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International Labour Organization

Decent Work for All

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The business that cares

By Dang Buenaventura, ECOP
and Mirriam Orig, DAWN

Women once victims of human trafficking are now earning to provide for the needs of their families. The Splash Foundation, a social arm of Splash Corporation and a member of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, sponsored cosmetology skills training for returned victims of trafficking. In December 2008, Splash Foundation in partnership with the ILO and Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) trained 15 victims of human trafficking. The women were trained on basic hair cutting, hair colouring, hot oil, manicure and pedicure, permanent hair winding and foot spa. Proud of what they accomplished, the women have renewed confidence. Many of the women now earn enough to provide for the needs of their families.

The training is an example of how the business community through its own resources, capacity and technical expertise can contribute to the economic empowerment of trafficked persons. Splash Foundation also has livelihood, health and educational programmes as well as other community service initiatives.

With this initial success, ECOP has pledged support to galvanize business community participation and prove that there are significant gains for companies in joining the anti-trafficking campaign. Commitment to an anti-trafficking policy includes right conduct by personnel, guaranteeing distinction for corporate image. It also creates a feeling of pride for staff members who understand that they work for a company that protects dignity.



Training on basic hair cutting and hair colouring for returned victims of trafficking
(Photo by DAWN / Splash Foundation)

Hope for trafficked women

By Rory Ilumin, Kanlungan

Rebuilding lives

Poverty pushes people to migrate. As labour recruitment becomes a lucrative industry, illegal recruitment increases. Women are the most vulnerable. They fall victim to prostitution or domestic slavery. Indeed, human trafficking has grown side by side with global labour mobility. Labour laws in most receiving countries have not been developed based on respect for the human and labour rights of foreign unskilled workers. Women who have experienced trafficking return to their countries with little hope to rebuild their lives.

Kanlungan, concerned for the welfare of women victims of trafficking, worked on their economic and social reintegration. Kanlungan provides counselling, skills training and education.

When Maria was recruited, she was promised a well-paid job as a domestic helper abroad. For four months of working for three different employers including her recruitment agency that treated her poorly, Maria did not receive a salary. She filed a case against her employers and recruitment agency.

Maria decided to start a business of buying and selling vegetables. Together with her spouse, Maria rented a stall in a public market. Kanlungan provided initial capital and guided Maria in starting her business. Maria only expected to earn P537 (\$10) per day, but was surprised to have a net income of P5,320 (\$110) just from the first week. Maria

continued to work hard together with her spouse and her profit margin grew. After a month of operation, she had a bank savings amounting to P 15,000 (\$310) plus the initial capital she had received to start her business. This encouraged the couple to work harder and invest to expand their business. Initially, they planned to buy a tricycle and a piece of land. They began saving for their children's education and for retirement. The second month of operation, they were able to buy a tricycle and had additional savings of P98,000 (\$2,040). Maria considers love for work, strong faith in God and great team work with her spouse as factors for the success of her business.

Traffic Corner

Traffic Corner, a convenience store in Angeles City, opened to the public in December 2008, selling grocery products and other items. Although the store may look like a typical sari-sari store, underneath the stacks of canned goods and various products are stories of bravery. Eight women, who founded the store, are survivors of trafficking.

In 2007, the ILO and Kanlungan Center Foundation, a non-government organization assisting overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), entered into a partnership to help empower women who had been victims of trafficking. Eight women were selected to participate in the Economic Reintegration

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Economic and Social Empowerment of Returned Victims of Trafficking in the Philippines and Thailand

A three-year ILO project funded by the Government of Japan and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (HSF), which contributes to reducing child trafficking and women exploitation in Asia through reintegration in countries of origin.

Traffic Corner

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and Support Systems for Victims/Survivors of Trafficking Programme. Primarily, the programme was designed to assist them in determining what to do, acquiring new skills, pursuing further education, starting a business or seeking employment. Other organizations, such as the Coalition against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific and the Ing Makababaying Aksyon (IMA) Foundation were inspired to participate in the programme. The local government through the barangay office provided financial assistance to cover rent and utilities. Aside from group and individual counselling, the women undertook Social Entrepreneurship and Character Formation training. They learned to develop a business plan and handle bookkeeping. To further succeed, they drafted and signed a constitution governing business operation and personal conduct.

It is not easy for the women to rebuild their lives. A visit to the Traffic Corner is testimony of how people can help themselves in working for a better future.

EDITORIAL

Return and reintegration? For trafficked victims, return and reintegration are challenging, yet are an area for which little policy intervention has been developed. Return and reintegration are especially hard for victims of trafficking who have experienced serious abuse. How can further steps be taken to help these persons?

The ILO's project for economic and social empowerment, funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (HSF), is a three year effort that provides assistance to returned victims of human trafficking and strengthens institutional capacities to address needs. In its work on human trafficking, the ILO advocates that economic empowerment is as important as social preparation, counselling and legal assistance to make sure that returnees are able to reassume work and family lives. Survivors can be helped through assistance in identifying career opportunities, developing skills and obtaining decent work to achieve economic independence and re-establish self worth.

Through the project, the ILO worked with government and non-government organizations to

provide 400 returnees with assistance. Returnees have been helped in healing from trauma and have been trained for gainful livelihood, with some having begun businesses.

The project, with partners, developed institutional capacity with systems, tools and models for reintegration and protection services. It supported an improved national referral mechanism for returnees, linked to a national recovery and reintegration Database. It also compiled case management manuals for case managers to enhance service delivery.

Alas, the project will end in April 2009. Fortunately, the European Community has awarded a further project that will build on lessons learned. The ILO thanks its project partners and primary stakeholders in making significant gains in tackling the return and reintegration of trafficked persons.

Linda Wirth
Director

Moving on from a shattered dream

By Coleen Auxemery, ILO

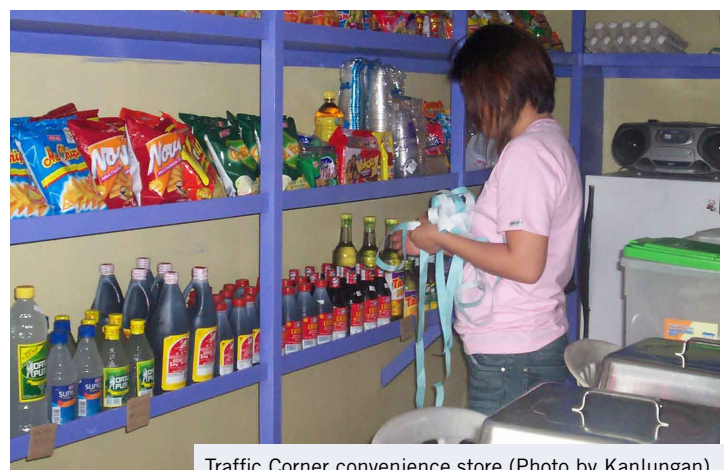
Angel wanted a more comfortable life for her large family of sisters and brothers. For this, she needed work, yet she could find no work in the Philippines. One day she went with her sister to a dance class as her sister was training to be an entertainer. Angel was advised to become an entertainer like her sister, and she learned that working in Japan was easy; she could save money and fulfill her dreams.

Angel was only 21 when she went to Japan. She was hired to dance in a club in Nagano Prefecture. But upon arrival, her passport was taken and the club did not respect her contract. Moreover, she never had a chance to dance. Her duties were to entertain customers, serving them, drinking with them, and going out on dates. She also had to clean the club. Food was limited, and writing letters and calling on the phone were prohibited. She lived with other Filipinas on the third floor of the club's building. Her employer, living on the ground floor, monitored their every movement. And at the end of her six month contract, for all her work, Angel received nothing. The club did not pay her as a

penalty because her sister, also an entertainer, had run away. Angel just wanted to get away, and she returned to the Philippines empty-handed. She did not report what had happened because she had no funds to file a case.

Angel's story is not unusual. With the same dreams and same hopes, many persons are lured; alas too many experience similar abuses. Some women have written their stories in a book published by DAWN, *Moving On, Stories of DAWN Women Survivors*.

The ILO views with serious concern the volume and complexity of trafficking in persons (TIP) worldwide. It recognizes that trafficking exists not only in the commercial sex industry, but also in other sectors including domestic service, work on plantations, in construction sites and sweatshops, and in begging and soliciting. In its commitment to promote decent work throughout the world, the ILO considers trafficking to be a form of forced and compulsory labour. Trafficking is among the worst forms of exploitation.



Traffic Corner convenience store (Photo by Kanlungan)

DAWN's multi-purpose cooperative

By Mirriam Orig, DAWN

The Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) in partnership with the ILO provided economic assistance and support to returned victims of trafficking. DAWN conducted career counselling and ran workshops and seminars on entrepreneurial skills and accounting. In June 2008, DAWN started a series of seminars on cooperatives. DAWN looked into the possibility of women starting a cooperative and pooling their resources. It engaged teachers from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) College of Cooperatives to teach the women about cooperatives. Eventually, the women set up their own cooperative.

The DAWN Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc. was officially registered with the Cooperative Development Authority in August 2008. Three months later, the cooperative signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the PUP College of Cooperatives for continuous training and assistance.

The multi-purpose cooperative provides business opportunity seminars to its members. Representatives from different companies are invited to introduce their products and services. The joint venture paved the way to provide commodity loans to its members and register with companies such as Avon, Natasha, and Boardwalk for business opportunities. Several members are now actively involved in marketing and selling products.



Business opportunity for members of the DAWN multi-purpose cooperative. The cooperative currently has 54 members which include 44 DAWN women, six DAWN staff, and four DAWN volunteers. (Photo by DAWN)

Swimming against the tide

By Andrea Luisa Anolin,
Batis Center for Women

Lani, a 36-year old family breadwinner; Karen, a 22-year old single mother; and Gemma, a 16-year old student influenced by her peers. These women have their own stories to tell on how they survived trafficking.

Just as a strong current can seem insurmountable, various challenges stand in the way of victims or survivors of trafficking in the process of rebuilding their lives. As Batis Center for Women (BCW) service providers help women like Lani, Karen and Gemma, they have witnessed that the efforts of these women can be likened to those of fishes swimming against the tide.

Although the current may be strong, BCW recognizes that it is possible to overcome challenges

and experiences of trafficking by turning the current into a steady flow of hope and new opportunities.

Through the ILO-HSF's economic and social reintegration project, BCW and Batis AWARE Women's Association created an enabling environment for women survivors of trafficking to overcome difficulties they faced. The ILO partners provided means to bring women closer to their goals in life by helping them become entrepreneurs and providing opportunities to learn skills or go back to school.

Through the project, Lani became an entrepreneur while Karen took vocational training and Gemma continued her education as a high school student. Lani, Karen and Gemma are not only survivors of trafficking; they are part of a stream of hope eager to teach others and put their pasts behind them.

Innovative tools to improve delivery of services

By April Ma-Anne Mendoza, DSWD

The ILO and its project partners, recognizing the need for a strengthened referral network, extended computer technology to manage trafficking cases. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) undertook to develop new tools.

The Referral System for the Recovery and Reintegration of Trafficked Persons bridges cross-border and in-country referral mechanisms for victim assistance. It discusses intervention from where it can be extended overseas to where services can be provided at the local level. It lists services for trafficked persons and provides guidance for service providers. The referral system is linked to the National Recovery and Reintegration Database

(NRRD) for trafficked persons which was also created by DSWD to log the profiles of trafficked victims. The database tracks the status of trafficking cases vis-à-vis services provided and generates reports such as Trafficking in Person (TIP) incidents per time period and place of commission (international, national, city and province). The report will include data by gender, age group, TIP served per agency, TIP incidents based on the act, means and purpose used by the trafficker and services provided to each victim.

The referral system was approved by the Inter-Agency Committee against Trafficking (IACAT) on 27 March 2009 and called upon all members and other stakeholders to utilize the system for the benefit of trafficked persons.

Coaching returned victims of trafficking

By Coleen Auxemery, ILO

Gainful livelihood is crucial for the complete reintegration of returned trafficked persons. The ILO developed a manual, "Coaching Returned Victims/Survivors of Trafficking toward Gainful Careers", to upgrade service providers' skills in helping returnees as part of a project on economic empowerment.

Career and occupational guidance is not as straightforward as determining whether returnees should opt for skills training or finding which job would best match their skills. Indeed, case managers have a delicate task. They must guide trafficked victims to overcome trauma and move forward. Recovery is a long process and service providers must follow the returnee at her own pace.

The service provider is both coach and guide showing trafficked persons the path to obtain decent work. Coach assists returnees through self-help and raised hope for a better future.

The training manual's six modules help service providers understand the profile of trafficked persons, the coaching process, entrepreneurship options for returnees, financial management and micro-finance. The manual is written to help coaches ensure that trafficked persons who consider re-migrating will do so based on well-informed decisions.

The ILO organized training workshops for service providers on the use of the manual. The first workshop was held in Subic on 11-13 February 2009, with further workshops planned. The manual is available from the ILO office.

OWWA welfare officers trained

By Ching Burgos, OWWA

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), in collaboration with the ILO, conducted two batches of special training on handling cases of trafficked and exploited migrant workers towards social and economic reintegration. Participants in the training included OWWA Case Managers, Welfare Officers and other staff from its regional offices. The first batch was held in Davao City with regional representatives from Bicol, Visayas and Mindanao. The second batch was held in Nasugbu, Batangas to cover Luzon and National Capital Region.

During the training, OWWA case managers enacted a victim-friendly procedure in handling cases of trafficking and severe maltreatment. Robert Larga, the ILO National Project Coordinator on human trafficking, provided a briefing on the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act while Father Nilo Tanalega of Ugat Foundation explained the value, process and techniques of stress debriefing and counselling.

At the end of the training, OWWA Administrator Carmelita Dimzon led a candle-lighting ceremony by participants as a symbol of commitment and dedication to provide enhanced recovery and reintegration services to victims of trafficking and severe maltreatment.



OWWA Case Officers providing airport assistance to migrant workers upon arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Photo by OWWA).

Philippine government helping victims of trafficking

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), in coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs recently repatriated 78 women migrant workers who were victims of trafficking and exploitation. Prior to their repatriation, OWWA sent a lawyer to represent them in filing a case against their employer. They were provided legal counselling upon return, before being referred to the National Labor and Relations Commission to help them file cases against their recruiter.

The Project Management Team (PMT) of the OWWA-ILO Project on Enhancing Case Management for and Provision of Enhanced Recovery and Reintegration Services to Trafficked and Severely Exploited Migrant Women monitored the cases. Several case conferences were conducted to determine reintegration plans based on individual needs and provide focused intervention

for recovery and reintegration.

OWWA Regional Welfare Offices are processing applications for training and livelihood assistance. Four women will start a poultry business in Batangas and six will open sari-sari stores in their local area. Twenty-four women applied for Skills-for-Employment Scholarships while another 22 women will take a course on Cosmetology sponsored by Splash Foundation. The rest were able to find local employment.

Many of the women indicated that re-deployment overseas was their main priority. They continue to believe that going overseas is the easiest way to earn more within a short period and pay off their debts. The PMT is helping these women through individual and group counselling to make well-informed decisions before leaving to work again overseas.

Testimony of hope

By Lara Javier, Batis AWARE

The Batis Association of Women in Action for Rights and Empowerment (AWARE) is a non-government organization formed by Filipino women who faced difficulties in their experiences abroad.

“There is always hope. This is what I always tell women we work with in our project with the ILO to empower returned trafficked victims,” said Babie Lloren, President of Batis-AWARE. “Just like other women I, too, had my share of shattered dreams and difficulties abroad. I lost hope and thought that life would never get better again. My outlook in life changed when I joined Batis-AWARE. Women like me were given hope to rise above difficult situations they faced. Our voices were heard. We learned about our rights and were given opportunities to rebuild our lives,” said Lloren.

Through the trafficking project, Batis-AWARE identified women in different communities who had suffered the same fate abroad. These women hoped for a better life for their families. “They were blamed for their negative experiences. They almost reached a point of losing their dignity,” said Lloren.

Lloren explained that her work was not that easy. “We have to be patient since we work with women having different personalities and experiences. At the end of the day, we are happy to help them by conducting workshops, assisting in preparation of business plans or simply by listening to their stories. Their success in life becomes our successes, too.”

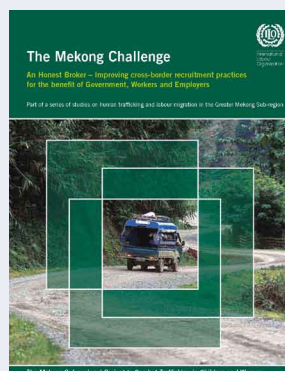
Through the ILO partnership, Batis AWARE became more knowledgeable about migration issues. “We gained knowledge and skills. Although the primary goal of the project was to empower victims of trafficking, the project also empowered us as implementers. Our sense of empowerment was put into reality,” concluded Lloren.

MUST READS



Meeting the challenge - proven practices for human trafficking prevention in the greater Mekong sub-region

Funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, this publication represents a fresh and important angle from which to examine and fight human trafficking.



The Mekong challenge - An honest broker improving cross-border recruitment practices for the benefit of government, workers and employers

Part of a series of studies on human trafficking and labour migration to examine laws and policies on migrant recruitment and to analyze experiences of both formal and informal migrants in the greater Mekong sub-region.