Countering Trafficking in Persons

Winrock International counters trafficking in persons (TIP) by engaging survivors, communities, officials, and businesses to address systemic gaps and detect TIP; connect survivors and at-risk groups to support; strengthen systems to hold traffickers to account; and address systemic gaps that increase risk. Winrock works to improve data, policies, and practices and tackle criminal exploitation.

METHODOLOGIES

Trafficking in persons is a profitable criminal activity that uses force, fraud, psychological coercion, debt bondage, and/or violence to control and exploit victims for financial gain or other benefits. For over three decades, Winrock International has led efforts globally to combat TIP in all its forms, including forced labor, sex trafficking, the worst forms of child labor, child marriage, and other exploitative practices. Winrock addresses TIP using:

Survivor-informed and community-led programming.
Winrock works with survivors, local leaders, and community groups to deliver trauma-informed, culturally-appropriate, and sustainable protective and preventative services. Winrock's approach empowers survivors and at-risk groups with the information and skills they need to safeguard their rights, access services, improve livelihoods, reintegrate with family, or migrate safely. Winrock also addresses the impacts of climate change on vulnerability to TIP and integrates protective and preventative measures within education, social protection, and legal aid systems.

Systemic improvements across the "4 Ps."
Decades of implementation using the 4P framework — Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership — have allowed Winrock to develop a body of evidence for effective counter-TIP interventions. Winrock's activities strengthen anti-trafficking actors and help them adapt proven approaches as well as innovate.

Improved evidence and measurement of counter-TIP interventions.
Winrock enhances the quality of data and research related counter-TIP responses and harmonizes their measurement. Winrock uses the knowledge gained from project implementation, research and evaluations to validate theories of change underlining counter-TIP programming and to continually adapt our approach.

Reduced stakeholder fragmentation.
Winrock recognizes that achieving and sustaining positive development outcomes depend on the interconnectedness of different actors and the incentives that guide them. Winrock strengthens relationships and creates shared value among government, civil society, and private sector actors to expand good practices and deliver demonstrable results. By elevating safe labor recruitment and management practices, Winrock's counter-trafficking work achieves greater reach and longer-term impact.

CASE STUDIES

Improving trauma care, access to jobs, and community support for survivors

The Swiss Development Corporation-funded Ashshash project in Bangladesh provides counselling services and skills training to survivors to support healthy reintegration into their community. All participants in the program have reported an improvement in their well-being, increased confidence, and an average increased income of 114 percent. In addition to direct service delivery, the project works with private and public institutions to improve both quality of and access to services, including psychosocial counselling, healthcare, financial services, and business development support.

Addressing barriers to enforcing laws on TIP, forced and child labor

The USDOL-funded Attaining Lasting Change for Better Enforcement of Labor and Criminal Law to Address Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking (ATLAS) project works in Thailand, Paraguay, Liberia, and Argentina to strengthen ability of governments to address child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking, primarily through improved law enforcement and coordination. Through activities tailored to local needs, the project has supported 28 government agencies, trained more than 3,000 individuals, and developed 16 resources for use by law enforcement and social protection agencies, resulting in increased knowledge on child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking, expanded law enforcement actions, improved institutional guidance and operating frameworks, enhanced engagement with local communities, and increased coordination among actors. In Liberia, ATLAS successfully advocated for approval of the Hazardous and Light Work Lists in Liberia and contributed to a new human trafficking law.

Promoting effective, victim-centered investigation and prosecution of TIP

The USAID Fight Slavery and Trafficking in Persons (FSTIP) project in Bangladesh promotes justice for TIP survivors by expediting prosecution and facilitating appropriate adjudication of TIP cases. FSTIP established five task force committees to improve prosecution of TIP cases through Anti-Human Trafficking Tribunals. The task force committees gather and share detailed information on TIP cases, prepare witnesses for testimonies, provide victims with legal aid, identify and address threats from perpetrators, and visit police stations to follow up on TIP cases that were filed but not investigated. Additionally, FSTIP collaborated with Judicial Administration Training Institute to conduct training for judges to provide them with a comprehensive orientation on laws, rules, the adjudication process, and the roles of judges in expediting the prosecution process.

Specialized tools and research for evidence-based implementation

The USAID Asia CTIP project focuses on transnational and regional challenges to combat TIP by strengthening learning around TIP; improving cooperation between source, transit, and destination countries; and reducing incentives for TIP through private sector engagement. The project has published over 90 learning products to provide an evidence base for effective counter-trafficking efforts, as well as monitoring, evaluation, and learning in CTIP. Three prosecution manuals for Bangladesh and Thailand were drafted and shared, and 48 lawyers were trained in Bangladesh on cross-border litigation of TIP cases. Each year, the project organizes an Evidence to Action conference to disseminate research findings, convene actors to share emerging trends, and promote greater evidence uptake among practitioners. The project has brokered partnerships with the private sector, including worker voice initiatives in Cambodian factories and research on labor abuses in the tuna fishing supply chain.

Sector-specific responses to improve worker conditions and tackle forced labor

In Thailand, the USAID Thailand CTIP activity has collaborated with stakeholders in the fishing, rubber, and sugarcane sectors to conduct research and introduce solutions that reduce vulnerabilities to TIP and forced labor. The activity worked with Fairagora to adapt the Verifk8 application, a supply chain monitoring tool, by integrating fair labor metrics aligned with Bonsucro standards. The app allows workers to upload documents, report grievances, and form a labor contract with their employers. The activity also conducted research into forced labor and TIP in the rubber industry to identify factors that contribute to worker vulnerability. In the fishing sector, USAID Thailand CTIP collaborated with NGOs and government agencies to set up a service provision and response protocol and distributed information about it in Burmese, Khmer, and Thai. This led to improved responses to worker grievances.

Technology and innovation to reduce vulnerability and increase access to services

The USAID Asia CTIP project is partnering with Migrasia Global Solutions to equip migrant worker activists who support their peers online with protective information, referral contacts, and to gather evidence on charged by recruitment agencies. This work has led to successful reimbursements to migrant workers of $17,300 in 2022 and led to several arrests. In Uzbekistan, Winrock initiated the Salom Migrant Telegram bot in cooperation with the Uzbekistan Sub-Commission on CTIP. The platform acts as a virtual consultant on migration and TIP, helping citizens understand rights and rules when seeking and performing work abroad. Within days of its launch in 2021, the chatbot was used to report several cases of TIP in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. In one year, Salom Migrant has been accessed more than 300,000 times. In the seafood sector, USAID Thailand CTIP piloted the Connectivity at Sea app that allows two-way communication between workers and authorities in case of abuses, as well as to improve quality of life aboard the vessels.

Child-centered and age-appropriate care

The USDOS Jamaica-U.S. Child Protection Compact partnered with Jamaica's Child Protection and Family Services Agency to develop a tiered model of residential care tailored to unique needs of the child. Combined with the TIP-specific minimum standards of care and case management trainings, the project team increased access to shelter for trafficked children. In addition, foster care families received specialized training on the unique needs of child TIP survivors, following a family-first model.