



## ADDRESSING THE RISKS AND NEEDS OF VULNERABLE MIGRANTS IN THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION AND MALAYSIA

IOM, with the support of the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, is engaged in a four year strategy and programme of action which brings together capacity building, awareness raising, direct assistance and regional cooperation aimed at contributing to the protection and well-being of vulnerable cross-border migrants in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and Malaysia.

The project targets a region with highly dynamic migration patterns. Incorporating large flows of irregular and mixed migration, the project specifically concerns the protection of highly vulnerable cross-border migrants including victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, stranded migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

IOM uses a four pronged approach to provide support to the programme beneficiaries, comprised of: capacity building; awareness raising; direct assistance; and regional cooperation activities. Messaging on safe migration along with awareness raising campaigns regarding new migration policies and regulations are regularly conducted in migrant communities. Direct support is offered directly or in close collaboration with the programme partners in the form of case management, health and psycho-social support, assisted voluntary return and community-based reintegration services as well as through dedicated funds to support extremely vulnerable migrants identified by the referral

networks established and strengthened by the programme.

IOM is also helping to build the capacity of partner governments to provide sustainable protection for the population, including direct assistance to vulnerable migrants nationally and throughout the GMS. Finally, a central component of the strategy to support vulnerable migrants in the GMS and Malaysia is the promotion of bilateral and multi-lateral dialogue on joint migration issues with a specific focus on promoting enhanced protection for the most vulnerable migrants.

### Key Facts

**Donor:** Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, U.S. Department of State

**Duration:** 2010-2014

**Project Partners:** Governments of Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam; NGOs/CBOs

**Target Beneficiaries:** Vulnerable migrants including internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, trafficked women, men and children for sexual exploitation and/or forced labour

**Geographical Coverage:** Burma/ Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam



*In Viet Nam, returned VoTS receive direct assistance and instruction in farming. © IOM 2014*



*Project staff supervise 'Art Card' activity at the Phang Nga Shelter for Women and Children, Thailand. © IOM 2014*



*Anti-trafficking in persons training in Sabah, Malaysia. © IOM 2014*

## Highlights of Achievements in 2013 (Phase III)

### **OUTCOME 1: Capacity Building – Improved capacity of governments in the GMS and Malaysia to provide protection, including direct assistance, to vulnerable cross-border migrants.**

- In Lao PDR, 94% of government officials who participated in the Training of Trainers (ToT) improved their knowledge on safe migration and migrant rights;
- A total of 90 police officers were trained on migrant protection and five trainings/workshops were delivered to government social workers and civil society members on Return and Reintegration practices for Victims of Trafficking (VoTs) in Myanmar;
- A total of 29 labour enforcement officers enhanced their knowledge on protection of VoTs, through training on anti-trafficking in persons organized in Sabah, Malaysia;
- A total of 20 training workshops on migrant rights protection conducted for members of referral networks in three provinces in Thailand; a total of 827 members of civil society and government agencies were trained;
- A community-based reintegration model in Viet Nam strengthened and expanded to a new province, as well as three self-help groups set up to provide support for 30 victims, including 20 women and 10 men trafficked internally for labour exploitation. All 30 victims received training on life-skills. In addition, 30 provincial officers in relevant agencies received training on reintegration support for VoTs and on facilitation skills for self-help groups.

### **OUTCOME 2: Awareness Raising – Migrants demonstrate increased knowledge about the risks of un-safe migration and trafficking and are more willing to assert their rights.**

- In Thailand, 88,567 migrants received information on their rights in their native language;
- In Myanmar, 15,000 brochures on safe migration were distributed to migrants at the border crossing point of Myawaddy-Mae Sot and 75 posters were disseminated along the way;
- In Lao PDR, an information campaign on the risks of trafficking was organized for passport applicants in close cooperation with the Consular Department of the MFA.

### **OUTCOME 3: Direct Assistance – Extremely vulnerable migrants, including victims of trafficking, receive timely and effective support through national and cross-border response mechanisms.**

- In Thailand, 525 detainees in the Kanchanaburi Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) received weekly medical screening;
- In Thailand, 110 migrants received legal assistance in the form of counselling and witness preparation; 367 Rohingya detained in the Phang Nga and Ranong IDCs received support in the form of Non-Food Items (NFIs) and medical assistance;
- 64 Myanmar VoTs successfully returned to their villages;
- 92 Cambodian men trafficked into fishing boats provided with access to quality direct assistance services;
- 125 Lao PDR VoTs repatriated from Thailand and received country support; 80 former victims received follow up visits;
- In Vietnam, 70 VoTs received direct assistance in the form of cash grant, purchase of breeds or small loan to establish a business. 56 of them received psychological support, awareness raising and capacity building through their participation in self-help groups and different trainings.

### **OUTCOME 4: Regional Cooperation – Reinforced actions at the bilateral and regional levels to increase synergies, pool expertise and facilitate cross-border cooperation for the protection of extremely vulnerable migrants.**

- 2 Case Management meetings were conducted;
- Technical support provided towards a bilateral meeting on the negotiation of the bilateral MOU on Cooperation of Combating Trafficking in persons between Malaysia and Thailand;
- One bilateral meeting to support the regularization process of Burmese migrants in Thailand supported.

## From Reducing Risks to Increasing Resilience in 2014 (Phase IV)

Building on the project achievements of the first three years of implementation, Phase IV of this regional project proposes a two-pronged approach to further strengthen support to extremely vulnerable migrants through: 1) Scaling up operations and moving them upstream by encouraging evidence-based policy and advocacy at the national level and promoting dialogue among governments in the region on the issues of vulnerable migrants identification and support; 2) Assessing emerging migration trends that have a serious impact on migrants vulnerabilities.

Phase IV will focus on ensuring that the cohesiveness and coordination of project activities at the regional level, specifically cross-border issues of common concern, is well in place and contribute to the sustainability of the action. In FY 14, IOM will implement the following new activities: 1) Refine a model of assistance to growing numbers of Male VoTs in the GMS; 2) Conduct a pilot activity addressing the new migration challenges between the Northern GMS countries and China; 3) Undertake a regional assessment of the changing vulnerabilities of migrants in the GMS and Malaysia.