

Innovative & Sustainable development work



About 83 percent of Cambodian migrants were entering Thailand irregularly, according to 2013 estimations from UNODC. With the concern of more Cambodians are illegally migrating into other countries, ICC-Trafficking Response Project, based in Prey Veng province, decided to form Watch Teams in order to spot and identify traffickers and middlemen behind illegal migration, and to protect their villagers from trafficking problems as well as un-safe migration. One Watch Team member at Preah Sdach district was able to confront one suspicious person who came to their village in June 2018 by pretending to recruit children between the ages of 13 to 15 to go study on a scholarship. When the Watch Team member found out about this she asked that person whether they have talked with the village chief yet, but that person said no, and stated that they wanted children to attend a nearby meeting with them. She was then asked where the meeting was but that person did not answer and walked away.

To fight against trafficking problems and illegal migration, currently there are thirty four Watch Teams and they are formed by those who share a strong commitment and motivation to protect their own village such as members of existing Self-Help Groups established by ICC, village elders, teachers, and pagoda leaders. Because of their strong commitment and motivation to combat the trafficking problem, the Watch Teams are appreciating the recognition from the village chief and from their own community for their positive activities. To deal with the human trafficking problem, the Watch Teams use tools such as showing a night video about the effects of human trafficking, and how to spot, identify, and report human trafficking cases to the local authority to intervene. These necessary tools have resulted from their close collaboration with ICC-Trafficking Response Project in which they have gained skills and knowledge in developing their own vision, mission and values, roles and responsibility and activity planning. They also received capacity building training from ICC-Trafficking Response team on how to spot and identify a trafficker and a middleman behind illegal migration, how to write the report, and how to report cases to the local authority.

What the Watch Teams have achieved so far is that they are able to spot strangers who came to their village and sort out small children through gift giving. They are also able to share what they have learned from ICC-Trafficking Response Project to their own villagers, relatives and neighbours, as well as to give consultancy on whether to migrate to Thailand or to work inside the country. So far, the local perspective on the Watch Teams has been very positive as they see them contribute a lot to the protection of their own community from trafficking problems and illegal migration. Watch Teams voluntarily use their own resources to safeguard their own community, including communication cost, travelling cost, time, and by providing a meeting venue.

To date, ICC-Trafficking Response Project has been contributing significantly to the progress of Watch Teams. These include the assistance with team formation, and in constructing their own vision, mission and values. ICC-Trafficking Response also provided them with capacity building training, helped them to mobilise and be pro-active, follow up with their roles and responsibilities, and to assist them further in becoming formally recognised by the community and local authorities. Furthermore, ICC-Trafficking Response wants to ensure that these teams will be sustainable and continue to safe guard their own community from these trafficking problems.