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WINROCK
INTERNATIONAL

GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING



LESSONS FROM USAID THAILAND COUNTER TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

April 2022

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|---|
| CTIP | Counter trafficking in persons |
| GESI | Gender Equality and Social Inclusion |
| GIDAP | Gender and Inclusive Development Action Plan |
| LGBTQ I | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex |
| MDT | Multi-disciplinary Team |
| NGO | Non-government organization |
| OCA | Organizational Capacity Assessment |
| SBCC | Social Behavior Change Communication |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

INTRODUCTION

This learning paper was developed to document lessons from the current Winrock counter-trafficking in persons (CTIP) programming in Thailand, as related to gender and social inclusions (GESI) and to inform future CTIP initiatives.

USAID Thailand CTIP is a \$10 million, five-year (2017-2022) project that aims to reduce trafficking in persons (TIP) and better protect victims' rights in Thailand. To fulfill these objectives, the project employs a 5C strategy: community engagement, change agents, communication, collaboration, and continuity. The project partners with the private sector, government, migrant groups, at-risk communities, and the media to foster collaboration supporting the project's main objectives.

This paper is the second in a series of learning products by USAID Thailand CTIP. The learning papers aim to identify achievements, challenges, and potential risks and ensure that future activities are grounded in experience and positively impact vulnerable persons and trafficking survivors.

The assessment conducted for this learning paper set out to answer two questions:

1. What are the GESI issues and patterns in priority sectors in each target province that remain as knowledge gaps from the project gender analysis?
2. How well has the project Gender and Inclusive Development Action Plan (GIDAP) addressed these challenges and gaps in order to implement more effective and inclusive activities in the target provinces?

Due to the ambitious nature of these questions and limitations related to COVID-19 regulations, this learning paper focuses specifically on what has worked well and what has not worked under USAID Thailand CTIP GESI programming.

The learnings presented in this paper are derived from interviews with six key informants (four - with Winrock International staff and two - with USAID Thailand CTIP grantees) and relevant documentation such as the 2021 USAID Thailand GESI Analysis report, and the 2021 GIDAP. As this paper is documenting the learnings from the USAID Thailand CTIP project, interview requests targeted only those working with the project and were held between December 2021 and March 2022.

The learning paper is structured as follows: the first section provides a brief overview of USAID Thailand CTIP GESI activities and summarizes its key objectives and approaches. The second section of the paper presents four key learnings identified through the interviews. The third section presents conclusions and recommendations for strengthening GESI programming in Thailand.

Learnings At a Glance:

LEARNING 1:

It is important to do a GESI analysis early in the project, use the findings to draft the Action Plan, and update both regularly

LEARNING 2:

The position of GESI Specialist is critical to effective GESI integration in programming

LEARNING 3:

Continuous and diverse engagement is central to shift the GESI practices of stakeholders

LEARNING 4:

It is important to look beyond indicators and document other GESI outcomes through learning activities



OVERVIEW OF USAID THAILAND CTIP GESI PROGRAMMING

In addition to the 5C strategy that was highlighted in the Introduction of this paper, the USAID Thailand CTIP project incorporates a cross-cutting GESI approach to address GESI research questions, service delivery, and emerging GESI issues. Under the project's approach, GESI considerations are integrated into various aspects of planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

A GESI approach looks at participation, voice, access, agency, and influence by various groups and how these aspects impact CTIP programming. The GESI lens helps practitioners better understand how to develop and implement CTIP activities in a non-discriminatory way.¹ Discrimination and social exclusion based on gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, or other factors – are key drivers of vulnerability to trafficking in persons (TIP).² As outlined in Winrock-developed *Integrating GESI into CTIP Programming Toolkit*,³ "Any serious attempt at combatting human trafficking must utilize a comprehensive and effective strategy that identifies the unique drivers that impact diverse groups of people differently so that activities that promote prevention, protection and accountability are more inclusive."

One full-time GESI Specialist oversees the GESI work of the USAID Thailand CTIP project. In addition, several technical USAID Thailand CTIP staff have received GESI training and are responsible for applying a GESI-sensitive approach in the areas of collaboration with the Royal Thai Government, in private sector engagement, and within the social behavior change communications (SBCC).

The USAID Thailand CTIP GESI approach involves integrating GESI into planned project activities and coordinating with governmental and non-governmental project partners to enhance GESI considerations in their day-to-day work. Sample activities include:

- USAID Thailand CTIP staff carefully consider the sex and gender balance of meeting participants and endeavor to ensure equitable representation when planning an event.
- During the events, seminars, workshops, and meetings, USAID Thailand CTIP team ensures that there is balanced dialogue between participants and certain individuals and groups do not dominate the conversation or decisions.
- USAID Thailand CTIP staff increase the knowledge of governmental and civil society partners on the vulnerabilities of specific groups, such as migrants, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI), and strengthen partners' capacity to apply a GESI approach in their work.
- GESI is also integrated into USAID Thailand CTIP communication activities, such as SBCC activities and campaigns on international days such as International Women's Day.

1 USAID, 2020, Integrating gender and social inclusion into counter trafficking programming toolkit: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/a4fd1ec1-f6b1-4e7b-8662-33dc-b6c93817>

2 USAID, 2020, Integrating gender and social inclusion into counter trafficking programming toolkit: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/a4fd1ec1-f6b1-4e7b-8662-33dc-b6c93817>

3 <https://winrock.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Asia-CTIP-GESI-Toolkit.pdf>

Strengthening the capacity of partners, including government counterparts and grantees, to apply a GESI approach in their work is done through inclusive and participatory GESI training sessions. Such sessions have raised awareness on the needs of groups such as migrants who often face discrimination and social exclusion, and the value of adopting a GESI approach when working with beneficiaries like trafficked persons. The project also invites partners to roundtable discussions with government officials to discuss GESI issues and update on the situation of vulnerable groups, including cases as well as trends that might lead to increased TIP risks, and to identify challenges faced by multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) in their TIP prevention and protection work. Partners are also encouraged to reflect on their GESI integration experience at pause and reflect workshops regularly organized by the project. Pause and reflect sessions provide an opportunity for project staff and partners to think collectively about the project activities, gap areas, challenges and how they could be approached differently.

The project has achieved positive results in terms of increasing the capacity of partners and grantees to apply the GESI approach. For example, one partner non-governmental organization (NGO) initially served only male beneficiaries; however, after the training, the NGO realized that female migrant workers performing fish processing work should also be included. In another example, the training led to the partner NGO using a gender lens in evaluating their activities and reviewed how their activities differently affect women, men and various ethnic groups. Finally, as a result of USAID Thailand CTIP capacity strengthening, another NGO partner has included GESI topics in their training for migrant workers, such as the right for equal pay for men and women, and survivor-centered approach when dealing with possible victims.

The project also endeavors to ensure that beneficiaries have a voice in all activities and events. For example, the project has invited migrant workers to join the roundtable discussions and share their perspectives on the challenges in accessing labor protection, health, and other services.

USAID Thailand CTIP GESI work is guided by research findings and action plans. In November 2017 a GESI analysis was completed, consisting of literature review and primary data collection, followed by drafting of the first GIDAP in December 2017. In 2019 – 2020, a follow-up GESI analysis was conducted and highlighted the current gaps and challenges related to GESI. This analysis included reviewing constraints in GESI work in different geographic contexts and in labor sectors and provided recommendations for strengthening GESI programming.



LEARNINGS

LEARNING 1:

It is important to do a GESI analysis early in the project, use the findings to draft the Action Plan, and update both regularly

The first learning highlights the importance of planning very early in project design for a GESI analysis. Without conducting a GESI analysis very early in project design, the unique needs of beneficiaries, and program entry points may be missed.

As noted in the Introduction of this learning paper, in the early phase of the USAID Thailand CTIP project (in November 2017) a GESI analysis was conducted, which was swiftly followed by the preparation of a first GIDAP in December 2017. In 2019 - 2020 a GESI analysis of all activities was conducted. The interviews conducted for this learning paper highlighted that the GESI analysis, and GIDAP are essential to effective GESI programming. By doing the GESI analysis right at the start of the project, staff are much better positioned to identify partners, available resources, and knowledge and capacity gaps that the project can address.

As highlighted in the above referenced GESI toolkit, the GESI analysis is useful for identifying, understanding, and explaining gender relations that exist at different levels (household, community, society), and power relations in community and other contexts. The GESI analysis also reviews experiences of marginalization and exclusion of groups of people on the basis of economic status, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion. It considers how these factors interact, and how they may lead to discrimination and barriers to participation in society. The GESI analysis is crucial to programming because it helps staff and partners to understand what needs to change in order to promote social inclusion.⁴ It enables the GESI Specialist, other staff and partners to design and implement activities that increase awareness of GESI in CTIP, meet the needs and priorities of vulnerable groups, and assess the positive and negative effects of CTIP activities on beneficiaries.⁵

Interview participants highlighted the important steps in GESI analysis:

1. The GESI Specialist takes the lead role in planning and conducting the GESI analysis.
2. An appropriate amount of time (at least two months) is devoted for reviewing literature and policy documents as well as collecting primary data through interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys of various stakeholders.
3. Data is analyzed, and key findings are presented in the GESI Analysis report.

Interview participants highlighted that a key learning from USAID Thailand CTIP's five years of GESI programming is that the GESI analysis is not a one-off activity. The GESI analysis needs to be updated regularly – preferably annually – in order to understand and document any changes in laws and policies related to GESI; actors and activities; and context of discrimination. Interview participants suggested that the GESI analysis should be considered a 'living document' that is updated each year in order to plan for the following year's GESI activities. On a regular basis, projects should engage with partners and work closely with them on the co-planning of activities.

Interview participants suggested that an annual update of the GESI analysis is possible if the project uses GESI roundtable discussions, or a GESI working group as a platform to meet provincial and national level government officials, NGOs, employers, and migrant workers to assess changes in policy on GESI, as well as the changing environment. Interview participants further suggested that, as employers and migrant workers may feel uncomfortable sharing information and thoughts on changes in the GESI environment in the presence of government officials, individual interviews should also be conducted with employers and migrant workers, to ensure that their voices are heard.

Interview participants highlighted that an effective GESI analysis considers information from different sources. In addition to conducting interviews with different government officials, NGO representatives, partners, grantees, beneficiaries – the GESI analysis should include different genders, age groups, and ethnic backgrounds, so that the sample is as diverse and inclusive as possible.

4 See <https://winrock.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Asia-CTIP-GESI-Toolkit.pdf>

5 See <https://winrock.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Asia-CTIP-GESI-Toolkit.pdf>

“ The GESI analysis combined desk review, with some reports from partners, grantees and others, and interviews with partners, grantees, and migrants. We asked for help from grantees to identify some key informants (migrants) then collected information from them. Then after that we realized that we needed roundtable discussions. Not to randomly talk about inclusion, but to specifically discuss about how the rights of migrants could be viewed through the lens of GESI.” (Interview with a USAID Thailand CTIP staff member)

Interview participants underscored that the GESI analysis should be conducted right at the beginning of the CTIP project – before the design of any activities - and requires an adequate amount of time. The GESI analysis takes a significant amount of work, involving the collection and review of legislation, policies, regulations, literature, and primary data. As the quote below suggests, rushing the initial GESI analysis can mean that priority areas for programming are not adequately identified, and CTIP activities are not planned as well as they should be.

“ For the GESI analysis, it needs a lot more work, a lot of time to have information. The analysis was completed but we did not yet know which provinces we would work on. More time is required, otherwise it requires a start over.” (Interview with a USAID Thailand CTIP staff member)

The interviews further highlighted that the findings from the GESI analysis are the basis to guide the development of the GIDAP. The GESI analysis report along with the GIDAP are the documents that guide all project work, such as the workplans for the USAID Thailand CTIP project.

“ We included the findings from the GESI analysis into the Annual Work Plan. We also used it to consider the stand-alone activities. To develop a twin track approach – one is mainstreaming, and another is the targeted actions to respond to the current needs” (Interview with a USAID Thailand CTIP staff member)

Interview participants further suggested that, similarly to the GESI analysis, the GIDAP should be regularly reviewed in order to plan for GESI activities annually. Similarly to the GESI analysis, reviewing the GIDAP regularly requires consultation with partners, and co-planning of activities. The USAID Thailand CTIP project planned held the consultations during the annual report writing phase. Through the process of writing the annual report, the GESI Specialist and other relevant staff were able to reflect on what the project had achieved in the previous year, and identify how to strengthen or expand activities for the following year.

Finally, the interviews identified that few USAID Thailand CTIP partners and grantees have their own GIDAP or similar action plan. As a result, the partners and grantees experience some confusion in understanding what they are trying to work towards in terms of outcomes. There may be value in USAID Thailand CTIP working with partners and grantees to support them to develop their own action plans, which identify actions to mainstream GESI in their ongoing activities.

LEARNING 2:

The position of GESI Specialist is critical to effective GESI integration in programming

The second learning is that it is essential to employ a full-time GESI Specialist who is responsible for driving GESI programming. The GESI Specialist's responsibilities are diverse and include conducting the GESI analysis and leading the development of the GIDAP; building the knowledge and capacity of USAID Thailand CTIP technical staff to adopt the GESI approach; and designing an array of activities to effectively engage and build the GESI knowledge and capacity of partners. The USAID Thailand CTIP GESI Specialist also ensured that the GESI approach is implemented in the project's engagement of government, private sector, and in SBCC programming.

The interviews conducted for this learning paper highlighted that the GESI Specialist's role is specialized and nuanced. The five years of USAID Thailand CTIP's GESI programming have demonstrated that the individual leading GESI requires considerable relevant work experience, and an advanced understanding of the national and local social, cultural, political, and economic landscape. They must also have a good grasp on various factors that lead to discrimination and vulnera-

bility to TIP, and knowledge of the approaches that may help increase inclusion. Finally, it's important that the GESI Specialist is able to build rapport with partners, guiding and mentoring them in strengthening the knowledge and capacity to apply the GESI approaches in CTIP. For example, migrant workers who have participated in interviews with the USAID Thailand CTIP GESI Specialist reported that, as a result of the training that they have received through project grantees, they have more awareness of the TIP risks and GESI, as well as increased knowledge of their labor rights, and the right to healthcare. Some of the migrants have become volunteers/activists in migrant communities.

Interview participants emphasized that the GESI Specialist should be empowered to implement the GIDAP, contribute to the design of plans and activities, and strengthen the capacity of colleagues, partners and grantees to apply the GESI approach. It is important that the GESI Specialist applies their creativity in activity design, and is able to try new approaches and activities to mainstream GESI and understand the positive (and also the negative) results and outcomes.



To empower your GESI Specialist is key.” (Interview with a USAID Thailand CTIP staff member)

From USAID Thailand CTIP's experience, the GESI Specialist should engage with CTIP colleagues at the start of the project on the design and implementation of GESI-sensitive project activities, conduct training for technical staff to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of the GESI approach. The GESI Specialist continues to support technical staff by attending regular meetings to discuss activities and ensure that GESI is mainstreamed throughout the programming. Examples provided by interview participants included the GESI Specialist attending regular staff meetings to ask questions about proposed program activities and suggest GESI considerations that might not have been explored; and the GESI Specialist regularly participating in the planning of workshops. As a result of such support from the GESI Specialist, staff began using gender sensitive approaches in CTIP program activities routinely.

The interviews conducted for this learning paper identified that one of the USAID Thailand CTIP most significant GESI achievements has been to strengthen the capacity of government and NGO partners in applying the GESI approach in activities involving migrants and trafficked persons. According to the interview participants, the project's capacity building sessions and ongoing communication with partners has contributed to building rapport between USAID Thailand CTIP and government and NGO partners, and increased the partners' ability to apply the GESI approach. Positive outcomes of the GESI efforts include partners re-defining their beneficiaries to be more inclusive; using a gender lens in evaluating their activities; and including GESI topics in their training of migrant workers.

The interviews also highlighted that the GESI Specialist's role is demanding. Because the GESI Specialist's role is so comprehensive, and s/he is involved in all technical work, it is important that the GESI Specialist is supported through GESI tools and resources. Such tools and resources may be designed by the GESI Specialist in order to streamline their work. According to the interview participants, such tools could include a portfolio of GESI resources, from which the GESI Specialist may draw when conducting capacity building activities, such as videos, workshop session plans, PowerPoint presentations, discussion questions, and so on.

Also important for the GESI Specialist is an understanding of whether staff, partners, and grantees have experienced a positive shift in GESI knowledge and capacity to apply the GESI approach. Regular (for example, annual) learning activities were suggested by interview participants as a way to measure and document shifts in GESI knowledge and capacity. USAID Thailand CTIP has, for example, conducted regular meetings with partners, as well as roundtables, pause and reflect sessions, and other events to gauge the results of capacity building. The CTIP project incorporated GESI themes into these meetings, roundtables, and pause and reflect sessions. The GESI Specialist was a part of the team that organized such events, so was well positioned to identify questions to guide GESI discussion during the meetings and events.

Finally, the assessment for this learning paper found that monitoring and evaluation results are also important to enable the GESI Specialist to understand the level of progress in terms of achieving project outputs and objectives and identifying areas that require further attention.



The GESI learning pathway is important... There should be a regular learning activity of how we understand the various GESI issues” (Interview with a USAID Thailand CTIP staff member).



LEARNING 3:

Continuous and diverse engagement is central to shift the GESI practices of stakeholders

The third learning is that strengthening the capacity of partners and grantees to adopt the GESI approach should be tailored to each partner's needs and level. It is also important that engagement is regular, extensive, and that diverse activities and resources are used. Assessing the needs of agencies prior to organizing and delivering targeted capacity building sessions is paramount.

Since 2017, USAID Thailand CTIP has collaborated with a number of government and NGO partners on GESI. For example, the project recently conducted two online trainings with government and NGO partners on how to incorporate GESI into CTIP programming using the USAID Asia CTIP Toolkit.⁶ One online training was provided in February 2022 to 45 NGO staff, employers, youth activists, school teachers, and university lecturers, and another online training was delivered to 25 government officials in March 2022. Knowledge and awareness shifts as result of these events were measured through pre and post-tests. The tests showed that the training increased knowledge on the survivor-centred approach, nurturing GESI champions as agents of change, and intersectionality.

These trainings are just two of many examples of GESI capacity building of government agencies and NGOs. Interview participants emphasized that the path to collaboration and positive shifts in GESI knowledge and capacity has not always been a straight-forward one, and that extensive engagement is required in order to achieve objectives.

Five years of USAID Thailand CTIP GESI programming has uncovered some important challenges in terms of strengthening partners' and grantees' ability to implement GESI-sensitive activities. Interviews highlighted that during capacity building sessions, participants find it easy to understand gender inequality, but find it more difficult to conceptualize other forms of social exclusion. This lack of understanding is often carried over to the partners' work, which may focus more on women's inclusion but pay less attention to addressing the inequalities faced by other groups.

6 See: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/a4fd1ec1-f6b1-4e7b-8662-33dcb6c93817>

The USAID Thailand CTIP GESI programming has also identified challenges in working with government partners on GESI. One of them is the continuous turn-over of government staff - every two years or so. This can create GESI knowledge vacuum and means that the GESI Specialist must seek out new partners within key government agencies, assess their level of GESI knowledge and capacity, and collaborate with those partners through capacity building sessions. Another challenge highlighted by interview participants is that it is difficult to know which government agencies in Thailand are working on GESI issues, and which individuals working within those government agencies have GESI responsibilities. As a result, interview participants suggested that there may be considerable value in the GESI Specialist conducting a mapping assessment, at the beginning of the project, in order to identify which government agencies, and individual government staff, the project should target for GESI capacity building to end trafficking in persons and forced labor.

Another key learning of USAID Thailand CTIP's GESI programming is that partners have vastly different levels of GESI knowledge. Some NGO partners are extremely knowledgeable regarding GESI and need only limited support, whereas other partners have limited knowledge and awareness of GESI. Without sound knowledge of GESI, partners will likely be unable to implement the GESI approach in their CTIP work and achieve success in reducing discrimination and social exclusion in communities.

“ The challenge is... the level of understanding is very different in terms of partners, and their different priorities. It is challenging to talk about these (GESI) issues when they don't have a full idea of how they should integrate it into their work. Sometimes we work with grantees and we know they have full understanding of GESI but don't know how to integrate it.” (Interview with a Thailand CTIP staff member)

USAID Thailand CTIP has learned from this experience that there is no one size fits all to building the knowledge and capacity of partners. What worked for USAID Thailand CTIP, was to conduct capacity assessments prior to training. The GESI Specialist collected information on partners' GESI knowledge, and information on the areas of knowledge and awareness that they would like to strengthen. Armed with this information, the GESI Specialist then designed training sessions and resources in order to address identified gaps.

“ We talked to different grantees in provinces to assess their needs and what they are lacking in terms of their own GESI capacity. And work out how Thailand CTIP could help to improve their GESI capacity.” (Interview with a Thailand CTIP staff member)

Another key learning from USAID Thailand CTIP's GESI programming is that engagement and capacity building with partners needs to be done regularly. In partners' busy schedules, it may be difficult to apply newly acquired knowledge in practice. As noted above, especially in the case of government partners, it is important that capacity building on GESI is continuously reinforced, so that organizations are well positioned to apply the GESI approach in their day-to-day work.

Five years of GESI programming have also demonstrated that GESI capacity building, like other activities, are best conducted face-to-face. In-person engagement allows for more participatory methods, more sharing of experiences, and more candid discussions on challenges and opportunities in applying the GESI approach. Interviewed NGO partners also emphasized that GESI activities with beneficiaries, for example, migrants, are best done face-to-face. There are obvious challenges to conducting online GESI activities with migrant communities, namely, access to Internet and other technology-related difficulties.

Finally, interview participants noted that the activities like pause and reflect sessions and roundtables with partners, led to positive results in terms of understanding and documenting GESI knowledge gaps, knowledge and capacity gains, and areas of capacity that require further strengthening.

One of the positive outcomes from USAID Thailand CTIP's GESI efforts include the government's commitment to strengthening the service provision to LGBTQI persons. In the past, these individuals were referred to shelter services based on their biological sex, and there were shelters for trafficked men and women only. The Royal Thai Government has established shelter services for transgender persons at the Chiang Rai Welfare Protection Center for Victims of TIP through the collaborative efforts of USAID Thailand CTIP and partners in Chiang Rai.

LEARNING 4:

It is important to look beyond indicators and document other GESI outcomes through learning activities

The final learning relates to quantitative and qualitative measurement activities in order to understand and document results of GESI programming.

USAID Thailand CTIP GESI programming is monitored and evaluated using three GESI-specific indicators:

1. Number of actions taken in support of gender equality, social inclusion and non-discrimination of women and girls related to labor migration policy at the national or sub-national level.
2. Average level of agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities.⁷
3. Number of persons trained with USG⁸ assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations

There was consensus across the interviewees that indicators all three of the indicators are quite straightforward and relevant to USAID Thailand CTIP objectives. All interview participants emphasized that the project has undertaken various actions in terms of supporting gender equality, social inclusion, and non-discrimination of women and girls related to labor migration policy and trained various persons in order to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality and/or female empowerment.

Over the past year of programming, the USAID Thailand CTIP team has concluded that while these indicators are useful for measuring outputs and some shifts in social inclusion, they do not tell the full story of GESI programming. GESI is holistic and requires long-term work to see societal change. Therefore, it might be difficult for the CTIP project and grantees to detect changes during the short life of the interventions.

Recognizing this important gap, USAID Thailand CTIP has designed qualitative learning activities to understand and document learnings and outcomes of GESI programming better. The activities included a number of qualitative studies, including focus group discussions, interviews, and surveys (of program partners, grantees, and beneficiaries) on GESI knowledge and awareness shifts, gender-based violence, and positive changes in terms of beneficiaries' personal, household and community inclusion.

One assessment highlighted that domestic violence in migrant communities may be addressed by assisting victims of domestic violence in accessing employment. The same assessment highlighted the importance of engaging men in efforts to reduce domestic violence.



The indicators just start to tell the story... So that's why we do focus group discussions. We do feedback loops. We do most significant change stories. We do learning papers." (Interview with a Thailand CTIP staff member)

A key learning from these studies and assessments is that it is important to consider carefully who is asking the questions, and the location of the interview. USAID Thailand CTIP and partners have reviewed various aspects of study design and ensured that beneficiaries have a full understanding of the purpose of interview/survey; how their data will be used; and the principle of anonymity in report writing. The project team and partners also considered the place of the interview. Due to the sensitivities and stigma of questions related to sexual exploitation, gender-based violence and other similar topics, it is important that these questions are raised in a safe and private space and not at home with one's family or friends.

Through the various learning exercises and studies that USAID Thailand CTIP has conducted since 2017, such as capture change stories, the project and its partners have been able to document important results of GESI programming. These activities have enabled change to be measured in ways that are broader than performance indicators and have helped present a more nuanced picture of GESI programming results, which helps to identify meaningful lessons for future activities.



"By looking beyond traditional impact and outcome metrics, you can produce a more nuanced picture and provide your project with more meaningful lessons for the future." (Interview with a Thailand CTIP staff member)

In addition, the project has ensured that these learnings are widely disseminated, through sharing study outputs on the project website, and promoting them among partners. Finally, and most importantly, the project has incorporated the lessons learned into ongoing CTIP program planning.

⁷ Indicator 2 is evaluation indicator. The project collects data on this indicator only at baseline, and end line.

⁸ United States Government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CTIP projects should plan for GESI programming early

An important practice adopted by USAID Thailand CTIP that other projects could consider adopting, is to plan early for incorporating GESI into program planning. It is important to conduct a GESI analysis at the onset of the project. As outlined in Learning 1, the GESI analysis can involve a review of relevant literature and policy, as well as primary data collection. Using the results of the GESI analysis, the Gender Inclusive Development Action Plan (GIDAP) should be drafted and guide activities.

As highlighted under Learning 1, the GESI analysis should be regularly updated to have an up-to-date picture of the GESI landscape in the local and broader contexts, and the challenges faced by partners and beneficiaries. A yearly workplan should be developed based on the GESI analysis and the GIDAP.

The GESI Analysis and the GIDAP should be widely disseminated to relevant organizations and individuals. There are key learnings from the GESI analysis, for example, that may be useful to partners and, indeed, to other projects.

USAID Thailand CTIP should also support partners and grantees to develop their own action plans, which identify actions to streamline GESI into their ongoing activities.

Employ a GESI Specialist

Learning 2 highlighted that GESI is a highly nuanced area of work and that many of the gains that have been made in GESI programming have been made possible through the project's GESI Specialist.

When a GESI component is included in any CTIP project, it is important to hire a GESI Specialist to drive forward the project's GESI initiatives and activities and strengthen knowledge and capacity among relevant organizations and individuals.

Learning 2 also highlighted that because the GESI Specialist's role is so all-encompassing, tools and resources should be developed to support the Specialist. A portfolio of GESI resources and activities can be drawn upon when conducting capacity building sessions with partners, grantees and beneficiaries, and raising awareness of GESI during events.

Engage regularly and extensively with partners

Learning 3 highlighted that effective GESI capacity building with partners and grantees does not occur after a one-off GESI capacity session. Rather, capacity building with partners and grantees needs to be done regularly through calls, monitoring visits, review of activities, and training (including refresher sessions).

Learning 3 also highlighted that partner have varying levels of GESI knowledge and capacity, and that capacity assessments should be conducted with all partners prior to the design of training activities. Where possible, capacity building sessions should be conducted face-to-face rather than online. Feedback should be invited from the participants, to understand and document positive shifts in knowledge and capacity as a result of the project's efforts.

There may be value in the project conducting a landscape assessment or similar mapping activity of the government agencies and actors that have GESI responsibilities. Following this mapping activity, the project should continue its efforts to work with government agencies on applying the GESI approach in the agencies' day-to-day work.

Conduct diverse learning activities

Learning 4 highlighted that there is significant value in conducting various learning activities to understand and document the positive and negative learnings from GESI programming. As USAID Thailand CTIP has done, lessons learned and outcomes may be collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys with project partners, grantees and beneficiaries.

In conducting studies and assessments, careful attention should be paid to principles of safety and anonymity of study participants. Lessons learned, including negative lessons, should be widely shared among the CTIP community, and embedded in various tools and resources such as the GIDAP.

CONCLUSION

This learning paper on GESI programming in CTIP highlighted the experience of the USAID Thailand CTIP project. These included the importance of early planning and GESI analysis, which is to be revisited regularly, along with the associated action plan. The paper has also underscored that, where possible, CTIP projects should employ a GESI Specialist to drive GESI programming and support project staff and partners in applying the GESI approach. The paper also highlights that extensive and regular engagement with partners is important to achieve long term shifts in GESI integration in partners' day-to-day work. Capacity sessions should be based on needs assessments and be conducted face-to-face, employing participatory methods. Finally, the paper highlights the use of GESI monitoring indicators as well as qualitative research to document the outcomes for partners from GESI programming.

Currently, there is limited research on GESI programming within CTIP projects. This learning paper represents a step forward in exploring the integration of GESI in CTIP. By highlighting several important lessons learned by USAID Thailand CTIP, readers will be able to develop more effective GESI programming and, ultimately, be better positioned to achieve the objective of reducing vulnerability to TIP.



OTHER RELEVANT RESOURCES BY WINROCK:

- [Thailand Migrant Resource Toolkit](#)
- [A Study on Service Provision for Gender Minorities in Shelters for Human Trafficking Survivors in Thailand](#)
- [Private Protection Centers to Assist Human Trafficking Survivors in Thailand” Obstacles to Registration and Recommendations for Mitigation](#)
- [Integrating Gender and Social Inclusion into Counter-Trafficking Programming Toolkit](#)

This report was made possible through the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government

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