

# Expanding Law Enforcement Actions in Thailand

## ATLAS SNAPSHOT

Winrock International's Attaining Lasting Change for Better Enforcement of Labor and Criminal Law to Address Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking (ATLAS) project worked with governments in Thailand, Liberia, Paraguay, and Argentina to improve their ability to address child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking through strengthened laws, regulations, and policies; improved enforcement of existing laws; and increased coordination between actors.

ATLAS aimed to improve enforcement of laws at the organizational and systemic levels and did so by working with and supporting government agencies holistically. One such agency is Thailand's Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA), an arm of the Ministry of the Interior that leads law enforcement operations outside Bangkok and training of provincial law enforcement officers on child labor, forced labor and human trafficking cases.

DOPA was a key ATLAS partner across activities, participating in the project's flagship Enforcement Training Program, attending trainings for multi-disciplinary human trafficking response teams, contributing to a new Practitioner's Guide on Forced Labor and Child Labor, and working closely with Winrock to educate local communities and increase referral of cases to authorities.

This close partnership saw significant results on March 29, 2022, when officers from DOPA's Governing Officers' Law Enforcement Center (GLOC) led the Department's first ever law enforcement operation on forced labor. More specifically, DOPA officers rescued 11 Thai nationals in Mae Sok District, Tak Province, on the border with Myanmar. These people were being transported into forced labor at illegal scam call centers in Myanmar. DOPA officers also arrested two Chinese nationals in relation to the case.



DOPA officers rescue 11 people from forced labor during a raid in Mae Sok.

This successful interdiction was a direct result of the assistance and training that ATLAS provided to DOPA during the project. Indeed, Mr. Kittipong Chaisoda - Chief of GLOC's Strategic Investigation Training Unit 2 and a project champion - directly credited ATLAS for this result.

Mr. Chaisoda himself was an active participant in ATLAS activities. He gained skills and knowledge from project trainings on child labor and forced labor and incorporated them into DOPA's own programming. Consequently, DOPA extended its law enforcement purview to include detection and prevention of child labor and forced labor, resulting in the Mae Sok raid.

According to Mr. Chaisoda, DOPA's engagement with ATLAS filled important training gaps and strengthened the Department's capacity to enforce and investigate forced labor in Thailand, leading to the successful operation. Winrock is pleased to have contributed to this effort and thanks the Department of Provincial Affairs for its support of the ATLAS project.