

2016 Global Health Case Competition

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Child and Adolescent Sex Trafficking in Thailand

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All characters and plots described within the case are considered fictional and bear no direct reflection of existing organizations or individuals. The case topic, however, is a true representation of circumstances in Thailand. The case scenario is complex and does not necessarily have an ideal solution, thus encouraging a discerning balance of creativity and knowledge. Provided are informative facts and figures within the case and appendices to help teams create a proposal. The data provided are derived from independent sources, may have been adapted for use in this case, and are clearly cited allowing teams to verify or contest them within their recommendations, if necessary. Teams are responsible for justifying the accuracy and validity of all data and calculations that are used in their presentations, as well as defending their assertions during judging.

Opening Scenario

You have recently been hired as a consultant for United Nations of Inter-Agency Project (UNIAP), a project established in 2000 to facilitate a stronger, more coordinated response to human trafficking in Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand. Your goal is to reduce child and adolescent sex trafficking in Thailand. While visiting Bangkok to meet with local NGOs and government agencies to determine what is driving human trafficking, you learn that sex trafficking among refugees in Thailand is a widespread problem, regardless of age and nationality.

You meet Thanda, a 13-year-old girl from Myanmar, who was recently rescued from sex trafficking and is now housed and cared for by a local non-profit (Thrive Rescue Home) outside Bangkok. Thanda is the oldest girl in a family with eight children. Her family fled to Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand five years ago due to political unrest in Myanmar and then struggled to support themselves. In an effort to increase the family income two years ago, Thanda's parents contacted a friend living in Bangkok that agreed to find Thanda work in the city. In the agreement, the money Thanda earned would be sent back to her family. Upon arriving in Bangkok, Thanda quickly discovered that the proposed job was actually in a brothel, and she became entangled in the sex industry. Six months ago she was discovered and rescued by Thrive Rescue Home. Since arriving at the Thrive Home in Pattaya, Thailand, she has enrolled in school, received medical care, and is in process of becoming a Thai citizen.

Introduction

Human trafficking is defined by the United Nations as the "forced, coerced, fraudulent, or deceitful entry into labor, including prostitution, entry by abduction, or entry into such work under age 18 years". (1) Sex trafficking is human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and it can pose significant health risks to individuals, including sexually transmitted infections (especially HIV), future infertility, violence, suicide, and familial alienation. Trafficked individuals also have decreased access to health care, including contraception and other sexual health services, which can lead to chronic medical problems or death. (2)

Approximately 200,000-250,000 women and children are trafficked in Southeast Asia every year, making sex trafficking a significant public health and human rights concern in this region. Thailand is often the destination country for trafficked individuals; Bangkok and Chiang Mai draw from communities in rural Thailand and from surrounding countries, including Myanmar, southern China, Cambodia, and Laos. (3) Thai individuals are also trafficked to wealthier countries, including Japan, China, the Middle East, and Europe. Vulnerability factors for trafficking include poverty, lack of education and employment, statelessness, or dysfunctional families. (4) Sex tourism, the organization of vacations with the purpose of taking advantage of the lack of restrictions imposed on prostitution and other sexual activities by some foreign countries, is one barrier to improving trafficking in this region, and poor children remain vulnerable to these predators.(5) A multi-pronged approach is needed to combat human trafficking in this region.

Thailand at a Glance

According to 2013 World Bank data (13)

Population	67.01 million
Population density	131 per square kilometer
Life expectancy	74.19 years
Fertility rate	1.4
Infant mortality rate (2014)	11/1,000 live births
Gross domestic product	387.3 billion USD
GDP per capita	5, 778.98 USD
Living below national poverty line	12.6%
Primary school enrollment	96%
Children 7-14 at work (2006)	15.1%
Male children at work (2006)	15.7%
Female children at work (2006)	14.4%
International Tourism Receipts	46 billion USD
GINI coefficient (2012)	39.3
Corruption Perceptions Score	38 (11)
Undocumented migrant workers	3 million (12)

Team Assignment

While there have been attempts by the government and other NGOs to reduce sex trafficking in Thailand, they are often unsuccessful for various reasons. There are cultural, practical, political, and economic considerations that must be addressed for combating human trafficking, specifically of children and adolescents. As the newly hired consultant for UNIAP in Bangkok, you have been tasked with submitting a proposal for the development and implementation of a program that is effective, culturally appropriate, and feasible. It may include interventions incorporating educational, policy, social, and/or other strategies that involve important stakeholders from local government, the community, NGOs, and other partners.

The time frame for the program to develop and implement an effective sex trafficking intervention is over a period of five years. The maximum amount you are permitted to request is \$2,000,000 USD for the duration of the program. To receive funding, your team will have to present the proposal to a panel of local and global experts on February 20, 2016. You will need to justify your decisions concerning the development of your final strategies and be prepared to explain the details of your plans.

Important Considerations

- Who is your target population?
- Who are the stakeholders and decision makers?
- Who will you develop partnerships with (other NGOs, local government, etc.) to leverage resources and expertise?
- How and where (urban and/or rural) will you test your strategies?
- How will you monitor and evaluate your project?
- Are the proposed strategies feasible, effective and culturally appropriate?
- For your intervention program, what are the:
 - Objectives?
 - Strategies?
 - Settings?
 - Budget?
 - Timeline?
 - Sustainability?
- What impact will this implementation have at the individual, family, community, and national level?
- Are there any long-term or short-term economic consequences?
- Can a socio-ecologic framework be used in assessing this problem and how will this be accomplished?

Case Background

Bangkok is the capital city of Thailand, a country located in Southeast Asia bordered by Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia. Located in the southern portion of Thailand, Bangkok covers 606 square miles. (6) According to the latest population estimates, there are 9.27 million people living in Bangkok making it the most populous city in Thailand. (7) Because of its tropical beaches, opulent royal palaces, ancient ruins, and ornate temples, Thailand is a popular tourism destination. As a relatively inexpensive destination in the region, in 2011, more than 19 million visitors spent a night in there. (8) Although the official language is Thai, English is spoken throughout the country.

Situation/Problem

According to the U.S. Department of State, Thailand is a source, destination, and transit country for human trafficking of men, women and children into sex and labor exploitation. Migrants from

neighboring countries (Myanmar, Laos, Burma, and Cambodia) fleeing poverty or military repression are often trafficked into Thailand and many Thai nationals are trafficked to wealthier countries in Northeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. (9) While the systems in place trafficking those into Thailand are typically smaller, the networks enslaving Thai nationals abroad tend to be larger and more organized. Victims experience the withholding of travel documents, registration cards and work permits in addition to forced labor. (10) While children typically are forced into selling flowers, begging on the streets or working in domestic service, men are exploited in forced labor for commercial fishing, low-end garment production, factory work, and domestic service. Women and girls are primarily victims of the sex tourism industry in Thailand and forced to work in karaoke or massage parlors to satisfy the demand for commercial sex. Thailand has taken some first steps to addressing the issue. It enacted the 2008 anti-trafficking law that criminalizes trafficking and developed the second six-year National Policy Strategy on Human Trafficking from 2011-2016. Yet, local police corruption and biases against migrant workers continue to be a problem. (5)

Who is being trafficked and why

The majority of individuals trafficked to Thailand come from Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Southern China, and are subjected to forced or bonded labor and commercial sexual exploitation. The nature of labor migration into Thailand creates vulnerabilities for those migrant workers without documentation, Thai language skills, or understanding of their rights under Thai law. Migrants and refugees who are denied citizenship are at a high risk of being trafficked due to their statelessness. Ethnic Thais are trafficked from the relatively poor areas of Chiang Rai, Phayao and Nong Khai to urban and tourist areas or internationally. Urban and rural Thai women are often sent to work in sex and domestic industries in many regions of the world, particularly Malaysia, Japan, Bahrain, Australia, United States of America, Canada, South Africa and Germany. This international trafficking is sometimes under the guise of a seemingly legal labor contract that is not honored. Migrants in Thailand, especially those in fishing industry, are vulnerable to trafficking, abuse, and exploitation. Thai authorities regularly deny landing of boats carrying ethnic Rohingya from Myanmar, while those arriving ashore are arrested and sent to immigration detention. (10, 12)

The causes of trafficking are multifaceted. They include poverty, lack of education, opportunities, awareness, and employment.

Current Strategies

One of Thailand's responses to this issue is to focus on the source of demand for trafficked services, such as the clients of underage sex workers. Thailand was the first country in the region to pass laws that impose greater penalties on customers than on sellers for involvement in commercial sex with underage partners. Application of the law has been light, but it is the basis for future enforcement. A local NGO (Development and Education Program for Daughters

& Communities (DEPDC)) aims to prevent women and children from being forced into the illegal sex trade or child labor. DEPDC informs parents about the dangers of sex trade, offering information about HIV/AIDS, brothel conditions, legal penalties, and other potential dangers in engaging in illegal sex trade. (14)

The Royal Thai Government through various organizations has created and supported several campaigns through radio, television, print, and electronic media to raise awareness about sex trafficking, and has called for public cooperation in the fight against human trafficking. (15)

Local NGOs, including Not For Sale and Thrive Rescue Home have constructed children's homes, which offer shelter and long-term housing for youth rescued from exploitation. There they provide safety, meals and medical care. The organization Not For Sale also helps the children legally obtain formal identification documents, providing them access to social services and increased opportunities for future employment. (16)

Current Policy:

Policy/Prosecution/Protection/Prevention/Partnership

The 5Ps Approach

The government of Thailand is actively working to reduce the number of human trafficking victims and to help victims that have been rescued. The approach of the government can be referred to as the 5Ps approach. This includes policy and political commitment, prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership. (17)

Policy and Political Commitment

The government of Thailand passed the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act B.E. 2551 in 2008. The key elements of the Act are: 1) heavier penalties on all offenders involved in human trafficking, 2) victims may claim compensation from the offenders for any damages caused by human trafficking, and 3) victims will be provided with shelter and other necessities including physical, psycho-social, legal, educational and healthcare assistance. (18) The Act draws funds from the government, international aid, and resources confiscated from traffickers. The law was amended in March 2015 to include harsher penalties on human traffickers including four years to life imprisonment, fines up to 400,000 baht (\$13,333 USD), and protection for whistleblowers. (19) In 2014, the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) renewed their efforts to fight human trafficking. Their plan includes the following: 1) The NCPO has joined the areas of migrant workers and human trafficking, since there is a risk of workers being trafficked. 2) For illegal migrant workers, the NCPO initiated a policy to legalize illegal migrant workers who have been working in Thailand. (17)

Prevention

The government is actively involved in prevention activities in Thailand and has increased funding in that area. Three acts have been created to protect workers: Labor Protection Act,

Employment and Job Seeker Protection Act, and Alien Employment Act. (17) Additionally, Thailand cooperates with bordering countries in order to reduce the illegal immigration of workers in order to protect them from forced labor and human trafficking.

Protection

The Ministry of Social Development and Human Securities (MSDHS) under the Royal Thai Government (RTG) shelters victims of human trafficking, and allows them to work temporarily or provides funding for their repatriation. (19) The RTG also provides physical, psychosocial, legal, educational, and health care support. (3) In 2013, the MSDHS helped 681 victims of human trafficking located in government shelters, 305 of them being Thai while the rest were from other countries. (9)

Prosecution

Improvements have been made in the area of human trafficking cases. The Ministry of Justice is working on using electronic locators for suspects in order to prevent them from fleeing, and they are working on allowing remote testimonies for victims that wish to return to their home countries. (17) The Ministry of Justice has also worked on expediting cases of human trafficking, so that it no longer takes more than three years to get a prosecution. (17) The government is able to temporarily stop operations and suspend local business licenses if they are discovered to be involved in human trafficking. (19)

Partnership

In 2014, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs convened with local NGOs and other government agencies to discuss how to increase their cooperation and coordination in the area of human trafficking. (17) The RTG has also signed anti-trafficking memoranda of understanding with Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam with the purpose being to increase cooperation in the registration and protection of migrant workers. (5) A meeting was held in August of 2014 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to update U.S. Embassy officials on recent developments in the area of human trafficking. The Thai organizations present at the meeting included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Labor, Royal Thai Police, Department of Special Investigation, Department of Fishery, and Marine Department. (17)

Summary of Team Assignment

Trafficking occurs due to a variety of factors, and a multipronged approach is needed to address the cultural, practical, political, and economic considerations to combat human trafficking of children and adolescents. UNIAP has the opportunity to address the issue of human trafficking in Thailand through an intervention of your choice. You have a budget of up to \$2,000,000 USD to be used over five years. You may work with other partners (NGOs, universities, local governments, etc.). Your team must present its proposed strategies to combat sex trafficking in Thailand in a presentation format on February 20, 2016.

To receive the funding, your team will have to present the proposal to a panel of local and global experts selected by the human trafficking initiative. You will need to be able to justify the

decisions you make towards the development of your final strategies and be prepared to explain details of your choices.

Important Considerations

- Choice of Target Population: Who is the target population and why did the team choose to target them?
- Social Benefit/Social Return on Investment: Impact on health outcomes, economic improvement, and productivity at the personal, family, and community levels
- Feasibility: How well do the proposed strategies utilize and/or improve capacity of current health systems, training/education required to implement plan, what provisions for education, product, or service delivery?
- Economic Impact: Direct costs associated with proposed strategies; transportation and/or opportunity costs to stakeholders
- Cultural Acceptability: Cultural perceptions of the proposed strategies and the extent to which they have taken in local cultural context and technologies
- Legal and Ethical Issues: Strategies for how these will be addressed, if applicable
- Scalability: Application of recommendation to other communities or more extensive coverage beyond Thailand, provided there is evidence of success
- Sustainability: Plans for how the program will proceed once funding ends
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Comparison of baseline data, to data collected during and after proposed intervention(s) and how this information will be used to inform program improvements and demonstrate impact
- Risk Identification & Mitigation Strategies: Potential challenges/risks associated with recommendation(s) and how those will be addressed
- Innovation: Are there aspects of the proposal which could be considered particularly innovative or creative; novel application of existing technologies or new products/services proposed?
- What are your specific plans to address:
 1. Prevention/education
 2. Health of sex workers/health consequences
 3. Safe sex practices
 4. Violence/mental health/suicide prevention
 5. Repatriation
 6. Sex tourism
 7. Partnership with surrounding countries

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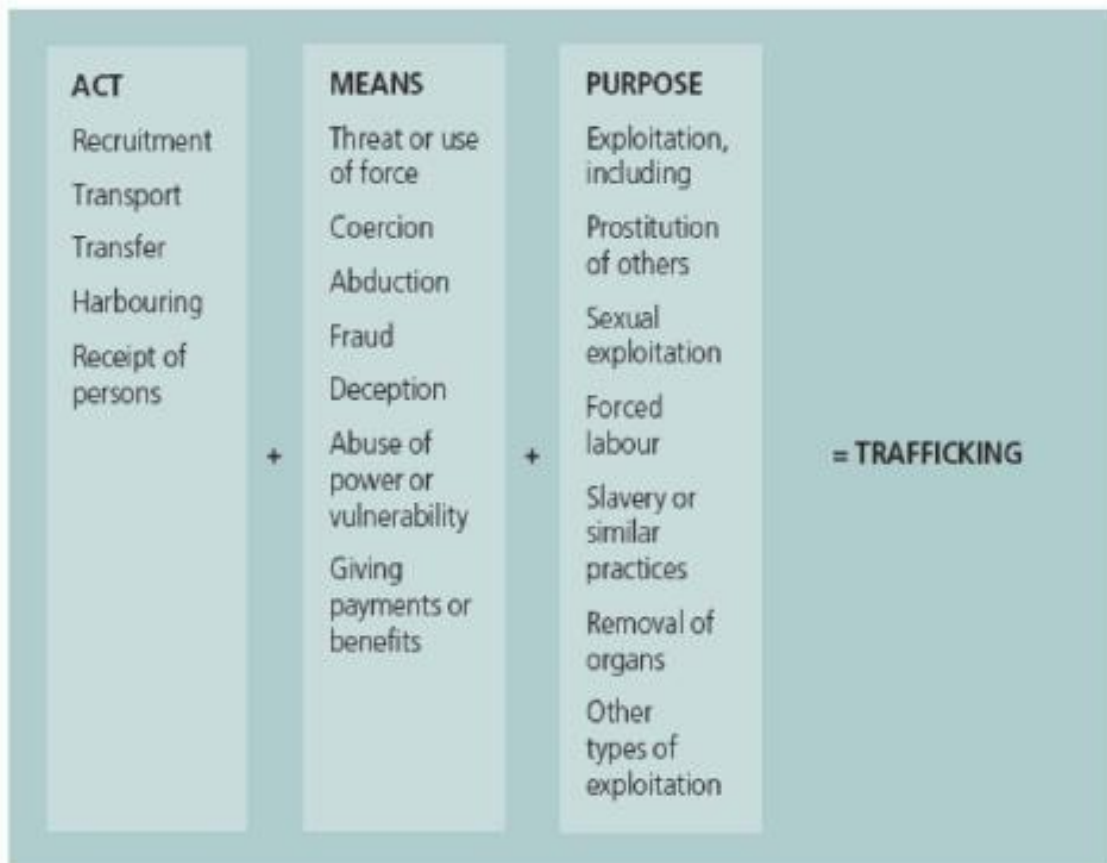
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Appendices

Appendix A

UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking. <https://www.youtube.com/user/UNIAPasia> . Includes Human Trafficking 101 and the 2012 Traffic Jam Human Trafficking Video Competition

Appendix B



Appendix D

