



USAID
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QUALITY AND RIGOR IN TIP RESEARCH IN THE MEKONG REGION.

ASSESSING THE EVIDENCE BASE

2008-2018
COUNTER-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS
RESEARCH REVIEW



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2019

ABOUT USAID ASIA COUNTER TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (USAID ASIA CTIP)

A five-year (2016-2021) program, USAID Asia CTIP is a regional initiative that aims to reduce human trafficking in Asia through activities that foster cross-border coordination and consolidated action by governments, civil society and business; develop opportunities for private sector leadership; and improve understanding of the nature and patterns of human trafficking, especially in the agriculture, fishing, domestic work and construction sectors.

This research review, conducted by NEXUS Institute, is part of a series of learning publications developed under USAID Asia CTIP by Winrock and implementing partners NEXUS Institute, Liberty Shared and Resonance.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

There is increasing recognition in the counter-trafficking in persons (CTIP) community that our knowledge of trafficking in persons (TIP) must be informed and driven by robust evidence.² Effective programming and policymaking requires combining scientific evidence (that is, TIP research) with other forms of evidence including CTIP program data (that is, M&E data, assessments, evaluations, case management data, baseline surveys and so on), all of which must be rigorous and of high quality. It is only with technically robust and ethical evidence that we can build our body of knowledge and understanding of TIP and effective CTIP interventions. Weak or inaccurate research and evidence, including sensationalistic and emotionally-charged representations and narratives, have the potential to distort our understanding of TIP and our ability to effectively design and implement CTIP interventions. This research review explores the nature and quality of TIP research and evidence in five of the countries of the Mekong region (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) and makes recommendations for how to improve future TIP research and data collection and, by extension, the evidence base for CTIP programming and policy.³ This review is intended to inform the USAID Asia CTIP project and the wider CTIP community in the Mekong region and beyond.

¹ Data collection, coding and preliminary analysis were conducted by Jarrett Davis, Mike Dottridge, Pattarin Wimolpitayarat, Rebecca Surtees and Laura S. Johnson. The research review was reviewed internally by NEXUS Institute and the USAID Asia CTIP team as well as USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID/RDMA). Thanks are due to external peer reviewers: Sebastian Boll (UN-ACT Regional Management Office, Bangkok); Fred Carden (Using Evidence Inc., Canada); Benjamin Harkins (UNOPS, Myanmar); and Rebecca Napier-Moore (ILO, Bangkok).

² "Evidence-informed" rather than "evidence-based" acknowledges that decision-making around programming and policy does not rely solely on scientific research, but is also informed by other forms of evidence including statistical data, citizens' voices and evaluation evidence. Head, B.W. (2016) "Toward more "evidence-informed" policy-making?", *Public Administration Review*, 76, p. 473.

³ This builds on NEXUS Institute's review of TIP research in and from five Mekong countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) on what is known (and not known) about human trafficking in the fields of agriculture, construction and domestic work.

⁴ "Grey" literature may include, but is not limited to, reports (such as policy reports or research reports), project assessments or evaluations, university theses, memoranda, briefing notes or white papers, bibliographies, conference proceedings or outputs, handbooks or manuals, and official documents not published commercially (primarily government or international organization reports and documents).

⁵ Please see Appendix #1 for a discussion of the methodology and approach.

ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS

This research review compiled published research on the issue of trafficking in persons (TIP) in five of the Mekong countries – Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam – between 2008 and 2018. This included both peer reviewed and “grey” literature⁴ accessed in library-based and internet searches according to a pre-determined set of criteria and based on specific keywords and research strings.⁵ We analyzed a total of 480 studies on trafficking in persons (TIP) in five of the Mekong countries published from 2008 to 2018. The full text was available for 345 of the 480 studies. While partial text and/or an abstract or summary were available for 135 studies,⁶ it was nonetheless generally possible to discern relevant information in relation to key findings. When sufficient information was not available from these 135 studies, this is made clear in the analysis.

While there is no single definition, standard, or method to assess research quality, we have focused in this review on technical robustness (that is, appropriateness and rigor in the design and implementation of data collection, analysis and use)⁷ as well as ethical rigor (that is, data collection that aligns with ethical and legal standards).⁸ Overall, TIP research in the five surveyed countries was of uneven quality and robustness. While there were many high quality and rigorous TIP studies in the region, others lacked quality and/or rigor. The findings outlined below offer concrete entry points for enhancing the quality and robustness of the TIP evidence base and, thus, our collective knowledge about TIP in five of the countries of the Mekong region as well as further afield.

SUMMARY

It is increasingly recognized in the counter-trafficking in persons (CTIP) community that our knowledge of and responses to trafficking in persons (TIP) must be informed and driven by high quality evidence – that is, technically robust and ethically rigorous research and program data. Weak or inaccurate evidence has the potential to distort our understanding of TIP and our ability to effectively design, implement and evaluate CTIP interventions. This research review explores the nature and quality of TIP research in five Mekong countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam), identifying key issues and challenges and making concrete recommendations on how to improve future TIP research and the collection of TIP program data.

The research review was conducted by NEXUS Institute for the USAID Asia Counter Trafficking in Persons (USAID Asia CTIP) project. We identified and analyzed 480 TIP studies in the five countries, published between 2008 and 2018. Overall the body of TIP research reviewed was of uneven quality and robustness. While there were many high quality studies and reports on TIP in the five countries, there were also studies and reports that were less technically and/or ethically robust. Identifying issues and challenges in research quality is critical in improving the TIP evidence base in the Mekong region. Addressing the key findings will enhance the collection of technically robust and ethically rigorous TIP research and program data.

⁶ This was because some research could not be located online or throughout libraries and some research was only available for purchase and it was beyond the resources of the project to purchase all studies.

⁷ Ofir, Z., T. Schwandt, C. Duggan and R. McLean (2016) RQ+ Research Quality Plus: A holistic approach to evaluating research. Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre (IDRC); and Surtees, R., A. Brunovskis and L.S. Johnson (2019) The Science (and Art) of Understanding Trafficking in Persons: Good Practice in TIP Data Collection. Washington, D.C., United States: NEXUS Institute. These dimensions are equally relevant for data collection that take place in the context of CTIP programs

⁸ McAdam, M., R. Surtees and L.S. Johnson (2019) Legal and Ethical Issues in Data Collection on Trafficking in Persons. Washington, D.C., United States: NEXUS Institute.

KEY FINDINGS

FINDING 1

Page 08

Terms and concepts were sometimes undefined and inconsistently applied.

Terms and concepts were sometimes undefined and inconsistently applied. While 60% of TIP studies conducted in the five countries defined at least some of the terms used, 40% did not, creating ambiguity around concepts and issues studied. Some research lacked conceptual and/or practical clarity, including inconsistencies around the circumstances in which individuals were categorized as trafficking victims. Terminology was sometimes applied inconsistently within one study. Some studies used different terms to describe the same phenomenon.

FINDING 3

Page 15

Many studies did not explain the research approach, methods and limitations.

Many studies did not explain the research approach, methods and limitations. The majority of studies based exclusively on secondary data (80% or 90 of 112 studies) did not include information about the research approach and methodology. Half of the studies that included primary data (121 of 233) clearly described the research methods, data sources, research instruments and so on, while the other half (112 of 233) provided only a vague description of the research approach, method and process. Only one third of the TIP studies reviewed discussed research limitations.

FINDING 2

Page 10

Data sources did not always align with research questions.

Data sources did not always align with research questions. Many of the studies reviewed asked research questions that were not necessarily "answerable" with the data sources used. While some research questions could be answered with secondary data, others required or would have benefitted from the inclusion of primary data including direct data sources, like trafficking victims.

FINDING 4

Page 18

Data sets and research samples were not always clearly explained and disaggregated.

Data sets and research samples were not always clearly explained and disaggregated. The TIP research reviewed often lacked a clear explanation of the nature and size of the research sample as well as disaggregation by age, gender and so on. One third of the studies that included primary data from trafficking victims/persons vulnerable to TIP provided only basic information about the research sample, 48% disaggregated the sample by gender and 39% indicated if the sample included adults and/or children. Studies that included primary data from key informants rarely provided demographic information or professional role and expertise.

FINDING 5*Page 21***Vague or missing discussion of ethical considerations.**

A large number of studies did not discuss ethical considerations. None of the studies based on secondary data discussed ethical issues and 61% of studies that included primary data did not discuss ethical considerations, including those that involved interviewing trafficking victims. Of the 39% of studies that included primary data and discussed ethical considerations, about half (55%) of these discussed ethical considerations only indirectly.

FINDING 6*Page 23***Varying levels of quality assurance and review**

Few studies discussed general practices and procedures for quality assurance throughout the research process. Most studies (71%) did not provide any information about the review process. Only 29% explained the review process, most which were supervised theses or published in peer reviewed journals and books.

FINDING 7*Page 25***A focus on cross-sectional and short-term methods.**

Most TIP research was cross-sectional (studies that interview or survey a new sample of people each time) rather than longitudinal (studies that follow the same sample of people over time). The research review found only three longitudinal TIP research projects in the five countries, resulting in twelve studies. All were focused on some aspect of victim assistance and reintegration; none studied the criminal justice process.

The above findings reflect common issues and challenges in TIP research and highlight the need to enhance the quality and rigor of TIP research as well as the collection of TIP program data. The following recommendations serve as entry points for enhancing the quality and robustness of the TIP evidence base in these five Mekong countries as well as further afield. This guidance applies not only to how researchers can enhance TIP research, but also to how practitioners, including USAID Asia CTIP and USAID-funded CTIP bilateral projects in Asia, can generate robust evidence from interventions to inform CTIP knowledge and learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONDUCTING HIGH QUALITY AND RIGOROUS TIP RESEARCH



Clearly define and explain terms and concepts used in TIP research.



Be transparent in data analysis and presentation, including research limitations.



Ensure that data sources are appropriate for answering the research question.



Adhere to legal and ethical requirements for all TIP research and explain these procedures when presenting research findings.



Include primary data sources when suitable for answering research questions and ethical to do so.



Establish and implement procedures for quality assurance and review throughout the research project.



Conduct a careful and thorough literature review to prepare for all TIP research and to support analysis.



Explore opportunities for longitudinal research when appropriate to answer research questions and when it is ethical to do so.



Clearly explain how data was collected (the approach, methodology and process) and what the data represents.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLECTING ROBUST AND HIGH QUALITY TIP PROGRAM DATA INCLUDING M&E DATA



Use commonly agreed definitions and terms within an organization or institution and across country projects.



Be clear about what program data can (and cannot) reveal about TIP, including an explanation of limitations in the presentation of all data.



Ensure harmonization of TIP data collection within and between organizations and institutions.



Ensure all TIP data collection conducted for a project and M&E is in line with legal and ethical requirements.



Promote the better use of various types of program data to inform the CTIP evidence base.



Establish quality assurance and review procedures for all data collection conducted for CTIP programming, to be followed during design, collection, analysis and presentation.



Leverage primary data from CTIP programs to directly inform programming and policy and to support learning within the wider CTIP community.



FINDING 1

Terms and concepts were sometimes undefined and inconsistently applied

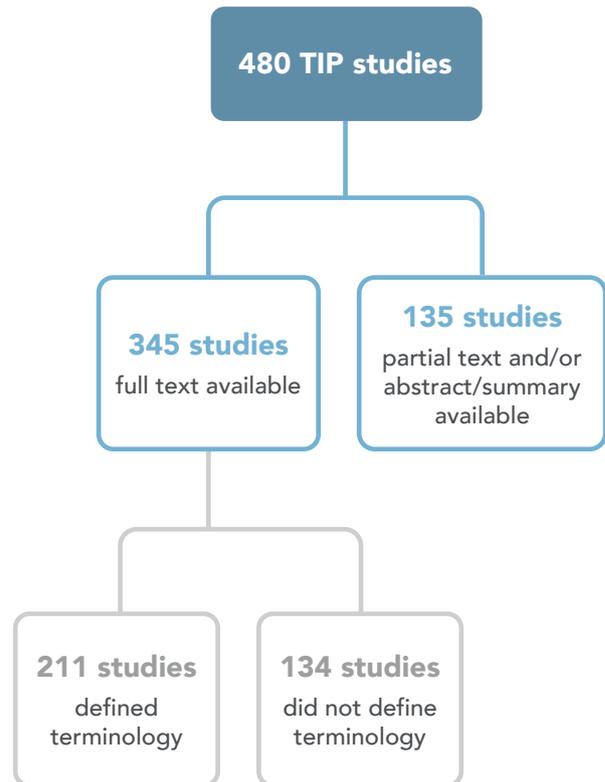
Terms and definitions used in any research or data collection project should be clearly defined. Clear definitions need to be operationalized into research questions and indicators in conducting TIP research. This is essential for those who are collecting and analyzing the data as well as for those reading and using research findings. And yet many of the reviewed studies lacked clear terminology and definitions. Not uncommonly, terminology was undefined or inadequately defined.

Of the 345 studies for which the full text was available, 211 (approximately 60%) defined at least some of the terminology used. The most frequently defined term was “human trafficking” and approximately half of these 211 studies (or 100 studies) cited the United Nations (UN) Protocol definition of human trafficking. Some studies did not define “human trafficking”, but instead defined other terms related to trafficking, including “forced labor”, “child labor”, “forced begging”, “debt bondage”, “domestic work”, “sexual exploitation”, “reintegration” and so on. Definitions most often appeared in the introduction or background section or in break-out boxes, although some studies included dedicated chapters focused on terminology or a glossary of terms and definitions used in the study.

AT A GLANCE

- A significant amount of TIP research (40%) did not define terminology, creating ambiguity around concepts and issues
- Terminology, once defined, was often applied inconsistently

Graphic 1: Number of TIP studies that did and did not define terminology used



By contrast, 134 of 345 studies (approximately 40%) did not define terms at all, creating ambiguity around the concepts and issues discussed.⁹ For example, one study on debt bondage did not define “debt bondage”, but instead described it as “a form of forced labor, often referred to as ‘modern day slavery’”, without defining either forced labor, which has an internationally agreed definition, or modern day slavery, which does not. Similarly, one country report on forced labor and child labor in a specific agricultural sector did not define either term, making it unclear what the researchers had identified as forced labor or child labor over the course of data collection.

In some of the literature on trafficked children, the boundaries between child trafficking and child labor were, at times, blurry, perhaps reflecting the lack of agreed definitions at the international level. Child labor, child labor trafficking and labor exploitation were not always carefully disentangled, in spite of important distinctions between them. The way that child labor is (or is not) defined in a study can make it difficult to determine when it constitutes labor exploitation and/or when it rises to the level of child trafficking. For example, one study of child trafficking in one Mekong country defined child labor as “all types of work that exploits a child”, although child labor does not necessarily involve exploitation and the study did not distinguish between labor exploitation and human trafficking.

In some research, there was insufficient conceptual and/or practical clarity, including inconsistencies around the circumstances in which individuals (migrants, workers and others) were categorized as trafficking victims. For example, some studies were presented as trafficking research and yet the data analyzed in those studies did not necessarily indicate instances of human trafficking according to national or international definitions. By contrast, other studies focused on abuses and violations suffered by workers, including exploitation and various forms of force, control and coercion, but researchers/analysts did not frame these situations as human trafficking, even when there were substantial indications that this was the case.

Further, terminology, once defined, was sometimes applied inconsistently. Some studies used different terms to describe the same phenomenon. It was not always clear, for example, when a migrant worker may also have been a

victim of trafficking or when a returnee was a returned migrant worker or a returned trafficking victim. Other terms that were, at times, used interchangeably with “trafficking victim” included: “smuggled migrant”, “irregular migrant”, “labor-trafficked person” and so on. Similarly, terms such as “human trafficking”, “modern slavery”, “slavery” and “forced labor” were also used interchangeably and sometimes conflated.

In some cases, inconsistency may be the result of not fully understanding definitions or not operationalizing terms and definitions for research purposes. In other cases, this may be a function of value-driven research where those designing or funding the research have a vested interest in a particular formulation of research questions and how findings are crafted and communicated or a desire to drive an emotional response. Some studies appeared to intentionally gloss over the complexities involved in measuring act, means and purpose (the constituent elements of TIP) to produce a more prominent result.

The use of agreed (nationally or internationally recognized) terms between the various entities working in TIP research and data collection (whether as researchers or as organizations collecting TIP program data) is key in developing a coherent and comparable evidence base. The use of clear and consistent terminology and concepts allows for the comparison and contrasting of different research results and findings. Consistency is also needed in applying and operationalizing terms and concepts for rigorous and transparent data collection and analysis, including disclosure of potential vested interests.¹⁰ This was intended by the adoption of international law for global application.

⁹ Another review of research on TIP and social work found that 38 articles (of 94 or 40%) did not include an explicit definition of human trafficking, while 42 (45%) included one definition and 13 articles (14%) cited multiple definitions of human trafficking, most commonly the TVPA and U.N. definitions. Okech, D., Y.J. Choi, J. Elkins and A.C. Burns (2018) ‘Seventeen years of human trafficking research in social work: A review of the literature’, *Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work*, 15(2): 109. One systematic review of research on TIP and health globally noted lack of standardized definition and standard measures which inhibits comparability across locations, disciplines, and studies. Cannon, A.C., Arcara, J., Graham, L.M and R.J. Macy (2018) ‘Trafficking and Health: A Systematic Review of Research Methods’, *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 19(2), p. 169.

¹⁰ Some progress has been made in this direction, such as the ILO guidelines on how to measure forced labor, which provide recommendations for the collection and analysis of forced labor statistics, including guidance on standard definitions to facilitate comparability across countries. ILO (2018) *Guidelines concerning the measurement of forced labour*. ICLS/20/2018/Guidelines. 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organization. Similarly, while not TIP-specific, the *Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse*, dubbed the “Luxembourg Guidelines” after their adoption in Luxembourg in 2016, aim to build consensus on key concepts for terms commonly used relating to sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, to strengthen data collection and cooperation across agencies, sectors and countries. Greijer, S., J. Doek and Interagency Working Group (2016) *Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse*. Luxembourg: ECPAT International.

FINDING 2

Data sources did not always align with research questions

Primary data is collected directly – for example, through interviews, participant observation, life histories, case studies, questionnaires, surveys or ethnographic research and so on. Secondary data is that which has already been collected and can be used for analysis – for example, previous research, media reports, official statistics, archival materials, government reports, court documents or police files and so on. The distinction between primary and secondary data depends on the relationship between the researcher/research team who collected the data and those analyzing it. If data was collected by the researcher/research team for the specific purpose or analysis under consideration, it is primary data. If it was collected by another researcher for another purpose, it is secondary data.¹¹ Decisions about what data is needed for specific research studies (that is, primary or secondary data or a combination thereof) is determined by the research questions and, equally, must align with ethical considerations. Many of the studies reviewed asked research questions that were not partially or fully “answerable” with the data sources used; other studies would have benefitted from the inclusion of primary data, including direct data sources like trafficking victims, given the research questions being asked.

Some research questions lend themselves to the use of secondary data – for example, legal analysis and review, policy questions, the operation of the anti-trafficking response and so on. Other research questions may require or at least benefit substantially from the inclusion of primary data, including direct and/or indirect data sources¹²

to support continuous learning and avoid the repetition of the same perspectives and voices. For example, understanding how to improve the assistance response requires engaging with different service providers who work on victim protection and different types of victims who are being assisted or who are unassisted. Similarly, improving the criminal justice response in a country requires engaging with a range of key informants (for example, law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, social workers, victim advocates) as well as trafficking victims who have experienced different elements of the criminal justice process and/or different suspects and traffickers who have been prosecuted.

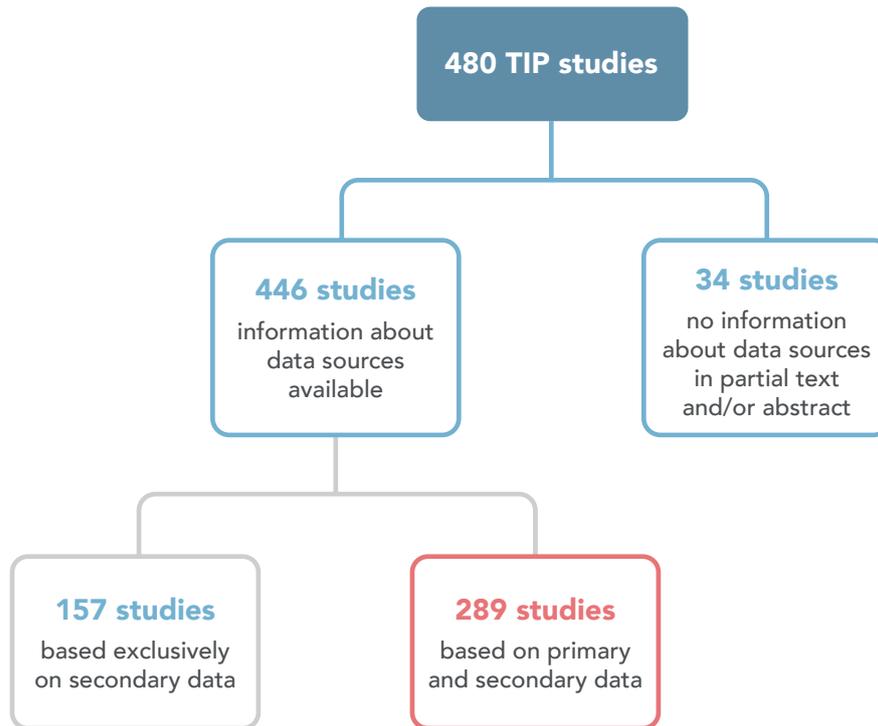
AT A GLANCE

- Data sources did not always or entirely align with research questions
- Approximately one third of TIP research was based exclusively on secondary data but would have benefitted from primary data
- Insufficient information was provided about primary data sources to assess appropriateness in answering the research question

¹¹ The same data set may serve as both primary and secondary data in relation to different researchers. For example, one data set serves as primary data for the original researchers and secondary data for the researcher performing later analysis.

¹² A direct data source refers to someone who has direct experience of the issue or event being studied, whereas an indirect data source is someone with secondary knowledge of the issue or event. For example, a social worker is a direct data source about services provided to trafficking victims but is an indirect data source about trafficking victims’ assessment of those services or about an individual’s trafficking experience. A direct data source is sometimes referred to as a primary data source; an indirect data source is sometimes referred to as a secondary data source.

Graphic 2: Number of TIP studies based on primary and/or secondary data



Of the 480 studies reviewed, information about data sources was available for 446 studies. For 34 studies, the partial text or summary available did not include information about data sources. Approximately one third of TIP research in the five countries (157 of 446 TIP studies or 35%) was based exclusively on secondary data. The remaining 289 studies used a combination of primary and secondary data. Although some of these studies specified that they used both primary and secondary data, most of the 289 studies using a combination of primary and secondary data included references, but did not explicitly specify and explain the use of secondary data or the literature review process.

Of the 157 studies based exclusively on secondary data, almost half (75 or 48%) were about TIP law and policy. Some of these research questions/topics would have benefited from the inclusion of primary data. For example, one study about barriers faced by trafficking victims in accessing legal remedies was based on a review of human

trafficking cases in the country, media reports and the U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report, but did not include primary data sources such as trafficking victims who had experienced criminal justice procedures, key informants from the criminal justice sector or service providers who had worked with victims who had been involved in legal proceedings. The other half (82 of 157 studies, or 52%) focused on trafficking vulnerability in migration experiences or the scope and nature of human trafficking – for example, within a country or industry – and also would have benefitted in many cases from the inclusion of primary data. For example, one study in one Mekong country about why trafficking victims were criminalized as irregular migrants rather than identified as trafficked was based on media reports but not data collection with key informants involved in victim identification, such as law enforcement, criminal justice practitioners, service providers or trafficking victims.

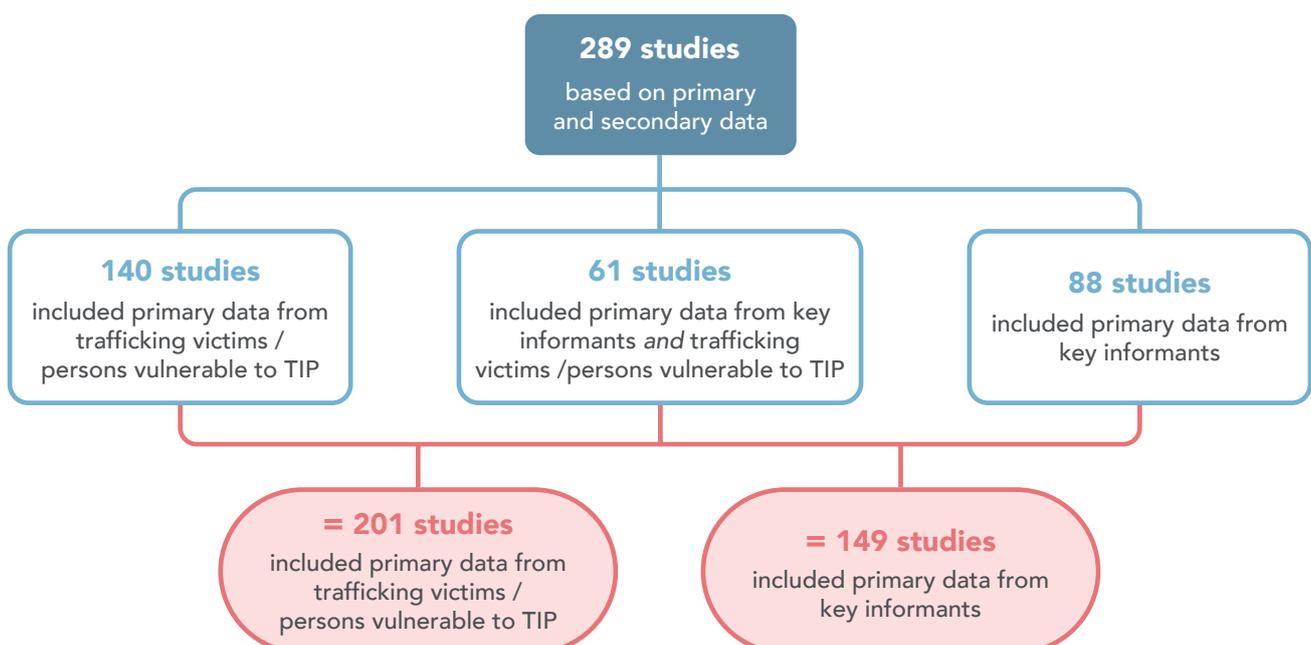
The decision to include primary data in a research study, including the specific type of primary data, should be informed by the research question to be studied and with due attention to ethical considerations and requirements. The selection of specific respondents – for example, anti-trafficking stakeholders, trafficking victims and so on – should also align with the research questions and appropriate data sources in relation to those questions. It is also important that key informants are engaged in a way that they can meaningfully inform the research questions. Some of the 289 studies that included primary data were essentially based on secondary data and included only a few key informant interviews, without explanation of the key informant's knowledge of the issues or how these interviews informed the research questions and the analysis. Including only a few key informant interviews in a study and, moreover, without clarity about the key informant's knowledge and expertise in relation to the study and research questions, increases the risk of a biased or weak dataset.

Of the 446 studies for which we had information about data sources, 289 studies (or 65%) used a combination of primary and secondary data. Of

the studies that included different types of primary data, 140 studies (48%) included primary data from trafficking victims and/or persons vulnerable to TIP;¹³ 88 studies (30%) included primary data from key informants; and 61 studies (22%) included primary data from trafficking victims and/or persons vulnerable to TIP and key informants.

Of the 289 studies that used a combination of primary and secondary data, just over half (149 or 52%) included primary data from different types of key informants – either primary data from key informants (88 studies) or primary data from key informants and trafficking victims/ persons vulnerable to TIP (61 studies). Key informants included, but were not limited to, government officials and representatives from international organizations, NGO and government service providers (such as shelter staff, case managers, counselors, health care providers), law enforcement and criminal justice actors, brokers, employers, business executives, supply chain auditors and so on. Some research focused on traffickers and trafficking operations in different sectors and ten studies included pimps and facilitators, labor brokers and agents and boat owners and captains as key informants.

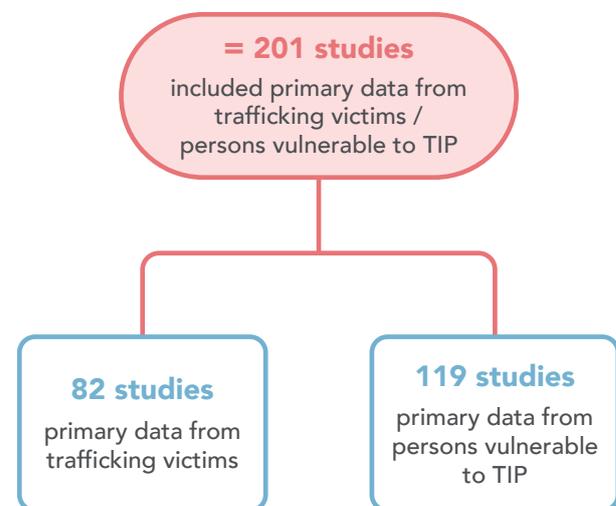
Graphic 3: Number of TIP studies that included primary data from trafficking victims, persons vulnerable to TIP and/or key informants



The 149 studies that included primary data from different types of key informants generally did not provide details about key informants as respondents, noting only that “key informant” or “stakeholder” interviews were conducted. Some studies provided some detail, for instance, when key informants were service providers (such as shelter staff, social workers, psychologists or healthcare professionals), law enforcement and criminal justice actors or representatives from businesses and employers in a certain industry. However, descriptions tended to be general, making it difficult to determine key informants’ professional roles and the professional composition of the overall sample, as well as specific expertise vis-à-vis the research topic and questions. For example, one study on human trafficking in one Mekong country described the research sample as follows: “key informants spanned the directors, managers and staff of some of the key organizations, both inter-governmental and non-governmental, working on trafficking, [as well as] staff from government, donor organizations and a number of United Nations agencies”. Another study on trafficking risk within a specific economic sector presented key informants as follows: “government officer, company executive, industry association representative, NGO representative, worker in the industry”. Vague descriptions made it difficult to determine if key informants were direct data sources (with direct experience of the issue or event being studied) or indirect data sources (with secondary knowledge of the issue or event). There was often insufficient information provided about key informants to assess their knowledge and expertise in relation to the specific research topic or various sub-topics being examined. On several occasions, even the number of key informants was unclear. This, in turn, made it difficult to weigh the significance of the data sources in relation to the research question.

The 88 studies that included primary data only from key informants focused on victim assistance, government responses to trafficking, and the nature or risk of trafficking in specific countries or in specific sectors. While valuable information may be obtained from key informants, particularly in relation to some topics, they are not always direct data sources about the topics and issues under study. For example, one study interviewed service providers about the impact of certain service practices on the lives of victims but did not include interviews with trafficking victims who had received those services. Accessing direct data sources in such studies would give voice to victims in seeking to understand and learn from their trafficking experiences or to assess their assistance and protection needs.

Graphic 4: Number of TIP studies that included primary data from trafficking victims and persons vulnerable to TIP

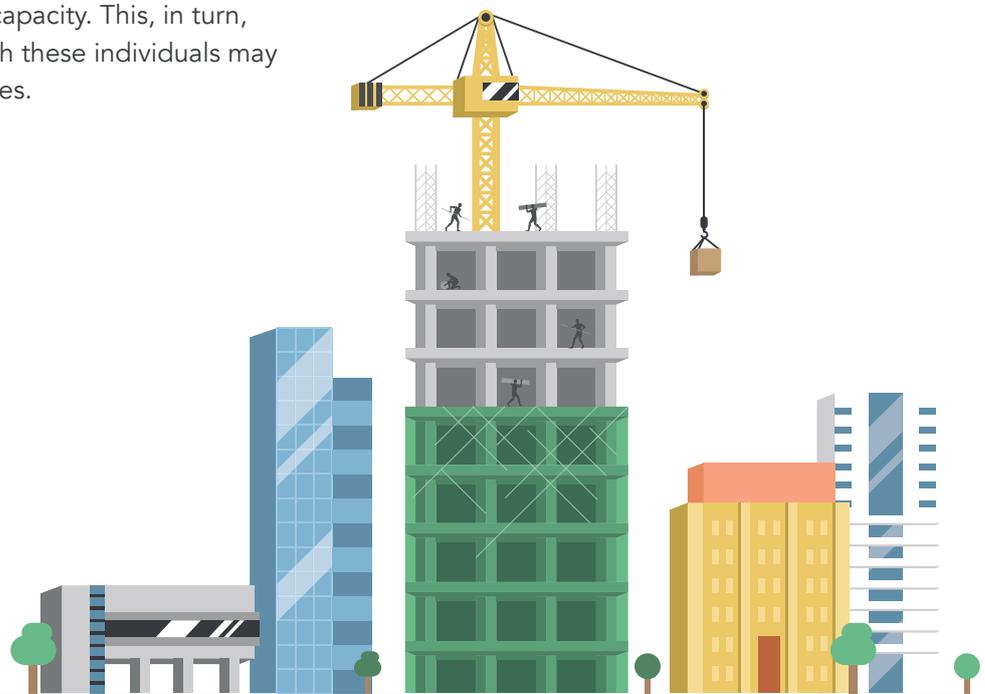


¹³ Persons vulnerable to TIP are those engaged in a sector where TIP has been identified, exploited workers/migrants, individuals from communities with a high prevalence of TIP and so on.

Of the 201 studies that included primary data from trafficking victims and/or individuals vulnerable to human trafficking,¹⁴ 82 studies (41%) included primary data from trafficking victims.¹⁵ Approximately half of these (40 of the 82 studies) focused on victims' needs and assistance experiences, including two studies on victim experiences of the criminal justice process. The remaining half (42 of 82) were about victims' trafficking experiences. Adequately addressing these specific research topics required access to trafficking victims as direct data sources.

More than half (119 of 210 studies or 59%) included primary data from individuals vulnerable to trafficking and examined the risk of or presence of human trafficking within migration flows, certain industries or certain geographic areas. These data sources seemingly aligned with the research questions under study. That being said, determining who is at risk of TIP is not uncomplicated and not all studies had developed a carefully derived profile of this population. For example, not all migrant workers in a specific industry may be at risk of TIP nor will be well placed to provide relevant information about research questions. TIP risk is specific to the form of TIP and a function of individual and context-specific vulnerability and capacity. This, in turn, informs the extent to which these individuals may be appropriate data sources.

As noted above, some studies in this research review would have benefited from the inclusion of primary data from trafficking victims and/or persons vulnerable to TIP. However, this does not mean that all TIP studies should engage trafficking victims or those at risk. Decisions around how best to answer research questions must take ethical factors carefully into account and find a balance between sometimes-conflicting interests. Regardless, in all cases data sources (whether primary or secondary data) need to carefully and precisely align with the research questions and the overall purpose of the study. When it is not possible to access data sources needed to answer specific research questions, it may not be possible to proceed with the study. Researchers should also take great care in ensuring that, in the analysis and presentation of findings, they do not voice perspectives of data sources – for example, of trafficking victims or key informants – to which they have not had direct access.



¹⁴ Of these 201 studies, primary data was either exclusively from trafficking victims and/or persons vulnerable to trafficking (140 studies) or alongside primary data from key informants (61 studies).

¹⁵ Some of these 82 studies were not exclusively with trafficking victims but also included primary data from non-trafficked individuals working in the same economic sector or who had similar migration experiences.

FINDING 3

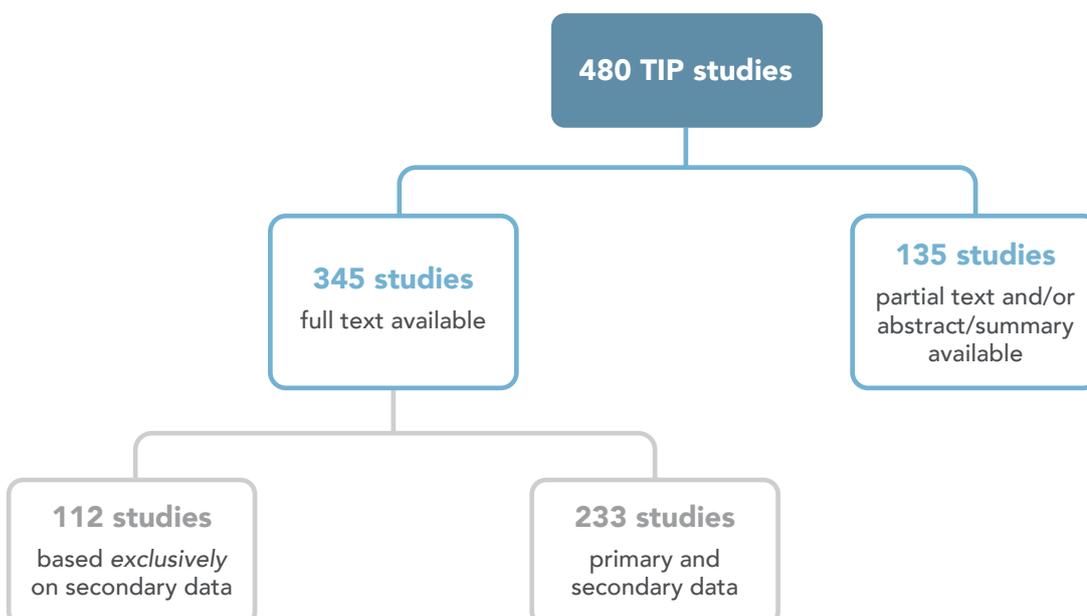
Many studies did not explain the research approach, methods and limitations

Research studies should clearly explain the research approach and method, the research process and any limitations and biases in the data that may inform analysis and findings. This information is needed by the researcher to analyze data and to carefully and clearly situate and frame findings. It also enables the reader to understand how data was collected and assess the findings, including the weight to be given to conclusions. Without this information, there is the risk that TIP research findings may be presented and cited as more significant than they are which, in turn, may lead to ill-informed decisions and interventions. Many of the studies included in this research review did not clearly or fully explain the research approach, methods, process or limitations. Some studies lacked a discussion of methods altogether, making it difficult to determine what data the study was based on. A discussion of tools used for data collection – for example, interviews, survey, focus group discussions – was also often missing or underdeveloped.

AT A GLANCE

- Most studies based on secondary data did not explain the research approach and method
- Half of studies that included primary data did not explain the research process and method
- One third of studies that included primary data did not indicate the year(s) of data collection
- Only a minority of TIP studies discussed research limitations

Graphic 5: Number of TIP studies based on primary and/or secondary data



Of the 345 full-text studies, one third (112 or 32.5%) was based exclusively on secondary data and two thirds (233 or 67.5%) used a combination of primary and secondary data. Of the 112 studies based exclusively on secondary data, the vast majority (90 studies or 80%) included no information about the research approach and methodology. A small minority of studies (22 of 112, or 20%) provided some information about the approach and method but most without much specificity – for example, how secondary sources were identified, selected, weighed and analyzed. Commonly these studies described the approach as “research”, “desk review” or “literature review”. The methodology section of one study, for example, stated that it was “based on research on trafficking in the [Greater Mekong Subregion]”. Another study described the research process as follows: “Methods that were used for this paper are mainly based on collecting and researching written materials on related matters, field survey and documentary study”. The same study did not explain what desk review, field survey or “documentary study” entailed beyond citing a documentary in the references. Only five studies (of 112, or 4%) provided detail about the research approach and analysis, such as the search protocol, the timeframe for secondary sources included and the framework for analysis. For example, one study noted that the researchers had used “a Cochrane-based systematic search methodology” and specified the timeframe for secondary sources, the number of secondary sources reviewed and the selected criteria for inclusion of literature in the study.

Studies that included primary data were more likely to explain the research approach and method. Of the 233 studies that included primary data, 121 (or 52%) provided a description of the research approach and process, including research methods, data sources, research instruments, and so on. For example, one qualitative research study detailed the aim of the study, funders of the research, research design, how research assistants and translators were recruited, the questions explored and methods used for analysis. The study also included an annex with the questions that were asked of respondents during data collection. While the 121 studies that described the research

approach and process varied in the level of detail provided all included enough detail that the research method could be understood. For example, some studies had a methods section or annex focused on methodology, others explained methodology in a paragraph in the text.

By contrast, 112 (of 233 studies or 48%) that included primary data provided only vague or limited information on the research approach and method. For example, one study based on primary and secondary data described the approach as follows: “National legislation, policy documents, and statistics were reviewed and interviews were conducted in order to obtain relevant information”, but did not explain the review process or what interviews were conducted and with whom. Another report on exploitation of workers included detailed anonymized case examples of individuals exposed to various labor violations, such as illegal work conditions, forced labor, debt bondage, coercive work arrangements, sexual harassment and trafficking, but did not explain how case studies were collected and compiled, apart from referencing “the experience” of the NGO that authored the report.

It was often necessary to extrapolate how research was conducted by reading the text itself, although this did not always yield relevant information about the research approach and methods. The 112 (of 233) studies that included primary data and that provided some (but not clear) information about the research approach and method often simply mentioned “interviews”, “ethnography”, “site visits” or “fieldwork”, making it difficult to understand the research method and sample and, thus, how to contextualize the research and its findings. Also, in these 112 studies, little information was provided about respondent selection including selection criteria and the recruitment process followed. For example, one study stated: “The interviewees were chosen by the consultant” but nothing about the selection criteria or how recruitment took place. Another study stated: “Informants were selected from lists of organizations working on trafficking in [the country] and contact was also made with people identified in the literature”.

In very few cases were data collection tools included as part of the research report. This was also the case for quantitative studies where it is common practice to include the instrument in the research report. Of the quantitative studies that included primary data, approximately half provided detailed information about the questionnaire or survey tool used, but very few provided a copy of the questionnaire or survey in an annex.

Another common feature was that many studies (65 of the 233 studies that included primary data, or 28%) did not specify the year(s) that data collection took place, further complicating a determination of what studies provided new information and when data may have been out of date. Some research questions may be answered by older data; other research questions (for example, about new trends or fast-moving issues) are more likely to require more current data. Similarly, some studies did not include the publication date in a readily identifiable place (for example, on the cover or inside cover page), which required searching through the document or accompanying publication information and website to identify the date of publication.

Only a minority of TIP studies discussed research limitations. Of the 233 studies that included primary data, 76 (or 33%) discussed research limitations – for example, when samples were not representative, limitations of official data sources, how interpretation and translation affected data quality, selection effects in sampling, gatekeepers' influence on access to respondents, how the researcher's identity affected respondent disclosure and so on. A majority of these studies (52 of 76 or 68%) clearly discussed limitations and biases; a minority of these studies (24 of 76 or 32%) provided only basic and unspecific information on research limitations, often mentioned in passing in the text. For example, one study noted, "due to definitional issues, the underground nature of the crime and underreporting, most numbers on trafficking are based on assumptions and guesses", but did not elaborate on how this might affect the findings. The majority of TIP studies that included primary data (157 of the 233 studies or 67%) did not

discuss or explain research limitations. Of the 112 studies based exclusively on secondary data, only three (3%) clearly discussed research limitations, citing issues such as lack of data/research on the research topic, out of date studies, lack of current statistics, availability of only English studies and so on.

A number of studies were based on the same dataset, which was not always explained and made clear in the description of the methods and sample. Some studies referred to having collected data as part of a wider data collection project or referred to previously conducted data collection, but did not explain the process and how the dataset related to the current study. In some cases, there was an impression of publishing seemingly separate and discrete studies, but closer examination suggested that at least some such studies were drawing from the same dataset. When reanalysis was conducted on an existing dataset (or partial dataset) this was often not made explicit in the methods section of a study.

In some cases, lack of information about the research approach, method and process may be less about individual researchers/research teams and more about a lack of appetite among some organizations and institutions (as well as readers) to produce and/or consume a detailed explanation of the design and implementation of the research. This exclusion of or limited attention to research approach, method, process and limitations seems to be, at least in part, due to a significant push within the TIP field to produce communication-friendly research outputs (for example, infographics, briefs, blogs, and so on) in an effort to make findings more accessible. In more extreme cases, organizations may not write up full studies, but instead produce shorter, more digestible communications materials and de-emphasize the importance of including a rigorous research methodology.



FINDING 4

Data sets and research samples were not always clearly explained and disaggregated

TIP research in the five studied countries often lacked a clear explanation and description of the dataset and research sample. While most of the 289 studies that included primary data provided some information about the research sample, it was with varying levels of detail and precision including in terms of size and disaggregation by gender and age.

Of the 289 studies that included primary data, 140 (48%) included primary data from trafficking victims/persons vulnerable to TIP; 61 (22%) included primary data from key informants and trafficking victims/persons vulnerable to TIP; and 88 (30%) included primary data from key informants. A total of 201 studies included primary data from trafficking victims and/or individuals vulnerable to TIP, either only from trafficking victims/individuals vulnerable to TIP or combined with primary data from key informants.

Of the 201 studies that included primary data from trafficking victims and/or individuals vulnerable to TIP, 20 (or 10%) did not provide any details about the research sample. These studies mentioned only conducting “ethnography” or “interviews” but not the composition of the research sample. The other 181 studies provided some information about the research sample but the level of detail varied greatly.

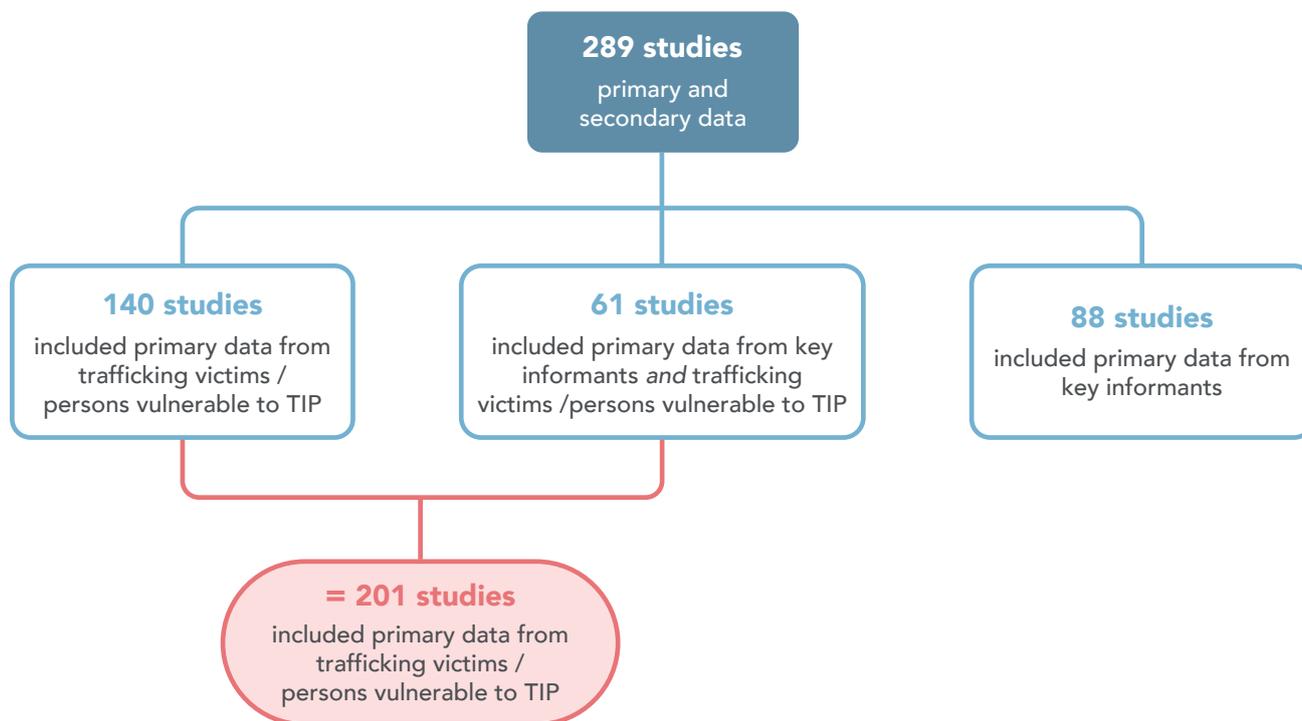
In 65 studies (out of 201 or 33%) only very basic information was provided about the research sample, without further explanation or disaggregation. For example, one report on trafficked and exploited migrant workers described the researchers’ fieldwork, including where they slept at night, but provided little detail about the sampling, except that the team met with over 400 villagers and that “meetings and discussions were attended by between 5-60 workers”. Neither the size of the sample nor the age or gender of research respondents was provided.

AT A GLANCE

- 10% of studies that included primary data from trafficking victims/persons vulnerable to TIP did not describe the research sample; 33% provided only basic information about the research sample
- 48% of studies that included primary data from trafficking victims/persons vulnerable to TIP disaggregated the research sample by gender and 39% indicated if the sample included adults and/or children
- 58% of studies that surveyed key informants did not specify the size or composition of the research sample

The remaining 136 studies (out of 201 or 67%) explained the research sample – for example, sample size, research/data collection site, information about the individuals who comprised the sample and so on – but the level of detail varied considerably between these studies. The composition of research samples was not always explained – for example, respondents’ gender, age or a range of other identifiers (nationality, ethnicity, education, profession, marital status and so on). Research findings were also generally not disaggregated and presented in this way.

Graphic 6: Number of TIP studies that included primary data from trafficking victims, persons vulnerable to TIP and/or key informants



Of the 201 studies that included primary data from trafficking victims and/or individuals vulnerable to TIP, just under half (98 or 48%) were disaggregated by gender.¹⁶ However, even when some gender disaggregation took place, specific numbers were not always given. The gender of individuals in the research sample was often described in broad-brush strokes – for example, "Nearly half of respondents were male" or "the majority of respondents were female". In 22 studies (11%), gender might be "guessed" based on the form of work under study or given the use of male or female pronouns. However, closer scrutiny of at least one of these studies suggested that some respondents described with female pronouns were in fact male. Research samples were also not always disaggregated by age. The minority of the 201 studies (79 or 39%) indicated if the sample included adults and/or children, but only some

of these studies specified the respondents' age ranges. The remaining studies did not indicate the age of respondents, including whether respondents were adults or children.

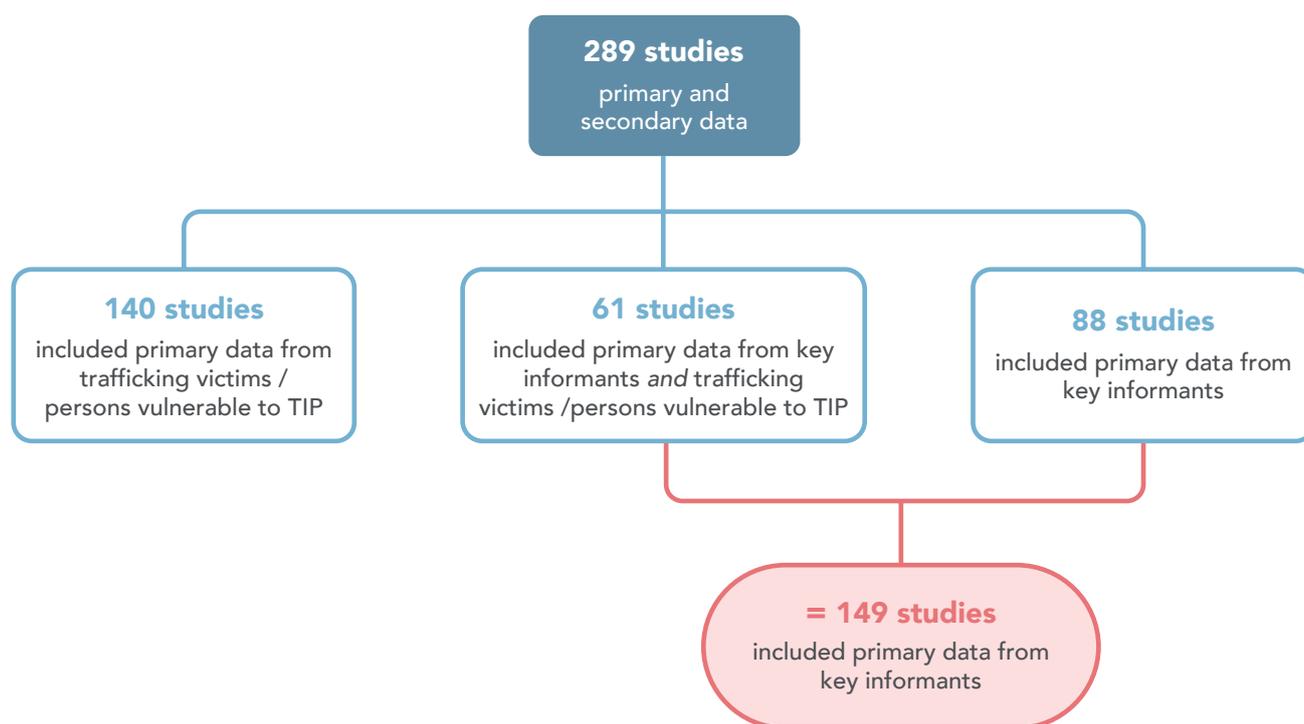
Lack of demographic information about respondents – for example, age, gender and various other identifiers – makes it difficult to derive a clear picture of who is exploited for different forms of trafficking, what may constitute risk factors, how identification and assistance may vary by victim and so on. It also impacts awareness of TIP among anti-trafficking professionals, particularly with the overarching and too common assumption that trafficking victims are only or even most commonly women and girls. Gender disaggregated research findings have made visible the trafficking of men, which has, in some countries, led governments to revise anti-

¹⁶ Another review of TIP research globally found that roughly half of the 1,231 studies reviewed did not disaggregate victim populations by gender and research samples seldom focused on males (adult or boys). Russell, A. (2018) 'Human Trafficking: A Research Synthesis on Human-Trafficking Literature in Academic Journals from 2000-2014', *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 4(2), p. 123.

trafficking legislation to include male trafficking victims and to tailor protection responses – for example, training of male or female police officers for identification procedures; the provision of housing options for male and female trafficking victims; the training and sensitization of service providers; and so on. Age disaggregation is also important for CTIP programming and policy

efforts – for example, to understand the different experiences and needs of adults and child victims; to understand risks at different ages; to understand experiences and vulnerabilities at different ages; to advocate for child-friendly services and professional skills; and so on.

Graphic 7: Number of TIP studies that included primary data from key informants



Of 289 studies that included primary data, about half (149 or 52%) included data from various types of key informants, either only from key informants or alongside data from trafficking victims or those at risk. Of these, the majority (86 of 149 studies or 58%) did not specify the size or composition of the key informant research sample, for example, by gender, profession or field of work, professional background and expertise, institutional or organizational affiliation, geographic location and so on. Rather sampling was described in general terms, for example, “we also talked to key informants” or one study on CTIP policy described conducting “interviews with select stakeholders”.

A minority of studies that included primary data from key informants (63 of 149 studies or 42%) provided some information about the sample size or composition of the key informant research sample, but without the information needed to assess appropriateness in answering the research questions. Even with purposive sampling,¹⁷ efforts can still be made to obtain a broad cross-section of respondents, which does not seem to be the case in much of the TIP research reviewed.

FINDING 5

Vague or missing discussion of ethical considerations

In many of the TIP studies reviewed, there was little to no information about ethical issues and how these were addressed in the research process. This was the case even in instances when the study included data collection from vulnerable persons, like trafficking victims. Of 233 studies that included primary data and for which the full text was available, a large number (142 or 61%) did not discuss ethical considerations in the text, annexes or footnotes nor how these were anticipated and addressed.¹⁸

Notably, of the 142 studies that included primary data but did not discuss ethics, 25 studies (18%) specifically included trafficking victims in the research sample. One study of child sexual exploitation described conducting “undercover data collection”, but without any discussion of the ethical issues attendant in such an approach, particularly in relation to research with vulnerable children. Similarly, in another study with victims of trafficking and individuals vulnerable to TIP, researchers did not disclose to respondents that research was being conducted on behalf of an organization, given the reticence of respondents to speak about their irregular migration status or involvement in criminal activities. The complex ethical decisions around how to approach such research were not explained in the study. In other cases, the way in which findings were presented raised ethical questions. Two studies, for example, appeared to cite the real names of exploited migrants and returnees who were interviewed.

The remaining 91 of 233 studies (39%) mentioned ethical considerations, but with varying levels of

AT A GLANCE

- A large number of studies that included primary data (61%) did not discuss ethical considerations at all
- The 39% of studies that included primary data discussed ethical considerations to varying degrees

detail. Less than half (41 of 91 studies or 45%) provided a clear and detailed explanation of ethical protocols and procedures. In these cases, ethical considerations included the selection and training of researchers, recruitment of respondents, the process of informed consent, concerns around privacy and confidentiality during interviews or data collection, sensitivity of researchers, the risk of traumatization when revisiting TIP experiences, providing referral information to respondents and so on. Some of these 41 studies detailed specific ethical dilemmas that arose and how these were addressed. For example, one study mentioned participant trauma in interviewing victims of trafficking. Some studies described the ethical protocols or ethics review procedures followed. For example, one study stated: “The current study paid special attention to ethical considerations through the adoption of guiding ethical principles, identification of possible risks and solutions for eliminating those risks, and

¹⁷ Purposive sampling or selective sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own expertise or judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study.

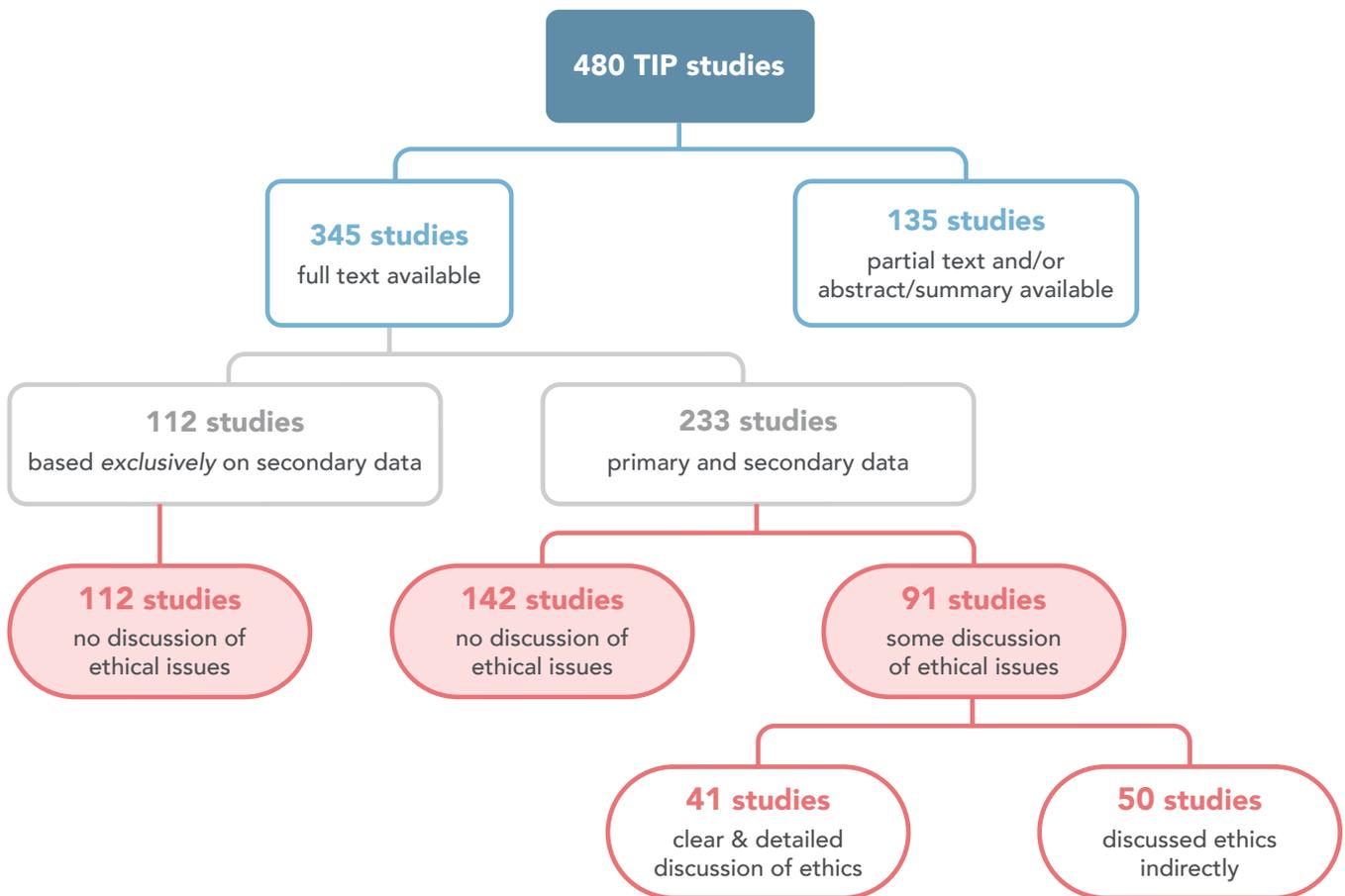
¹⁸ One systematic review of research on TIP and health globally noted that 21 articles did not explain research ethics or informed consent procedures, while the remaining 49 articles did so to varying degrees (13 articles described ethics approval and ethical procedures, 28 articles reported ethics approval but did not discuss research ethics beyond this approval and 8 articles discussed their procedures for informed consent and research ethics). Cannon, A.C., Arcara, J., Graham, L.M and R.J. Macy (2018) ‘Trafficking and Health: A Systematic Review of Research Methods’, *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 19(2), p. 167.

careful preparation for gaining informed consent” and specifically cited the documents used in guiding ethical considerations.

The other 50 of the 91 studies (55%) that included some mention of ethical considerations did so indirectly or incidentally within the text. For example, some indicated “disguising the identities of migrants” or “anonymizing” respondents. Another study noted that when researchers learned that migrants were unhappy with one-on-one interviews, they changed to focus group

discussions. And researchers in one study decided not to record interviews when workers/ respondents said they felt “uncomfortable” and “intimidated” by recorded interviews. While all examples suggest attention to ethics, these studies did not explain ethical protocols followed in the design and implementation of the research study. Of the 91 studies that discussed ethics in some way (in detail or more vaguely), the most commonly discussed issues were anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent.

Graphic 8: Number of TIP studies that did and did not include a discussion of research ethics



While ethical issues particularly arise in relation to primary data, especially from vulnerable persons like trafficking victims and children, there are nonetheless ethical considerations that merit discussion in relation to the use of secondary data. Of the 112 studies based exclusively on secondary data, none discussed ethical issues. Of the studies that combined both primary and secondary data,

none included a discussion of ethics in relation to the use of secondary data – for example, whether data was originally collected in an ethical way, whether respondents consented in the case of data sharing, ensuring data presentation was clear in terms of what data was primary and secondary and so on.

FINDING 6

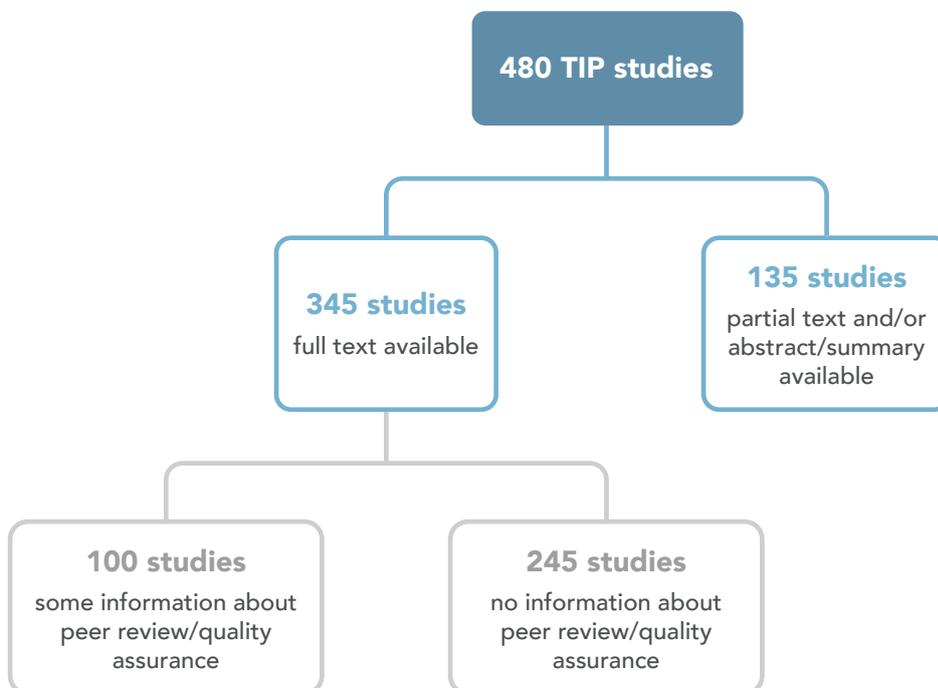
Varying levels of quality assurance and review

Quality assurance refers to the techniques, systems and resources deployed to assure the care and control with which research is conducted. This is needed at all steps of the research process, not only in designing and planning the research but also in terms of collecting robust data, data entry and cleaning, data analysis and the presentation and use of findings. A quality assurance process seeks to ensure that research is properly conducted and that results are reported accurately, based on the best currently-available techniques, knowledge and understanding. Quality assurance may involve a number of different tools and mechanisms that are employed for different purposes, in different contexts and at different stages of the research lifecycle.¹⁹

AT A GLANCE

- Most studies (71%) did not provide information about quality assurance or review procedures
- A minority of studies (29%) explained the review or quality assurance process

Graphic 9: Number of TIP studies that did and did not include a discussion of research ethics



¹⁹ Research Information Network (2010) Quality assurance and assessment of scholarly research: A guide for researchers, academic administrators and librarians. United Kingdom: Research Information Network, p. 7.

Of the 345 studies for which the full text was available, the extent to which studies were subject to various quality assurance procedures was uneven. Few studies discussed general practices and procedures for quality assurance throughout the research process – for example, the training and supervision of data collectors, the design and use of manuals to guide research, the establishment of criteria for research quality, supervision and checks during data collection, how data was cleaned and validated, how data was managed, data analysis procedures such as triangulation and so on.

The most commonly described means of quality assurance was peer review (that is, subjecting research proposals, presentations, papers and other publications to critical evaluation by independent experts/peers).²⁰ Peer review is generally common when publishing in journals, books and edited volumes. However, one review of human trafficking research noted the high number of non-empirical trafficking articles published in non-peer reviewed journals, particularly law journals.²¹ Peer review is less common for TIP research conducted by NGOs, governments and international organizations. Nonetheless, some organizations and institutions implement their own procedures for peer review, with different types of external and internal review procedures.

The majority of studies (245 of 345 or 71%) did not provide any information about a review process, making it impossible to determine whether any such procedures were in place. Five of these 245 studies were published as part of an edited book,

which suggests that a formal review process took place but nonetheless was not explained. Of the 245 studies that did not explain review procedures for publication, 70 (29%) were based exclusively on secondary data, while 175 (71%) included primary and secondary data.

The remaining 100 studies (of 345 or 29%) provided some information about the review process followed. Of these 100 studies, 42 (42%) were based exclusively on secondary data while 58 (58%) included primary and secondary data. Of these 100 studies, 45 (45%) were published in peer reviewed journals; 40 (40%) were supervised theses or student papers reviewed by an academic advisor; ten (10%) mentioned an external peer review process or acknowledged peer reviewers by name and title; four studies (4%) were reviewed during expert group meetings or consultations; and one study (1%) described an internal review process.

The above points notwithstanding, many of the 135 studies where only partial text was available were from peer reviewed journals, which may potentially be of higher quality than “grey” literature. This is important because most practitioners and policymakers do not have access to formally published, peer reviewed research; they often do not have access to library databases and journals and books are often prohibitively expensive. Regardless of quality, lack of access to such a large portion of TIP research may constrain one’s understanding of the scope and nature of TIP as well as inappropriately influence what interventions are designed and implemented.

²⁰ Research Information Network (2010) Peer review: A guide for researchers. United Kingdom: Research Information Network, p. 4.

²¹ The review found that 83 articles (or 37% of the articles reviewed) were non-empirical articles published in journals that did not use the peer review process. Of these 83 articles, 68 articles (or 31%) were articles published in law journals, focusing on legal analysis of the scope and practical efficacy of the proposed legal protections applicable to victims of trafficking. Goździak, E.M. and M.N. Bump (2008) Data and Research on Human Trafficking: Bibliography of Research-Based Literature. Washington, D.C., United States: Georgetown University, p. 26.

²² This applies to TIP projects generally with donors often reluctant to fund and commit to longer term, multi-year projects, in spite of human trafficking being recognized as an entrenched and structural problem.

FINDING 7

A focus on cross-sectional and short-term methods

Cross-sectional studies engage a new sample of people each time they are carried out, whereas longitudinal studies follow the same sample of people over time. Most TIP research is cross-sectional – that is, a one-off exercise, a snapshot of a particular moment in time. And yet longitudinal research offers opportunities to understand and answer specific research questions, including, but not limited to, long-term outcomes and effects of CTIP interventions that are not visible with cross-sectional approaches. For example, measuring the success of reintegration interventions benefits from a longitudinal lens as victim reintegration outcomes change over time, with victims facing setbacks and successes at different stages of their post-trafficking lives. The criminal justice lens is also time-sensitive, with different issues and challenges arising at different stages of the criminal justice process and beyond. Longitudinal evidence offers additional forms of critical information to inform interventions – to understand how an economic sector functions and changes over time, how worker/victim experiences may change in response to different factors, how businesses may adjust their operations and so on. Tracking specific trends and patterns, including noting changes and improvements over time, can provide critical information to inform programming and policy work.

Very few longitudinal studies have been conducted globally in the TIP field. Only three longitudinal research projects have been conducted in the five countries studied, resulting in twelve reports. Of these twelve reports, nine were from one long-term longitudinal research project on reintegration in one country; two drew from the same longitudinal survey with victims receiving post-trafficking assistance in three Mekong countries; and one study included follow-up interviews with nine of 15 trafficking victims after one year. All twelve reports focused on some aspect of victim assistance and reintegration.

No longitudinal research was conducted on the criminal justice process or considered victims' or suspected perpetrators' experiences of the criminal justice process over time.

AT A GLANCE

- Very few longitudinal studies on TIP have been conducted in the Mekong region
- Twelve longitudinal studies represent only three discrete longitudinal research projects
- All twelve longitudinal studies focus on some aspect of victim assistance and reintegration

The dearth of longitudinal research is likely in large part a function of available resources and a lack of interest or tolerance in the funding community for long-term, complex research projects. Longitudinal research is complex, time-consuming, expensive and involves ethical issues that must be carefully considered, particularly in conducting research with vulnerable persons. At the same time, some research questions may only be meaningfully addressed with a longitudinal perspective, and it is important to consider how more time-sensitive and time-specific data collection and research can be undertaken. This may include, for example, follow-up studies of a particular issue or trend, longitudinal research, or through M&E program data. This would require funding, which is not always available. Some of the politics of TIP funding makes some of the more appropriate research approaches and methods not possible.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND ACTION

This research review has examined the nature and quality of TIP research conducted in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam over the past decade. Overall this TIP research was of uneven quality and robustness. While there were many high quality studies on TIP in the region, we have identified common issues in the way that TIP research has been conducted, which, if addressed, would substantially enhance the quality of future TIP research. Moreover, these issues also exist in how CTIP program data is collected and used. For example, common terms and definitions are not always applied in how organizations collect program data, and victim case management data is generally collected differently by different organizations and sometimes even within the same organization. There is also generally a lack of information about the approach, methods, process, samples and limitations when data is collected and presented by CTIP projects. Ethical issues that are present in program data collection are un- or under-considered and most TIP programs lack quality assurance

and review procedures when data is used and presented. Overall there is a need to enhance the way in which TIP research and CTIP program data is collected, analyzed and used. It is only with robust and ethical evidence that we can build the body of knowledge on TIP and have the information and understanding needed to design, implement and evaluate effective CTIP interventions.

The following recommendations offer guidance in conducting TIP research as well as in the collection of CTIP program data. As a next step in learning and evidence-informed programming we also need to think about how we can better communicate and use knowledge and evidence about TIP to inform CTIP policy and practice. This requires attention to how we can incentivize the collection and use of better quality TIP data and research, including donor commitment to prioritize and invest in building a robust evidence base through research and M&E work.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONDUCTING HIGH QUALITY AND RIGOROUS TIP RESEARCH



Clearly define and explain terms and concepts used in TIP research.

Terms and concepts used in TIP research and data collection should be clearly defined and explained at the outset and used consistently throughout the project and study. This is necessary for those conducting the research to ensure that the data is collected and analyzed in line with the agreed terms and does not vary by researcher or by analyst. Clear terms and definitions are also needed by those reading and using the data – as programmers, policymakers or other researchers – to ensure that they are able to understand the meaning, limitations and application of research results. Using internationally or locally agreed and defined terminology in TIP research allows readers to fully understand the findings and results and to compare findings between different studies on the same or similar topics. Harmonizing definitions with the existing international legal definition, to the greatest extent possible, broadens potential opportunities to meaningfully comparing different research studies and, thereby, leverages the potential value of the research beyond the specific scope of any particular project.



Ensure that data sources are appropriate for answering the research question.

Identifying the right research questions is critical in TIP research; the “right” research questions are informed by the needs of the users and based on a review of previous research. The research questions or data collection topic should determine the choice of data sources – whether primary or secondary data, direct or indirect sources. The design of research projects and data collection initiatives need to align data sources with research questions and more carefully attend to what limitations arise when there is a mismatch between the two.



Include primary data sources when suitable for answering research questions and ethical to do so.

Some research questions should be answered with primary data; other research questions may be answered with secondary data. The specific research questions also determine what type of primary data may be needed – whether from trafficking victims, those at risk and/or various types of key informants. The inclusion of trafficking victims and vulnerable persons as data sources is often essential in meaningfully answering some particular research questions – for example, about their experiences of trafficking, criminal justice responses, victim assistance and so on. All such data collection must strictly adhere to ethical and legal requirements.



Conduct a careful and thorough literature review to prepare for all TIP research as well as to support analysis.

Every research study should be based on a robust literature review – to identify what information and research already exists; to situate research questions in the existing knowledge base; to identify appropriate data sources in relation to research questions; and to identify previous research that can offer guidance on how to proceed and potential limitations. Research without a careful and thorough literature review will lessen the probability that new research will add new knowledge to the TIP field and fill research gaps.



Clearly present and explain how data was collected (the approach, methodology and process) and what the data represents.

Any research study, whether based on primary or secondary data, should clearly outline the research approach and method as well as the process itself (for example, tools used for the study, who collected the data, how was collected and so on). Research studies should include a clear explanation of the research sample (who was included) as well as the sampling process (how respondents were contacted, data gathered and so on) and any methodological limitations or biases that arise as a result of how the research was conducted. Research studies based on secondary data should also describe the approach and method, not least in terms of the scope, nature and parameters of the secondary data reviewed including limitations.



Be transparent in data analysis and presentation, including research limitations.

It is important to be transparent about the research process as a whole including limitations and constraints faced. All research has limitations that provide parameters for what can (and cannot) be concluded. The presentation of these limitations is essential in accurately framing research findings and allowing readers to assess and weigh the findings and interpret meaning. It is also important to be clear about any external factors that have informed the research process, including who chooses the research questions and who funds the research.



Adhere to legal and ethical requirements in conducting TIP research and explain these procedures when presenting research findings.

Ensure all TIP research is conducted in line with legal and ethical requirements, including ethics review procedures and data protection legislation. Robust ethical protocols in line with international standards and national laws should be put in place and followed by all organizations and institutions conducting TIP research and using TIP data for research purposes. Research studies should also include a discussion of any ethical issues faced in the research, including how these were anticipated and addressed.



Establish and implement procedures for quality assurance and review throughout the research project.

All research should be subject to formal review and quality assurance procedures, from the design and planning phase, through data collection, and during analysis and presentation of the research. Organizations or research teams should establish and implement a robust quality assurance and review process for all research conducted by an organization or institution. Whenever possible, external experts should be engaged in quality assurance, ideally throughout the research process.



Explore opportunities for longitudinal research when appropriate to answer research questions and when it is ethical to do so.

Longitudinal research offers opportunities to understand and answer specific research questions, such as the long-term outcomes and effects of CTIP interventions that are not visible with cross-sectional approaches. At the same time, longitudinal research is complex, time-consuming, expensive and involves ethical issues that must be carefully considered. Assess the benefits and limitations of longitudinal versus cross-sectional research in relation to specific research questions and conduct longitudinal research and data collection when needed to answer specific research questions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLECTING ROBUST AND HIGH QUALITY TIP PROGRAM DATA INCLUDING M&E DATA



Use commonly agreed definitions and terms within an organization or institution and across country projects.

To facilitate inter- and intra-agency communication, cooperation and understanding, it is important that the CTIP community uses common definitions and terminology. Established international and national legally enshrined definitions should guide the work of CTIP organizations and institutions. Within an organization or institution (including across its various projects and initiatives within and across countries) there should be a consensus on terminology and concepts to support the collection of consistent and harmonized program data, evidence and research.



Ensure harmonization of TIP data collection within and between organizations and institutions.

CTIP data should be harmonized and in line with international or national definitions to allow organizations and institutions to leverage program data to inform the TIP knowledge base and CTIP interventions. This allows for the comparability of datasets across organizations and institutions and across countries. At minimum, organizations and institutions should ensure that their CTIP data is harmonized within the organization or institution and across all of its projects and work, even in different countries.



Promote the better use of various types of program data to inform the CTIP evidence base.

CTIP programs generate a great deal of evidence that can contribute to knowledge on TIP and actions to address it. This includes M&E data, project assessments and evaluations, case management data, baseline surveys and so on. However, careful planning, resources and technical expertise are needed to determine how data is collected from the outset of a project, including ensuring that program data is technically robust and that it is collected safely and ethically. Increased investment of time and resources in M&E is needed to improve the quality and, thus, usefulness of this data. The not uncommon compartmentalization of M&E in CTIP programs must also be addressed. Even when data is robust, it is often not used to inform and enhance program management decisions.



Leverage primary data from CTIP programs to directly inform programming and policy and to support learning within the wider CTIP community.

Organizations and institutions that collect primary data in the context of their program work and M&E tasks – for example, case management data from assisted trafficking victims or on-going M&E – have a unique opportunity to leverage this data to inform the TIP knowledge base. However, when such data collection is of low quality or unethically collected, there is tremendous potential for this data to harm those from whom it was collected and lead to an inaccurate and weak evidence base. Organizations or research teams must ensure that all TIP data collection is technically and ethically robust, and that it aligns with legal requirements and higher order ethical standards to protect trafficking victims.



Be clear about what program data can (and cannot) reveal about TIP, including an explanation of limitations in the presentation of all data.

Program data has biases and limitations in terms of what it can and cannot reveal about TIP and CTIP interventions. For example, data about assisted trafficking victims is not representative of all trafficking victims and may constitute a particular and unrepresentative subset of trafficking victims. Interventions designed based on this data will, therefore, be unlikely to be appropriate for all trafficking victims. Organizations and data collection teams must be clear from the outset of any data collection, through the analysis of the limitations and biases of the different types of program data, and ensure that the presentation and use of this data does not suggest conclusions and findings that cannot be reasonably drawn from the specific dataset.



Ensure all TIP data collection conducted for a project and M&E is in line with legal and ethical requirements.

All data collection must be in line with ethical standards and relevant data protection legislation, particularly the protection of personal data. There may also be multiple legal jurisdictions at play, including legal requirements of the donor country, the country where data is collected and the country where the implementing agency is headquartered. When data collection is funded by multiple donors and/or implemented in multiple countries, additional legal requirements will apply. Weak data protection laws in a country does not excuse inadequate data protection. Organizations and institutions may leverage robust data protection legislation from other countries or regions.



Establish quality assurance and review procedures for all data collection conducted for CTIP programming, to be followed during design, collection, analysis and presentation.

Each organization or institution publishing data about TIP should implement a formal and ideally external review procedure to ensure the quality of the data and results. This procedure should apply to the presentation of all types of program data as well as assessments, surveys, evaluations and so on. This should include quality assurance throughout the entire data collection process. Establishing or strengthening a mechanism to ensure that CTIP project investment in routine data collection (for example, baseline data, monitoring data and specific studies/assessment) is being conducted rigorously will ensure that this investment will contribute to deepening understanding of evidence in TIP.

APPENDIX 1

Methodology and approach

The research review involved compiling published research on the issue of trafficking in persons (TIP) in and from five of the Mekong countries – Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam – between 2008 and 2018. Library-based and internet searches were conducted to identify relevant research according to a pre-determined set of criteria. Selection criteria included: 1) research on trafficking in persons, 2) Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam (whether as origin, transit, destination countries), 3) different economic sectors and forms of TIP 4) qualitative and quantitative research, 5) peer reviewed and “grey” literature, 6) within an eleven-year time frame (from 2008 to 2018).²³

Key word searches were conducted on library-based and internet search engines (Proquest, Worldcat.org, Google Scholar and Google search). For both Proquest and Worldcat.org, we reviewed all “hits” (search engine results for a query) that were identified but included only those that met our criteria, as outlined above. For Google Scholar and Google searches we reviewed the first 100 hits, depending on the extent to which the search yielded high or low results. Research strings included a combination of human trafficking (or some variation) + form of trafficking or economic sector + country or region (of origin, transit or destination). Some searches also included the keywords “research” or “data” in combination with the above keywords.

We also searched the websites of specific organizations, institutions and universities, which commission or conduct TIP research – for example, International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM),

SELECTION CRITERIA USED FOR RESEARCH SEARCHES

- Research on trafficking in persons
- Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam
- Different economic sectors and forms of TIP
- Qualitative and quantitative research
- Peer reviewed and “grey” literature
- Eleven-year time frame (2008 to 2018)

United Nations Action for Cooperation Against Trafficking in Persons (UN-ACT), Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) – as well as smaller organizations working on the issue in the five countries and specific universities known to conduct TIP research.²⁴ This captured studies that we were aware of but that were not always found through the above searches. Targeted searches were also conducted on Research Gate and Academia.edu (social networking sites for researchers to share papers, follow research in a particular field and communicate with other researchers) and Freedom Collaborative (an online service platform to facilitate connectivity, knowledge-sharing and cross-border cooperation among anti-trafficking stakeholders). We also reviewed the table of contents of specialized anti-trafficking journals and edited volumes on human trafficking²⁵ for any studies that met the search criteria²⁶ as well as past research reviews conducted on TIP.²⁷

²³ The original time frame was one decade (2008 to 2017) but was extended to September 2018 as a number of relevant studies and resources were released over the course of data analysis.

²⁴ This included, for example, Mahidol University and Chulalongkorn University in Thailand.

Preliminary searches were conducted to test the search protocol and modifications were made. Because the initial review focused specifically on TIP in agriculture, construction and domestic work, we initially focused our searches on these economic sectors, including searches for specific commodities. However, because much research covers multiple forms of TIP, we expanded our searches to include research and resources from other economic sectors (for example, fishing, forestry, manufacturing, mining) and for other forms of exploitation (for example, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, forced criminality, begging, forced military service). This was also done to be able to compare the scope and nature of TIP research undertaken in different sectors and for different forms of exploitation. Once these adjustments were made, we systematically searched for, collected and reviewed relevant research, as well as conducted directed searches for specific titles or organizations and institutions.

In practice, it was sometimes difficult to distinguish what did (and did not) constitute TIP research as some studies did not specifically refer to trafficking in persons but did describe abusive and exploitative experiences (including exploitation and various forms of force, control and coercion) that may constitute human trafficking, according to the UN TIP Protocol. By contrast, some studies were presented as trafficking research and yet the data analyzed did not necessarily indicate instances of human trafficking according to national or international definitions. For this review, we included only studies that were explicitly about TIP or which contained

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

for example: "human trafficking", "people trafficking", "trafficking", "trafficking in persons", "trafficked people", "forced labor", "labor exploitation", "modern slavery"



ECONOMIC SECTOR OR FORM OF TIP

for example: "domestic worker" (including "cleaner", "nanny", "maid"); "construction" (including "builder", "construction worker", "laborer"); "agriculture" (including "plantation", "farming"); "sexual exploitation" (including "prostitution"); "fishing" (including "fishers"); "manufacturing" (including "factory work"); "forestry" (including "logging"); mining (including "miners"); begging (including street selling); forced military service (including "forced military labor"); "forced criminality"; "marriage" (including "forced marriage"); etc.



COUNTRY/REGION

for example: "Southeast Asia", "ASEAN", "Mekong", "Greater Mekong Sub-region", "Thailand", "Cambodia", "Viet Nam", "Myanmar", "Burma", "Laos PDR", "Laos"

²⁵ This included: Kneebone, S. and J. Debeljack (2012) *Transnational Crime and Human Rights: Responses to Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge; Piotrowicz, R., C. Rijken and B.H. Uhl (Eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Human Trafficking*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge; and Yea, S. (Ed.) *Human Trafficking in Asia: Forcing Issues*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

²⁶ This included: *Journal of Human Trafficking* (publication started in 2015), *Anti-Trafficking Review* (publication started in 2012), *Dignity* (publication started in 2016), *Journal of Trafficking and Human Exploitation* (publication started in 2017) and *Journal of Modern Slavery* (originally called *Slavery Today Journal* when publication started in 2014).

²⁷ This included Gozdzia, E., S. Graveline, W. Skippings and M. Song (2015) *Bibliography of Research-Based Literature on Human Trafficking: 2008-2014*. Washington, D.C., United States: Georgetown University; Gozdzia, E. and M. Bump (2008) *Data and Research on Human Trafficking: Bibliography of Research-Based Literature*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University; Okech, D., Y.J. Choi, J. Elkins and A.C. Burns (2018) 'Seventeen years of human trafficking research in social work: A review of the literature', *Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work*, 15(2), p. 103-122; Russell, A. (2018) 'Human Trafficking: A Research Synthesis on Human-Trafficking Literature in Academic Journals from 2000-2014', *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 4(2), p. 114-136.

information which clearly indicated situations and experiences akin to TIP. We also searched for other types of resources (for example, evaluations and assessments) that may not be considered traditional research but contained information on different forms of TIP and exploitation in various economic sectors. Further, we included reports conducted annually or on a regular basis (for example, the U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report), the U.S. Department of Labor Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Report on Trafficking in Persons), which provided country- and also sector-specific information.

The search protocol yielded hundreds of hits which were then screened/assessed by the research team. Studies and resources that met the criteria were included. Excluded materials were those that did not fall within the timeline, reports and publications on TIP that were not research-based or that did not include information about trafficking (such as organizational annual reports, descriptions of anti-trafficking activities, opinion pieces and so on). In case of uncertainty the research team made a joint decision on whether to include or exclude a study. We did not make

a decision about inclusion or exclusion based on research quality. The intention was to map the landscape of TIP research and resources and then assess issues of quality as part of the review process. All research or resources that met the inclusion criteria were entered into the research framework, hosted in Microsoft Excel.

The research team manually double checked all entries to eliminate studies that were not within the 2008-2018 timeframe as well as duplicate or redundant studies (for example, when authors names were listed differently in various databases, when studies were listed both by commissioning or publishing organization and by author). At the end of the process, 480 studies were included in the framework.

We developed a framework for coding the research (that is, breaking down data into first level concepts, or master headings, and second-level categories, or subheadings)²⁸, tested the framework and modified accordingly. The main categories and sub-categories are outlined in Table #2 below, but this does not include all fields that were coded in the analytical framework.

Table 2: Taxonomy for categorization and coding of the 480 resources.

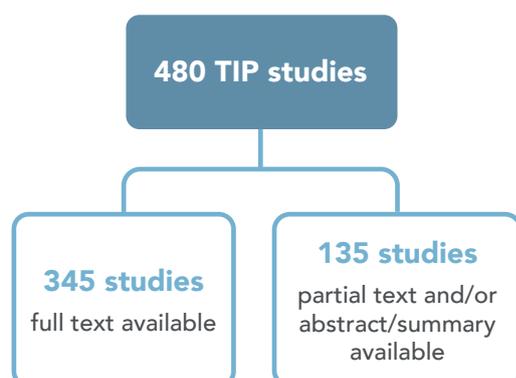
Publication information	Author Year of publication Abstract Link (when available) Peer reviewed or “grey” literature Information about quality assurance and review
Research topic	Research aim General topic Specific topic Category of topic (e.g. prevention, protection, prosecution, law and policy, nature of TIP, prevalence, etc.) Form(s) of TIP included Geographical coverage (source, transit, destination)

²⁸ Coding entails grouping or categorizing entries after identifying distinct concepts and categories in the data, which then form the basic units of the analysis.

Research approach	Qualitative, quantitative, mixed method Data sources (primary and/or secondary data) Methods and tools used Defined terms Limitations presented Ethical considerations
Data sources and research sample	Primary or secondary data Type of secondary data reviewed/nature of data sources, including accurate use Type of primary data including: Composition of the research sample Sample size Type of respondent (trafficking victim, migrant worker, social worker, police, government official, etc.) Age of respondents Gender of respondents Nationality of respondents Year(s) of data collection Research site(s) Date (range) of data collection

The process of coding and data entry was time consuming as information for the various categories was not readily available. The full text was available for 345 of the 480 studies while for 135 studies only partial text and/or an abstract or summary were available. This was because some research could not be located either online or through libraries and some research was only available for purchase and it was beyond the resources of the project to purchase all studies. While it was generally possible to discern relevant information in relation to key findings from these 135 studies, when this was not the case this is made clear in the analysis.

Diagram 5: Number of studies for which the full text was available



Even when full texts were available, the information needed for coding the above categories was often either unavailable or difficult to find. On a basic level, publication information (including who authored the report, year of publication and so on) was not always clearly presented. A number of studies did not include the publication date either at all or in a readily identifiable place (for example, on the cover or inside cover page), which required searching through the document or accompanying publication information to identify the date of publication. In other cases, information was not provided about significant categories like methodology and research sample or even the year(s) when data collection and analysis took place. Similarly, most studies (71%) did not provide any information about a quality assurance or review process which may indicate that it was not included or simply not presented. Discussions of ethics were also largely absent, with 61% of studies that included primary data not discussing ethical considerations at all.

LIMITATIONS

There are a number of limitations to this research review as outlined below. While adjustments were made to compensate for the limitations noted below, these nonetheless are important to keep in mind in reading the above findings:

- The potential for missing TIP research**

Not all TIP research or resources that met the selection criteria may have been captured by the search protocol. Some studies that we were aware of did not come up in searches. This was the case even after amending and tailoring the search terms as well as conducting specific and targeted searches by organization or publication, as outlined above.
- Language barriers**

TIP research and resources included in the research review were primarily in English, with opportunistic inclusion of some studies in French, Swedish and Thai, given the language skills of the research team. Studies conducted and presented in other languages will, therefore, be missing from the review. This limitation will be particularly pronounced in countries where researchers may be more likely to conduct and publish research in their national languages.
- Questions of research quality**

The quality of existing TIP research is decidedly uneven and inclusion in this research review should not be read as an endorsement of quality. This research review was intended to identify the scope and nature of TIP research in five of the Mekong countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam), with particular attention to TIP in the agricultural field, in the construction sector and for domestic work.
- No access to some studies**

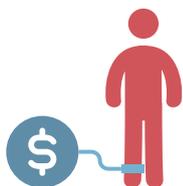
While we were able to collect information about 480 resources, we did not have access to the full documents in all cases. In some cases, we had access to only portions of the study or a summary or abstract, as discussed above. The full text was available for 345 of the 480 studies. While partial text and/or an abstract or summary were available for 135 studies, it was nonetheless generally possible to discern relevant information in relation to key findings. When sufficient information was not available from these 135 studies, this is made clear in the analysis.

APPENDIX 2

Terms and definitions



Child labor is a subset of working children. Child labor includes employment below the minimum age as established in national legislation (excluding permissible light work), the worst forms of child labor, and hazardous unpaid household services. Child labor is thus a narrower concept than children in employment because child labor excludes children who work only a few hours a week in permitted light work and those who are above the minimum age who engage in work not classified as a worst form of child labor.²⁹ While child labor does not have an internationally agreed definition, there is push from many working on the issue for an international definition of child labor, including what constitutes worst forms of child labor.



Debt bondage is “the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or of those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined”.³⁰



Forced labor is defined as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily”.³¹



Labor exploitation is work that is exploitative, such as when it involves low or no pay, long hours, insufficient breaks, broken promises, bullying or contravention of labor rights.



Modern slavery (or modern day slavery) is not defined in law, but is instead an umbrella term that is used to refer to situations of exploitation, including both sex trafficking and compelled labor.³³

²⁹ U.S. Department of Labor (2016) Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. United States: U.S. Department of Labor.

³⁰ United Nations (1956) Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, Article 1.

³¹ ILO (1930) Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour, CO29, Article 2.

³² Lewis, H., P. Dwyer, S. Hodkinson and L. Waite (2015) Precarious Lives: Forced Labour, Exploitation and Asylum. Bristol, United Kingdom: Policy Press. J/

³³ TIP (2019) ‘What is Modern Slavery?’, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. Washington, D.C., United States: United States Department of State.



Migrant worker refers to a person who is engaged or had been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national.³⁴



TIP research and data collection is the overarching practice of gathering and assigning meaning to data on various aspects of trafficking in persons including scope, nature and responses to TIP. This includes research conducted by researchers, institutions or organizations as well as a wide range of administrative data collection by various organizations and institutions.³⁵

ACT
MEANS
PURPOSE

Trafficking in persons refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes “at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”. In the case of children (under 18 years of age), recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in [the definition of trafficking in persons].³⁶



Worst forms of child labor refers to activities described in Article 3 of ILO Convention 182 on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, including: all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, and forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; the use, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography, or for pornographic purposes; the use, procuring, or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; and work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children.³⁷

³⁴ United Nations (1990) Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, Article 2.

³⁵ Surtees, R., A. Brunovskis & L.S. Johnson (2018) The Science (and Art) of Understanding Trafficking in Persons: Good Practice in TIP Data Collection. Washington, D.C., United States: NEXUS Institute.

³⁶ United Nations (2000) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, UN Doc A/45/49, Article 3.

³⁷ ILO (1999) Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, C182, Article 3.

APPENDIX 3

References cited

Below is the list of references cited in this specific research review. It does not include all research compiled for the research review. For a complete list of the 480 studies identified and compiled for this research review, please see: NEXUS Institute (2019) A bibliography of research on trafficking in persons in the Mekong region (2008-2018). Bangkok, Thailand and Washington, D.C, United States: NEXUS Institute, USAID and Winrock International.

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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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