The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. Human trafficking is deeply embedded in the societal and economic context of migration. Victims of trafficking are often migrants who have ended up in a trafficking situation because of a lack of affordable, accessible opportunities to migrate legally, and information regarding legal rights. IOM takes a comprehensive approach to address trafficking in persons within the wider context of migration management. Our vision is to eliminate exploitation of migrants in all its forms, especially the severe human rights violations suffered by trafficked persons. Building on our individual commitment to Viet Nam and our global presence, we support the capacity-building of our partners in government and civil society. Through pilot models, we seek effective and sustainable approaches for the prevention of trafficking, protection of victims, and prosecution of traffickers that can be scaled up for replication across the country.

Policy and Partnerships

Human trafficking is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive, multilateral approach to be addressed effectively. IOM works with the Government of Viet Nam and various organizations to achieve a coherent approach to human trafficking at the local, national and regional levels. To date, bilateral Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with Cambodia, Laos PDR, the P.R. China and Thailand outlining action plans and standard operating procedures to combat human trafficking. Within Viet Nam, IOM has supported the development and implementation of national mechanisms, including the National Plan of Action 2011-2015 (NPA) and the National Steering Committee on Counter-Trafficking, aiming to strengthen coordination and cooperation between ministries.

IOM provided technical assistance to the development of the 2011 Law on Prevention and Suppression against Human Trafficking and the 2011-2015 NPA on the Prevention and Control of Trafficking, the country’s most comprehensive piece of legislation on human trafficking. IOM works closely with the National Steering Committee to develop effective evaluation and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the NPA. At the sub-regional and regional levels, IOM supports the participation of relevant implementing partners in dialogue processes, including the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking, as well as the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime.

Study on Trafficking, Exploitation and Abuse in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (STEAM)

Not enough attention has been given to the medical and psychological consequences of human trafficking, the health priorities of trafficked persons in the region and the capacity of existing public health systems and non-governmental services to provide adequate support. The results and recommendations of the STEAM study will provide research-based evidence to inform the development of governmental policies, strategies for health service provision, and individualized care of trafficked persons in the GMS, particularly Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam.
Prevention through Promotion of Safe Migration

In addition to supporting counter-trafficking strategies, IOM Viet Nam works to minimize opportunities for human trafficking through the promotion of safe migration practices. IOM carries out information campaigns in source and destination areas to educate the public about trafficking, encourage people to report suspected cases and equip vulnerable populations with information to better protect themselves from recruitment tactics of traffickers. Acknowledging that migration can be beneficial for migrants and society, IOM’s trafficking prevention programmes place emphasis on increasing the knowledge and awareness of safe migration practices and options through the provision of comprehensive and unbiased information on migration and pre-departure services. In close partnership with the Department of Overseas Labour (DOLAB) of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and the Viet Nam Women’s Union (VWU), IOM Viet Nam launched a pilot Migrant Resource Centre in Ha Noi, providing integrated services for intending, actual, and returned migrants. This MRC may serve as a model for national replication.

Return and Reintegration

Drawing on its global experience, IOM Viet Nam supports the Government of Viet Nam in developing comprehensive return and reintegration services for trafficking victims in line with international standards and practices. In close partnership with MOLISA’s Department of Social Evils’ Prevention and the VWU, IOM has piloted service models to assist with the recovery and rehabilitation of trafficking victims. Services include shelters, assessment centres, and community-based reintegration programmes, which rely on peer-led self-help groups. In partnership with the Government, IOM has been working towards a more inclusive system of victim identification and protection to include trafficked persons returned to Viet Nam through unofficial channels.

Research and Information for Counter-Trafficking

IOM works to ensure that the Government of Viet Nam has the information required to respond to emerging issues in human trafficking. IOM conducts quantitative and qualitative research of human trafficking developments and trends in order to inform future work. Current areas of focus include the effectiveness of current return and reintegration models, health consequences of human trafficking, research on internal and labour trafficking, and trafficking in boys.

Project Highlights:

Boys are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, but trafficking in boys remains under-researched. Under the UN Joint Programme on Gender Equality, IOM conducted an empirical qualitative assessment of the scope and nature of trafficking in boys in Viet Nam. The Trafficking in Boys research supports an evidence-based policy for the protection of trafficked boys and prevention of new cases, while helping to break the stigma and silence surrounding male trafficking.

The project Addressing Internal Trafficking and Trafficking for Forced Labour will support the Government by contributing to policy development and the NPA. It also focuses on advocating for an improved legal framework with an aim towards prevention, victim protection and promotion of safe migration. Research on the situation of internal trafficking and trafficking for forced labour is a core activity and lays the foundation for follow-up activities, as well as advocacy and policy development.

Future Initiatives

Going forward, IOM will continue its efforts to combat all forms of human trafficking in Viet Nam. This includes policy work to encourage the adoption of wider definitions of human trafficking as well as improvement of victim identification and victim support mechanisms to reduce secondary victimization. In order to better respond to country-specific needs, IOM is increasing its focus on emerging forms of trafficking, such as labour and internal trafficking, as well as improving victim support through a focus on health and migration. IOM will work to initiate baseline surveys, to help identify gaps in the migration system where vulnerabilities to human trafficking may exist. All work will be victim-centric, based on the notion that victims of trafficking who are legally protected and understand their rights are better able to cooperate in investigation, increasing the effectiveness of prosecution of traffickers.

Please visit www.iom.int.vn for information on projects and research related to IOM’s activities in Viet Nam.