



CASE STUDY

Strengthening Civil Society Coordination and Collaboration in Chiang Rai

The CCT following a quarterly meeting at The Freedom Story, Chiang Rai, 2021

THE COMMITTEE FOR THE COORDINATION OF CSOS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, WOMEN AND COUNTER TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN CHIANG RAI PROVINCE (CCT)



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Background

In Thailand, there is a wide range of civil society actors working in migrant protection and anti-human trafficking, from large International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), village volunteers, community leaders, and migrant organizations. Civil society actors are often at the forefront of counter-trafficking efforts, engaging most directly with people in situations of exploitation, referring cases to service providers, providing protection services and identifying emerging trends. CSOs bring unique skills, knowledge, and resources crucial for effective migration governance and counter-trafficking, and play a vital role in civic representation, awareness-raising, advocacy, empowering migrant communities, identifying and protecting victims of trafficking, providing vital services to migrant populations and host communities, and enhancing accountability. Because of this, it is important to ensure that policy makers and service providers seek out and consider civil society perspectives when designing responses to human trafficking in Thailand. For that reason, CSO participation in anti-trafficking efforts is central to the theory of change that underpins the USAID Thailand CTIP project. Over the course of the project, World Vision and the civil society partners highlighted in this case study worked together to ensure that civil society organizations are included in decision-making on provincial, national and regional policy levels and are incorporated into provincial multidisciplinary teams.

USAID Thailand CTIP has two primary purposes: to reduce trafficking in persons in Thailand and to better protect rights of trafficked persons. To fulfill these purposes, the project incorporates critical crosscutting factors into all activities. These include a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) approach that mainstreams gender and social inclusion in all components and the use of innovative, data-driven solutions — both technical and programmatic — to address emerging issues, research, and service delivery. USAID Thailand CTIP prioritizes geographic areas with increased risk of human trafficking, including known trafficking routes such as border areas and communities with large migrant populations working in high-risk industries; construction, fisheries and agriculture.

Under the USAID Thailand CTIP project, between 2018-2021, Implementing Partner World Vision worked with local partners in Chiang Rai Province to establish The Committee for the Coordination of CSOs for Protection of Children, Women and Counter Trafficking in Persons in Chiang Rai Province (CCT). Chiang Rai province is home to over 30 civil society organizations working with vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities, stateless people, migrant workers, women and children. Previously, there was limited coordination between these organizations, with organizations working only with preferred or established partners, despite the fact that many organizations had similar goals, objectives and served the same target groups, often in the same locations. In 2018, World Vision initiated discussions with other NGOs in Chiang Rai to propose the establishment of a committee to strengthen coordination and



Figure 1: CCT members and Local Government officials are appointed to an MDT working group roster, appointed by the Chiang Rai Governor

harmonization of resources, pooling financial, human and technical resources to create a stronger platform for provincial advocacy efforts. This committee was initially established by a working group of CSOs in August 2018, with a broad mandate to strengthen coordination on protection activities with vulnerable populations in Chiang Rai. In 2019, the committee was formalized through an MoU and as of March 2022 is made up of 16 member organizations working under four pillars: 1) counter human trafficking, 2) stateless people, 3) protection, and 4) education.

This case study highlights the process to establish the CCT in Chiang Rai, including the methodology, committee composition, joint activities implemented, results achieved, challenges, and recommendations for strengthening civil society coordination in counter trafficking efforts at the provincial level. The case study has drawn on data from CCT meeting minutes, the CCT MoU, joint activity reports, a participatory strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats analysis (SWOT) and five key informant interviews with CCT members conducted in April 2022.

Methodology

In August 2018, following initial consultations with a range of CSOs working in counter trafficking in Chiang Rai, a steering committee was appointed through joint agreement to draft the constitution of the CCT. The steering committee consulted the national level Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Coalition in Thailand and used its founding documents as a model for the provincial level CCT. Following the drafting of the constitution, an initial meeting was held with all interested organizations to present the constitution, share feedback, and vote to appoint the Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary. Over the course of 2018-2019, members met on a quarterly basis to discuss workplans of the working group organizations, align activities and pool resources. On November 25th 2018, CCT members hosted a provincial awareness raising campaign on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, partnering with the Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office (PSDHS) and pooling logistical, human, technical and financial resources between the working group members.

After working together for a year, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was developed and signed by 14 member organizations on 18 September 2019, after which the CCT organized a multidisciplinary capacity building training for its members. Prior to signing the MoU, the steering committee was assigned to find and screen interested member organizations to join the CCT. In Chiang Rai, there are more than 30 civil society or non-governmental organizations. The steering committee considered the organizations' core missions, target groups, and objectives in relation to



Figure 2: MDT Lessons Learned Meeting held between CCT members and local government in Chiang Rai, June 2020

the CCT constitution alongside their legal status as a registered CSO/NGO in Thailand as preconditions for membership. The steering committee selected 14 organizations eligible for membership in the first year, who all signed the MoU in September 2019. The MoU allows for committee members to leave the CCT at any time and membership is sought on an annual basis. All 14 CCT members have renewed their membership on an annual basis since the signing of the MoU in 2019, with two new member organizations joining in 2020 and 2021. For new members, an existing committee member is required to endorse the new member organization. Since the MoU signing, an annual membership survey has been completed by member organizations, whereby committee members are given an opportunity to provide feedback on the committee. As part of this process, a participatory performance assessment workshop is held on an annual basis, using a simple SWOT analysis methodology, whereby member organizations discuss strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats from the perspectives of member organizations, with recommendations documented and used to inform quarterly planning and monitoring meetings in the preceding year.

MoU and Committee Composition

The MoU signed in 2019 outlines the CCT's organizing principles and includes the following:

Vision

We work to help and protect children, women, and at-risk/vulnerable groups, promote human rights, and end trafficking in persons.

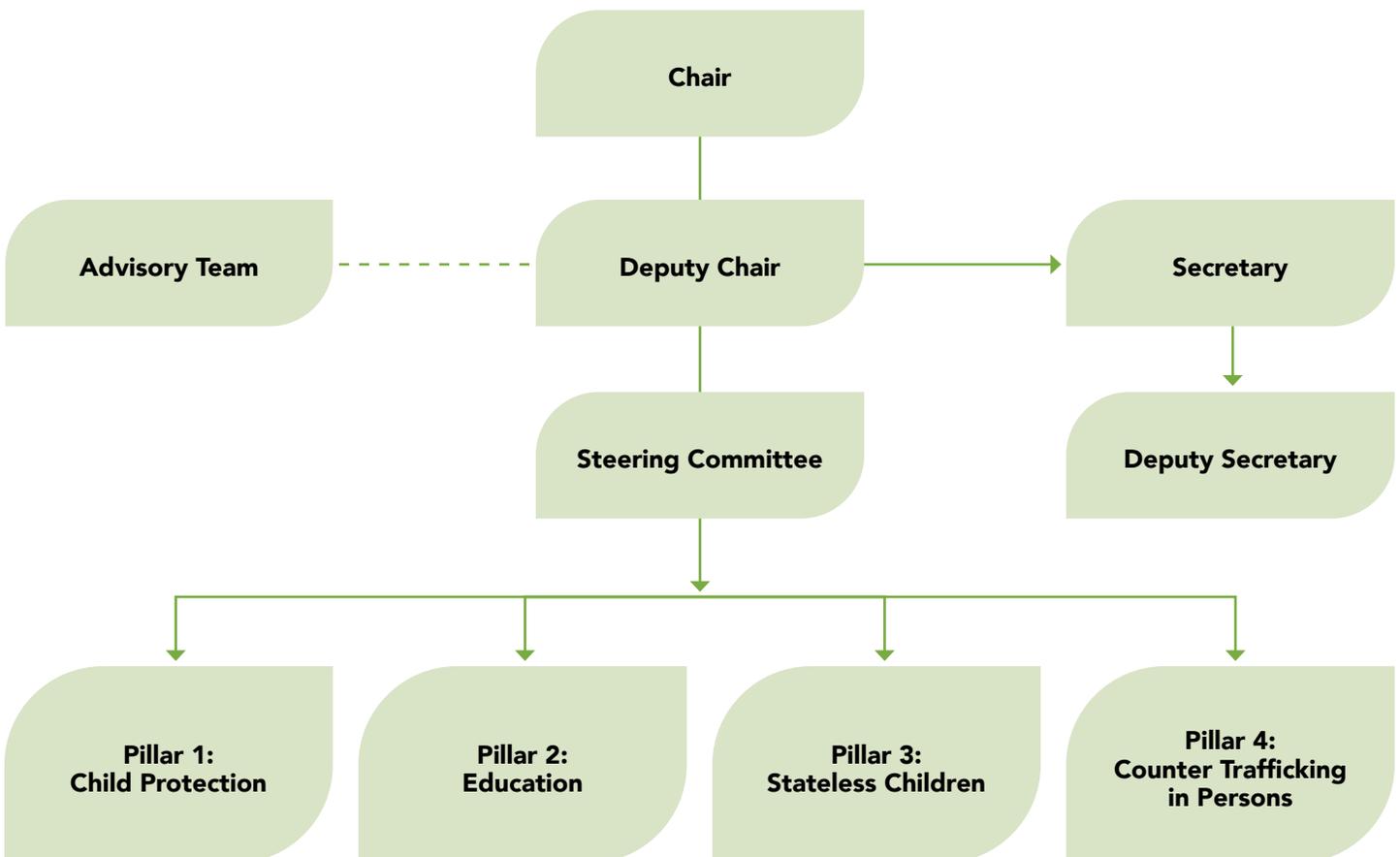
Mission

To advocate for improved policy, monitor progress and advocate with government agencies and civil society organizations to drive the protection of children, women and at-risk/vulnerable groups and counter trafficking in persons in Chiang Rai Province.

Objectives

- 1 To serve as a channel for communication and knowledge exchange, build capacity, and support collaboration between members of the Committee for Coordination of CSOs for Protection of Children, Women and Counter Trafficking in Persons in Chiang Rai Province (CCT).
- 2 To coordinate and monitor activities implemented by the Committee for Coordination of CSOs for Protection of Children, Women and Counter Trafficking in Persons in Chiang Rai Province (CCT) to ensure they are implemented smoothly and efficiently.
- 3 To coordinate cooperation between government agencies and civil society organizations. To report problems, advocate for improved policy and provide recommendations to government agencies, civil society organizations and the general public to protect children, women, and at-risk/vulnerable group and combat trafficking in persons in Chiang Rai Province.
- 4 Collect/analyze data and develop a database related to the protection of children, women, and at-risk/vulnerable group and counter trafficking in persons in Chiang Rai Province

Committee Structure



Committee Membership (as of March 2022):

Organization	Role	Pillar
World Vision Foundation of Thailand	Chair	Child Protection, CTIP
The Freedom Story	Deputy Chair	Education, Child Protection, Stateless Children, CTIP
Foundation of Child Understanding (FOCUS)	Secretary	CTIP
ECPAT Foundation of Thailand	Deputy Secretary	Child Protection, CTIP
Ezekial Rain Foundation	Steering Committee	Child Protection, CTIP
Center for Girls	Steering Committee	Child Protection
New Life Centre Foundation	Steering Committee	Child Protection, CTIP
Destiny Rescue	Member	CTIP
ADRA Foundation	Member	Stateless Children, CTIP
House of Love Project	Member	Education
Plan International Thailand	Member	Stateless Children
Chiang Rai Children's Network	Member	Child Protection
Bala Foundation	Member	Child Protection
Ruammit Foundation for Youth and Children, Chiang Rai	Member	Education
Priesterio Foundation Thailand	Member	Education
Women Empowerment for Change Network Chiang Rai	Member	CTIP



Figure 3: Youth participants interact in an End Human Trafficking Campaign, managed, and organized by the CCT in Chiang Rai

Results



Non-governmental organizations are weak when working separately. If we are united, we can become stronger and have power to bargain, advocate policies to protect rights, and recommend for improvement to better help victims. Good opportunities may also open up.

CCT MEMBER

Since the CCT was formally established in 2019, it has expanded its membership to 16 member organizations. Member organizations are located in Mueang (city) district and in several border districts along Chiang Rai's Laos and Myanmar borders. Since its founding, the CCT has conducted several activities to increase civil-society-government coordination in prevention, victim identification, and assistance activities. The CCT has hosted annual anti-human trafficking campaigns in Chiang Rai, which have reached over 2,000 people. Between 2019 – 2021, the CCT hosted annual intensive, multi-day capacity building trainings for the provincial Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) in Chiang Rai, training 126 frontline practitioners (law enforcement, social workers, CSO workers, nurses, psychologists, labor inspectors, PSDHS staff) on case reporting, victim identification and referral, victim protection and assistance and (re)integration. The provincial MDT have implemented guidelines on best practices for improving victim identification and referral processes, which were developed collaboratively between CCT members and the local Chiang Rai government through annual lessons learned meetings. In addition, a roster of MDT members, with local government and CSO representatives, was developed and endorsed by the provincial governor, formalizing civil society-government coordination and cooperation in victim identification and referral. Bi-Monthly meetings are used for member organizations to share and coordinate work-plans, raise issues, and share and harmonize resources.



16 CSOs have signed the CCT MoU



Over 2,000 people reached through awareness raising campaigns on gender-based violence, trafficking in persons, labor rights, victim identification and case reporting



3 capacity building trainings for 126 MDT practitioners hosted for the Chiang Rai multi-disciplinary team on victim identification and referral, victim protection and assistance



Guidelines on best practices in victim identification, referral, protection, investigation and repatriation developed between CCT and local government in Chiang Rai



A provincial MDT roster with government and CCT members proposed and endorsed by the provincial governor



MoU signed between 10 CCT members and the Chiang Rai Shelter for Children and Families on strengthening child protection mechanisms at the sub-district level

Challenges

In April 2022, the CCT chair conducted five key informant interviews and reviewed the annual SWOT analysis to identify challenges and obstacles from the perspectives of CCT members. Challenges have arisen over the project period, reflective of coordinating a wide membership base with diverse goals, objectives, and internal processes and protocols. Key informants reported that on some occasions, rather than working towards shared goals and objectives highlighted in the MoU, organizations sometimes pick and choose how they participate and support the CCT's work based on how it benefits their own organizations, foregoing the CCT's common interest agreed upon in the MoU. Data also reflects those financial resources and sustainability were an issue from the perspectives of some members, with some organizations lacking budget allocations from

senior management to support joint activities and an overreliance on a handful of organizations to support associated costs. A related challenge was that organizations who provided regular budget allocations to committee activities, were perceived by some to have more 'authority' or 'influence' than those who didn't. Key informants also highlighted that, while there has been a marked improvement in coordination and collaboration, communication outside of quarterly meetings is mostly informal, through LINE messenger, making accountability between organizations difficult.

Recommendations

In March 2022 the CCT developed the following recommendations for improving coordination and efficiency of the CCT:

The CCT should identify streamlined bureaucratic mechanisms so that member organizations can easily seek internal approvals when undertaking CCT-related activities

The CCT should develop an external engagement/ public relations strategy to improve government coordination, collaboration and policy advocacy

The CCT should establish an internal referral mechanism between member organizations and local government to streamline protection activities and improve service delivery for vulnerable populations

The CCT should develop a central database and/or website to share reports and documentation as an information and knowledge sharing platform between member organizations

To increase accountability between member organizations and external engagement, the CCT should explore local registration options, including becoming a legally registered association.

The CCT should explore additional funding streams to support CCT activities, for example, as a consortium to implement grant projects and/or if registered as an association as a recipient of local grants.



Figure 4: The CCT group and provincial stakeholders met in Chiang Rai to review the outcome of the Campaign to End Violence Against Women, Children and Trafficking.

