibility

~ EMPLOYERS CONFEDERATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (ECOP)

How the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) advocated for the business sector to extend its corporate responsibility to trafficked women, a group that has not traditionally received help from the business sector.

THE EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

The Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) advocated for and engaged the business sector to meaningfully participate in the economic reintegration of returned victims of human trafficking by including in this sector in their corporate social responsibility agenda and by developing policies and services that will benefit or support the returned migrants.

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE²⁷

Relative poverty and lack of opportunities at home are the major causes of labor migration. Many trafficked women come home suffering from physical and psychological abuse and social and economic deprivation. Financial issues facing returnees can be multi-faceted and differ from one individual to another. Many trafficking victims may return without savings, or worse, they return with significant debt. This is exacerbated by the lack of employment opportunities available for returnees to sustain an income. Yet even if work is available, their debts along with living costs could outweigh their earnings. Most of the returnees find opportunities back at home rarely any better than when they originally migrated.



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. *Project beneficiaries and partners during the graduation rites for cosmetology trainees at Splash Foundation, a member of the ECOP CSR Committee, and one of the companies providing free skills training to Project beneficiaries.*

Economic reintegration is a particularly important aspect of the reintegration process. Considering that returning migrants have been economically active and oftentimes their families rely heavily on their remittances, being “economically crippled” would be equally traumatizing to them and to their families. Thus, for those opting to return to their respective communities, a local productive and remunerative employment or economic opportunity is imperative to address their economic and financial difficulties.

The business sector is a crucial partner in the economic reintegration of victims of human trafficking. However, there is still a lack of effort directed to mobilize the support of the business community because of a lack of knowledge on human trafficking and its adverse effect on the economy and society in general. Moreover, the business sector has also traditionally exercised its corporate social responsibility to provide services

²⁷ *Actions that Work: Engaging the Business Sector in the Economic Reintegration of Returned Victims of Human Trafficking Draft Report. (no date) Employers Confederation of the Philippines.*

to children, the elderly, education, medicine, and other similar sectors. The resources, services, and the technical expertise of the business sector can be tapped to provide economic assistance and empowerment to the returned victims.

THE RESPONSE

The Employers Confederation of the Philippines is a membership-based organization that seeks to enhance labor-management relations and ethical management practices as well as address socio-economic development issues through policy formulation and tripartite consultation at the regional, national, and international levels. The ECOP takes the lead in merging the interest of employees in matters pertaining to labor and socio-economic progress. It has about 560 individual companies, and 50 industry associations and chambers of commerce as its members.

One of its thrusts is to promote corporate social responsibility (CSR) – “a voluntary initiative of the business sector to engage in programs that will not only benefit the company and its employees but the entire community and with a larger impact.” As a genuine desire to promote CSR, ECOP established its Corporate Social Responsibility Department. This department encourages its members to recognize and play a role in community development and to demonstrate it in action. Initially, the department created the Child Friendly Committee in 2004 with the aim of advocating against and eliminating child labor in the country.

In 2008, ECOP in partnership with the International Labor Organization (ILO) expanded its CSR initiative by participating in the efforts of economically reintegrating the returned victims of human trafficking. The ECOP believes that the business or private sector could be actively involved in the vicious cycle of human trafficking by including in their CSR agenda programs or services that would counteract trafficking. It is equally important that the business or corporate sector understand that “human trafficking is not only a social issue but an economic concern as well.”²⁸ ECOP hopes to enlighten the business industry about the serious impact and social and economic cost of trafficking.

Under the ECOP and ILO partnership, ECOP aims to encourage their members and partners to be active participants in the reintegration process of the victims through an industry-matched capacity building training program and creation of other opportunities that would eventually help the victims get a job or livelihood. In addition, ECOP’s program hopes to serve at least 30 returned victims of trafficking through interventions in selected corporations or establishments.

THE PROCESS

As an initial step towards mobilizing the business sector’s support in the program, ECOP formed a Technical Working Group composed of 11 companies/business organizations (Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, CS Garments, Lopez Group, Central Azucarera don Pedro, Vitarich Corporation, Indophil, Sarmiento Foundation Inc., Splash Foundation Inc., Fujitsu Computer Products in the Philippines, Philippine Airline Foundation and Mabuhay Vinyl Corp) with the task of encouraging representatives from other corporations to be involved in the cause through various advocacy and orientation activities. In consultation with the ILO Human Trafficking Program Coordinator, the Technical Working Group and the CSR Department designed a human trafficking orientation and capacity

²⁸ *International Labour Office – HSF AP Technical Progress Report. Second Report. July 2008 – January 2009.*

building workshop for its members. Twenty-four middle-level managers and representatives of employer groups and business organizations participated in the said event. A set of recommendations on how to engage the business sector to support anti-human trafficking initiatives were generated.

Getting the commitment of ECOP members and partners is not an easy task. To maximize their effort and time, ECOP focused on tapping major businesses and corporations in eight areas identified by the ILO as sending provinces of trafficking: Bulacan, Cavite, Batangas, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, Zamboanga, and selected areas in the National Capital Region (NCR). ECOP also took advantage of working with the different local chambers of commerce to have a wider reach in these areas.

The result of the preliminary workshop was shared through a series of orientation workshops covering these areas. The major objective was to raise awareness and educate these business groups (and other groups such as the academe, faith-based organizations, and local government units) on the adverse effect of human trafficking. Accordingly, a number of these corporations have yet to understand the impact of trafficking not only at the business or economic aspect but also at the society or community level. The participants in the workshop were also led to examine the prospects of leveraging their networks, tools, mechanisms and systems of their CSR initiatives to provide opportunities in skills and income to victims of trafficking. Following this, ECOP's strategy was to solicit support and get the commitments from the participating corporations in the economic reintegration of the returnees.

In addition to workshops, ECOP acts as a conduit to bridge interventions for trafficked victims between the business sector and other stakeholders such as NGOs and government units. ECOP's pursuit to include the issue on trafficking as a corporate social responsibility and its networks allow other stakeholders to take advantage of the opportunity that may be offered by the businesses or establishments. In fact, ECOP facilitated the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between Splash Foundation Inc, the social arm of Splash Corporation, a beauty and cosmetics company, and three more ILO partners, Development Action for Women's Network (DAWN), BATIS, and the Overseas Workers' Welfare Association (OWWA) to provide a training program for victims of trafficking being assisted by the latter organizations.

Partners ensure that the victims are matched with either a skills training program or a job placement that the latter need and are committed to undertake through in-depth interviews. The interviews are conducted in separate occasions by staff from the non-government organization and from the corporation offering the service.

Initially, "matching" was done as corporations commit themselves to the cause and offer their services to future beneficiaries. Eventually, ECOP decided to map out available training programs and job placement services from corporations that attended the workshop using a survey form. The data will be used to create a catalogue of skills and livelihood training program as a reference. The data has yet to be completed.

OUTCOMES

A total of 220 participants (mostly CEOs, human resource managers, training managers, general managers and medical staff) from the business sector, academe and faith-based organizations from all target areas attended the workshop and learned about human trafficking. Commitments were solicited in the areas of: self-monitoring/regulation, corporate policies, in-plant education and orientation to prevent the occurrence of human trafficking, and inclusion of human trafficking programs in their CSR agenda. The following are some examples:²⁹

²⁹ *International Labour Office – HSF AP Technical Progress Report. Second Report. July 2008 – January 2009.*

The advocacy workshop with the Cavite Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) resulted in pledges of support and commitment to actively participate in the economic reintegration of victims of human trafficking through the provision of employment or livelihood opportunities. Garment manufacturers are among the companies that verbalized their commitment to extend their apprenticeship program to the returnees.

At the workshop with the Bulacan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Pascual Laboratories, a pharmaceutical company, also pledged to incorporate an orientation on human trafficking on the company's exit interview procedures. Even an academic institution vowed to include knowledge on human trafficking in their curriculum.

In Pangasinan, there was a rich discussion that hotels, restaurants, internet shops, and travel industries should be on guard against human trafficking. A machine shop and foundry operations industry also expressed its commitment to include human trafficking in its training program curriculum for new staff.

In Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, one of the significant outputs is the commitment of a City Councilor to set up a technical working group to elevate the issue of human trafficking at the city council and to set up funds for the benefit of returning migrants including victims of human trafficking.

In Batangas, a shipping company (Keppel Shipyard) committed to conduct an orientation on human trafficking among its staff as a preventive measure. The company also pledged to coordinate with relevant agencies when they spot potential victims of human trafficking within their vessels.

In Zamboanga, there was a substantive discussion on the area being labeled as "backdoor exit" and the need for a multi-sectoral partnership to counteract human trafficking activities. Local business groups (ECOP Zambasulta and the Zamboanga Chamber of Commerce and Industry) vowed to include anti human trafficking initiatives in the organization's CSR agenda.

As a conduit to economic reintegration of victims of trafficking, ECOP was able to facilitate the livelihood training of a total of 35 women coming from three organizations (ie DAWN, Batis and OWWA). These women were able to complete a six-day skills training on cosmetology with Splash Foundation, a corporate foundation of a beauty and cosmetics company.

Although the training program is free of charge, both parties strictly adhere to the conditions set in the memorandum of agreement such as complete attendance of the participants in all sessions and daily staff supervision from DAWN, Batis and OWWA. This is to ensure the full cooperation of the participants and to fully monitor the actual training.

Splash Foundation presents a certificate to the women after completion of the program as well as a start-up kit to help them continue applying the skills they gained. The graduates are also monitored after 2 months to get updates on how they made use of their knowledge in the program. In fact, participants from DAWN have already set up their own salon with support from DAWN administration.

According to some of the women, such program has not only given them hope to become economically productive but restored feelings of self-worth, trust in one's self and skills, and courage to face challenges and adversities.

LESSONS LEARNED

Documentation of the commitments and pledges of the business sector can motivate other corporations to take human trafficking as an important economic and social issue. It is equally important that commitments be transformed into action and tangible outputs. It is essential, thus, to allocate time to follow-up these pledges, monitor and record their activities.

Mobilizing the business community to help trafficking victims is an important step because they have the resources to provide various forms of assistance to trafficking victims. Interestingly, the growing concern with corporate social responsibility among corporations, should be properly tapped. Corporations should be directed towards groups like trafficked women that has not been a sector that is traditionally given attention by these companies.

Interest on the issue of human trafficking continues to be a challenge among the business sector. Time to educate them to maximize their resource is an important element in the process.

Other business issues such as the financial crisis and recession also pose a challenge to high-level management and this may affect the priorities of the business to implement CSR programs and services in general, and to trafficked women in particular.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The papers included in this book chronicle the emerging good practices of the partner organizations of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in running the ILO-HSF Project – Economic and Social Reintegration of Returned Victims of Trafficking in the Philippines. The Project sought to address the social and economic needs of victims/ survivors of trafficking upon their return.

Such assistance is important because these women had harrowing experiences abroad that have negatively affected the various dimensions of their lives – personal, social, psychological, emotional, mental and financial.

The ILO endeavored to address these issues and problems by supporting the economic and psychosocial programs of government and non-government organizations. It is from these programs where the emerging good practices of the partner organizations were drawn from.

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