

# GLOBAL EYE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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## Unaccompanied migrant children in transit: Challenges and opportunities for Mexico

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While Mexico is a country of origin, destination and transit of migrants, it is the transit context that poses the greatest challenges to effective migration management and respect for the human rights of migrants. These challenges are exacerbated when those migrating are unaccompanied children. Thousands of unaccompanied migrant children (UMC), mostly from Central America, cross Mexico every year in order to reach the United States.

The perils that accompany irregular transit through Mexico are many, and migrants are not immune to the violence that is affecting certain areas of Mexico. Added to the "typical" risks, many Central American migrants, including UMC, travel atop trains through the vast Mexican territory and often suffer injuries along the way. UMC in particular fall prey to traffickers who exploit them for their labour to obtain a financial benefit. Given these risks and hazards, the government of Mexico (GoM) has taken special measures to provide protection to UMC throughout the migration cycle.

#### Protection measures

At a policy level, the GoM has created the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on UMC, which is headed by the Ministry of Interior and gathers

17 governmental bodies. IOM, UNICEF and UNCHR also hold membership status while Mexican First Lady Margarita Zavala, who has extensively supported the cause of migrant children, has provided substantial support to this initiative. The aim of this task force is to put the issue of UMC at the front line of the policy debate on migration and to formulate creative solutions that may result in operative responses for the benefit of UMC.

The National Migration Institute's Child Protection Officers (OPIs for its acronym in Spanish) is a concrete project resulting from policy-level discussions held at the Inter-Ministerial Task Force. The National Migration Institute's Child Protection Officers is a specialist group of immigration agents who have been trained on the rights of the child and child migrant protection. As of today, 332 immigration officers have been certified as OPIs in Mexico, and the model has been replicated across the Central American and Caribbean regions and promoted as a "good practice" at the international level.

The GoM has also been at the forefront in promoting the protection of UMC at a regional level, particularly in the framework of the

(continuation on page 2)

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED HEREIN  
DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT  
THE VIEWS OF IOM.



## EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 9<sup>th</sup> issue of the **Global Eye on Human Trafficking**, and the last of 2010, on the occasion of International Migrants' Day.

This month, the **Global Eye** carries two articles on the increasingly prominent topic of unaccompanied migrant children. Our cover story profiles some of the migration challenges and opportunities in Mexico, with a particular focus on the situation of unaccompanied migrant children in transit. We also bring you an interview with Mr. Loïc Tréguy, Executive Director of Village Pilot in Senegal, who discusses a shelter initiative aimed at rescuing children from the streets.

For those of you who are not familiar with the challenges faced by some migrants in the Horn of Africa, I would encourage you to read the story of Hatim\*, which has been shared with the **Global Eye** by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

In recognition of the numerous protection challenges that often confront returning migrants at borders, we look to extract some good practice from an innovative project known as 'Posto', which is being implemented by the Brazilian Association for the Defense of Women, Children and Youth (ASBRAD in Portuguese), and aims to protect migrants at the Guarulhos International Airport in Sao Paulo.

Also from Latin America, we review stories of successful reintegration in Nicaragua that were made possible due to public-private cooperation and engagement of local entrepreneurs. This issue also carries an article on the reintegration of trafficked women into Nepalese society, and on the struggle for sustainable livelihoods amidst a challenging social context.

From Sweden comes the multilingual information campaign known as 'Safe-Trip', which aims to reach, inform and assist female victims trafficking through a hotline. We may yet see 'Safe Trip' extend beyond Swedish borders, as a number of neighbouring countries have expressed interest in the campaign.

On a final note, we have been greatly assisted in the preparation of this issue by the IOM office in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and would like to acknowledge, in particular, the contribution of our colleague, Ms. Linn-Kaja Rogstad. Thanks Kaja!

Sincerely,

Jonathan Martens  
Editor

\* Name changed for protection reasons

*(Unaccompanied... continued from page 1)*

Regional Conference of Migration (RCM). In this context, the "Regional Guidelines for the Assistance of Child and Adolescent Migrants in the case of Repatriation" were actively promoted. The objective of these guidelines is to promote collaboration amongst RCM countries in order to guarantee a more humane and orderly return of UMC while also serving as a guide to governmental officials in charge of implementing these returns. The Guidelines, for example, mention the need to provide safe temporary shelter, balanced meals as well as medical and psychological assistance.

#### Challenges and Opportunities

As stated in Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration in all actions regarding children. While neither the CRC, nor its Committee, has offered any practical guidance as to how to ensure that a child's best interests are being met, a formal Best Interests Determination (BID) process is a useful means of doing so, and can be instrumental in ensuring the protection of UMC. The BID process, which is inter-institutional and multidisciplinary in nature, is not being applied in Mexico at present. However, there is interest to institutionalize a formal BID as evidenced through the participation of government officials in an information seminar organized by UNCHR, IOM and UNICEF on how to implement a BID process.

Limited recourses present another challenge to providing adequate shelter and alternatives to detention of migrants and UMC. The GoM is committed to not place male UMC under the age of 14 and any female UMC in migrant holding centres; but unfortunately, there are currently few alternative options available due to the lack of recourses. Civil society shelters are a possibility; but there are not enough to cater to all migrants in need. The Ministry of Welfare is overstretched by attending to the protection needs of nationals, including Mexican children who return unaccompanied from the United States. To date, for example, there are no shelters available for adolescent boys who are victims of trafficking; they must utilize the services created for irregular, and often smuggled, migrants.



While OPIs have been extremely beneficial in protecting children once they are identified by the National Institute for Migration (INM for its acronym in Spanish), they are not legal guardians – a key figure which guarantees a child's right to due process. Consular officials may take on the role of legal guardian at times; but relying solely on the diplomatic corps could interfere with a UMC's right to seek asylum and enjoy international protection in Mexico.

When discussing challenges related to the protection of UMC, the difficulties related to finding durable solutions must be mentioned. Return is often seen as the most beneficial solution in that it is assumed to result in family reunification. But, what if returning with his or her family members poses a threat to the well-being of the child? Then, integration in Mexico can be an option; however one must take into consideration that this often results in institutionalizing the child with public bodies given that the concept of foster families has yet to take root in Latin America.

As seen through the policy and programmatic examples, Mexico does more than pay lip service to the protection of UMC; however many challenges still remain. It is well known that the answers lie in walking along the path of effective and humane migration management policies and implementing a comprehensive child protection system. Solutions will also be found when putting into practice a comprehensive government approach that is flexible enough to reach out to civil society and international organizations for technical support. □

\* The views expressed herein are those of the authors writing in their personal capacities and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM and UNICEF.

## Street boys returning back to society through “Springboard”

*Village Pilote in Senegal is a NGO that forms a dynamic network of service providers and has an extensive experience of all stages of counter-trafficking work. Loïc Tréguy is the Executive Director of Village Pilote. In this interview he describes the NGO's work with the street boys.*

Could you please describe your main activities with the street children?

Our activities with street children have 5 axes: identification, listening, shelter, “springboard”, and return to their family of origin.

*Identification* is mainly done in the streets. We identify the different profiles of the children we are in contact with. These are talibés<sup>1</sup>, child workers, child beggars, children begging with adults, children in conflict with the law or *fakhmans*<sup>2</sup>, children experiencing a disruption in family ties.

*Listening* is crucial in gaining the trust of the children. Our staff goes out in mobile teams to speak with them at different meeting points and learn about their situation. Children are invited to participate in cultural activities, they are given the option of having an often needed medical check and we talk with them about the necessity to leave the streets. The mobile teams usually bring a photo book illustrating the shelter's activities to give an additional incentive for leaving the street. This phase is not about establishing any dependency through “feeding and clothing” the children, but about building a trustful relationship and prepare them to leave the street if they chose so.

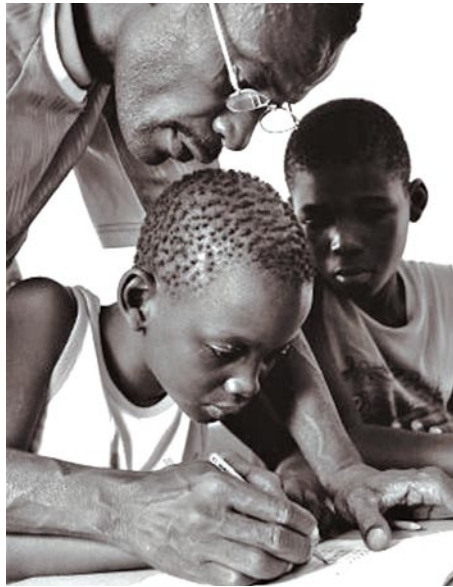
*In the shelter* we can accommodate 25 persons. Nearly all staying there are young boys. It is thought as a *place of integration* and is above all a safe place to rest after the harsh time spent in hostile streets.

The “springboard” is an activity centre for boys between the age of 16 and 25. Many of them have spent several years in the streets, some have been in prison, and they all have a violent background. Immediate return to the family is usually impossible. However, after a given period, we organize meetings between the boys and their families to bring them back together.

*Return to the family* is a long process but it is our ultimate aim, since we believe that the family is the best environment for a child. For children between 4 and 12 returning to school and being reunited with their family is generally possible.

What is a day like in the shelter?

The day is well planned with a schedule from 6 am to 10 pm, including reading and writing lessons, sports and cultural activities, and everyday work such as cooking. Daily activities are a good way to get more information of a child's history. Through friendly discussions, we encourage the children to talk about their family: e.g., while preparing a meal, a staff member asks the children what their mothers used to cook, what was their favorite meal at home, etc.



The children learn the basics of living in a community, respecting rules, personal hygiene and so forth. The staff is hired based on personality and aptitude for this work. Except from the specialists such as the psychologist, most do not have formal training, but are internally trained.

How do you identify VoTs among the children you assist?

When the children feel safe to have a trustful relationship with us, they provide the information of their individual migration experiences that allows us to determine if a child is a victim of trafficking. From this information we can fill in the screening interview forms and provide the basis for reintegration plans.

The main *challenge of identifying Trafficking in Persons* among the children is to build the trust of the child. They really need to trust you to reveal their life story, and what they have been through. Some of the children are really scared of their marabouts and are not easily assured that we will not return them back to them. Some children may also have forgotten about their past, as they left when they were very young and are thus confused about their origins.

After a child has been identified as a VoT, which steps are then taken?

Primary protection measures are of an utmost concern in the case of VoTs. Almost all VoTs are talibés, so even in the shelter, they're very afraid of their marabouts who often come to look for them. We have developed ways to talk to the marabouts and we speak to the parents separately, since the marabouts sometimes approach them directly. Moreover, we are working on creating a support network with law enforcement actors and our neighbors. Since many children arrive with wounds we collaborate with

state medical doctors testifying physical abuse, and take pictures to verify violence. When a family has been identified and the child wants to go back, the police is involved to sensitize the family on the risks of the child going back to the streets, as well as on their obligations as parents towards the child.

What are the differences between VoTs and the other children as beneficiaries?

The typical child VoT is a run-away talibé, who has spent most of his/her time begging for their marabouts. Some of them are very violent because of the abuse and violence between younger and older talibés in the daaras and due to the time spent in the streets. Our priority is therefore to make the child feel safe. For those talibé, we need to address their specific needs and special care is given (e.g. medical aid). We also teach them how to live in a community. Our past experiences show that children gain a lot from learning activities on an interactive basis. Findings of the activities run with the kids are analysed afterwards and are helpful to provide tailored assistance.

What are the main activities to reintegrate VoTs? And which challenges have you faced?

It is important that parents realize the difficult conditions their child was experiencing in the streets. During the family mediation, we need to be sure that the parents accept the reintegration of their child to the family; therefore we developed an assessment. In addition, we identify individuals in the community of origin whom we can rely on to ensure that the child is still with the family and well reintegrated.

The will and capacity of the parents to take their child back can be a challenge. This is why we need to work with the community and school to build a support network. Moreover, the logistics and efforts involved in family tracing, mediation and reintegration are very expensive. Last, the legal guardianship is an issue, for that we need to work with the magistrate on having temporary custody rights.<sup>3</sup> □

<sup>1</sup> Talibés are students in daaras, schools devoted to studies of the Koran. The schools do not have an official status.

<sup>2</sup> Fakhmans (in Wolof) is used for runaway children.

<sup>3</sup> At the moment there is no established mechanism in Senegal for granting guardianship to the shelters hosting street children/VoTs.



## A story from North-east Africa By Karen Ringuette (UNHCR) in Shagarab Camp, Sudan\*

SHAGARAB CAMP, Sudan, September 20 (UNHCR): When 16-year-old Hatim\*\* and two friends left Eritrea for neighbouring Sudan last April they carried only their mobile phones and some extra clothes. Fleeing forced conscription, they thought Sudan was just a short trek away.

But six weeks passed before the trio, half starved and in need of medical aid, stumbled into Shagarab, one of eight refugee camps run by UNHCR in eastern Sudan. They were among more than 1,000 unaccompanied minors who have arrived in Sudan from Eritrea over the last year.

Many, like Hatim and his companions, fall into the hands of ruthless smugglers-turned-kidnappers who prey on those fleeing Eritrea in the hope of forcing their families to pay for their freedom. The UN refugee agency is concerned about this development and about the welfare of unaccompanied minors, who are vulnerable to smugglers, traffickers and kidnappers.

"UNHCR has received several reports by asylum-seekers referring to similar stories of extortion by traffickers upon their arrival in Sudan," said Rebeca Cenalmor-Rejas, a protection officer in Kassala, near Shagarab. She added that UNHCR has urged the Sudanese government to intervene "to prevent similar events in the future."

Five months after arriving in Shagarab, Hatim is thin but looks healthy.

He has been staying in the camp's special centre for unaccompanied minors, where the young residents receive food, shelter and security and have access to games, television and language classes in Arabic and English.

Hatim wants to stay and go to school in Sudan, but for many of the unaccompanied minors and refugees who make it across the border, Shagarab is just a pit stop on the road to the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, the Middle East or Europe, and what they hope will be a better life.

Like so many other males fleeing Eritrea, Hatim left to escape conscription. It was a spur of the moment decision. He had quit school to contribute to his family's survival when he received a letter from the army ordering him to report for duty.

"I told two friends about the letter and that I was going to Sudan.

They were already doing military service but [were] on leave, and that evening the three



of us left together," he told UNHCR. "We knew Sudan was to the west and it was close. ... We only brought our mobiles with us."

Hatim and his companions soon realised they had been a bit too optimistic. "We kept walking but it was so long we started to feel hungry and thirsty. The journey was farther than we expected, so we slept on the ground."

On the third day, they met some shepherds. "They said we were close to a water reservoir near the border with Sudan. We could see it in the distance," Hatim recalled. They were heading towards it when about 10 men armed with sticks and swords suddenly appeared.

The boys knew the men were from a nomadic tribe that lives along the border and engages in smuggling and, increasingly, extortion. They demanded to know if the young men had family abroad who could be contacted by phone and asked for ransom money - many Eritreans have fled to Western nations.

The nomads took the young men's clothes as well as their mobile phones and identity papers and drove them to an area thick with trees and shrubs. They were chained to the trees for a staggering four weeks, relieving themselves where they were chained and sleeping in the mud when it rained.

Each morning they were given a small bowl of porridge and a small can of dirty water. It was often unbearably hot and sunny, but that was not the worst of things. "The place was full of [small brown] snakes and when they came we were helpless. Sometimes they crawled over us and sometimes we lifted our legs to let them pass," recounted Hatim, adding that the boys were also tormented by scorpions.

The nomads threatened to kill Hatim and his friends and sell their internal organs if they did not ask their parents to send money. "But since we did not have anyone to send it, they just hit us," Hatim said.

Prohibited from speaking, Hatim said the three companions "just looked at each other. Obviously we were afraid of being killed, and sometimes we regretted leaving as we thought it was better to die in our own country."

After three weeks, they were joined by about 10 other young Eritrean men and women and an infant, but a ransom was paid within a few days and these people were taken away. After the release of this group, the nomads became impatient with Hatim and his companions and, probably realising they would not get any money, drove them out one day and dumped the three near Shagarab.

"The three of us were sick and one friend needed help to walk," Hatim said. "However, we could not assist him for long and we went ahead for help. After that, the people at the camp were very helpful to us. We explained our situation . . . and then they took us to pick up our friend."

Meanwhile, Hatim's companions are gone; one is in Khartoum and the other made it to Israel. But he said he has no plans to run away again, perhaps chastened by his experience with the nomads. He now dreams of becoming a mechanic, happy to have escaped from the desert alive. □

\* UNHCR does not warrant in any way the accuracy of the information reproduced and may not be held liable for any loss caused by reliance on the accuracy or reliability thereof.

\*\* Name changed for protection reasons.



## Assisting migrants at the airport – The experience of the *Posto de Atendimento Humanizado aos Migrantes* in Brazil

By the ASBRAD team

The *Posto de Atendimento Humanizado aos Migrantes* (Humane Assistance Service to Migrants) aims to contribute to the humane and effective assistance to Brazilians who are forcibly returned or non-admitted<sup>1</sup> when returning to Brazil through the Guarulhos International Airport in Sao Paulo. Provided by ASBRAD – Associação Brasileira de Defesa da Mulher da Infância e da Juventude (Brazilian Association for the Defense of Women, Childhood and Youth) which has been delivering assistance to victims of trafficking since 1999, particular attention is paid to women and trans (transvestites, transsexuals or transgender) for screening and identifying potential victims of human trafficking.

The *Posto* team has operated at the Guarulhos Airport since December 2006 with the support from the international development organization Cordaid and in partnership with the Secretaria Nacional de Justiça (National Secretariat of Justice, the Ministry of Justice).

The ASBRAD initiative has aimed to develop an effective methodology for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to its target group; a methodology that is rooted in human rights and considers ethnic, gender and migration aspects.

At the International Airport of Guarulhos, ASBRAD's expertise on gender violence is applied to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance to trafficked persons.

The team of the *Posto* approaches returning Brazilian women and trans at the moment



they arrive at the airport. They are carefully interviewed and screened to understand if any assistance is needed, and, if so, what kind of assistance.

The team consists of professionals from a broad range of occupations - lawyers, psychologists, social workers, social scientists and journalists. Each person assisting introduces herself as a representative of a nongovernmental organization that works to defend human rights. The first question is: "How was your experience abroad?"

The answer to this question usually varies broadly depending on the person's life story, desire for change and problematic experiences, involving labour exploitation, forced marriages, and other rights' violations. In some cases, organized criminal groups were involved. The *Posto* team investigates what has happened in the destination country and is active in building referrals in Brazil based on the needs of the persons assisted.

Each migrant's life story in the country of destination is assessed through interviews.

### *Posto* as Public Policy

The principal goal of the *Posto* as a nongovernmental initiative was set up in March 2010, when the transition of assistance services into a public policy in Brazil began.

ASBRAD has the mandate to support keeping the humanitarian character of the assistance service. It aims to assure that this assistance must consider non re-victimization having a strategy that acknowledges the will of the assisted person, her/his rights and individual needs.

Since September 2010 ASBRAD is holding training courses on its particular assistance method for the new *Posto* team. Based on its success, ASBRAD will also provide training for the personnel working in the public social assistance and health network in Brazil, which again is part of a broader assistance network to potential victims of trafficking, forcibly returned and non-admitted migrants. □

For more information see: [www.asbrad.org.br](http://www.asbrad.org.br)

<sup>1</sup> Forcibly returned are those migrants who live in another country and are "returned" for having passed the legal period of stay granted by the immigration authority, or because they committed a certain type of violation. Being "non-admitted" occurs in the moment a foreign authority refuses entry into a country of destination; this usually implies potential irregular immigration. This attitude can be legitimized through the sovereignty of the respective country of destination.

## Safe trip – Sweden launches new anti-trafficking campaign

On the EU Anti-Trafficking Day 18 October the Council of the Baltic Sea States' Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (CBSS TF-THB), in partnership with the Swedish National Support Operations against Prostitution, and Human Trafficking (NMT), the County Administrative Board of Stockholm and the Swedish National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence Against Women (NCK) launched the information campaign "Safe Trip" linked to a national telephone helpline to reach, inform and assist female victims and potential victims of human trafficking in Sweden.

"Safe Trip" campaign posters are on display in different locations in the Stockholm area; at the international airports, on the metro and commuter trains and at street level – through which victims could be trafficked en route to exploitation. Swedish authorities, hospitals and clinics, service providers and organisations as well as embassies and cultural institutions have welcomed the campaign and are displaying posters, information cards and website banners. The first evaluation of the campaign to measure its concrete impact will be carried out by the project partners in December 2010.

The information campaign carries the following five messages in six languages – Swedish, English, Romanian, Russian, Spanish and Thai:

- Forced to sell sex?
- Threats of violence?
- Victim of threats?
- Deceived into performing services against your will?
- In Sweden you never need to accept:
  - Being threatened
  - Selling sex against your will
  - Being forced
  - Being beaten

Through these messages, the campaign encourages female victims and potential victims of human trafficking to call the 24 hour Swedish national telephone helpline for women subjected to threats, violence and sexual assault. Specialist social workers and nurses have been trained to operate the helpline. All calls are free of charge; they will be received anonymously and will not be shown on the callers' telephone bill. Interpretation services are available.

"Safe Trip" is being extended throughout Sweden in the near future.

The CBSS TF-THB comprises of Ministry experts on human trafficking from 11 countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation and Sweden. So far, several CBSS Member States



have expressed interest in carrying out the Safe Trip campaign tailored to their national requirements. □

For further information: [www.safetrip.se](http://www.safetrip.se)

## Human Trafficking survivors in Nicaragua – From a living nightmare to feeling hope

By Berta Fernandez, Brenda De Trinidad, Teresa Jimenez, and Diazen Oda

*It all began as a terrible nightmare but eventually the situation improved. Whoever said that dreams could come true was not mistaken.*

*“Having my own business makes me feel I can finally have the life I have always wanted for my children, the same life that made me leave home in the first place”* Survivor of human trafficking

Overwhelmed by change, frightened but yet enlightened by hope, at last the life this survivor of human trafficking had been aspiring to and had never imagined being possible could start. She had never thought that she could set up her own business and start afresh, be a part of society, of her community and no longer carry the stigma that had been chasing her since she fell victim to one of the largest businesses on earth – that of human trafficking.

Many men, women, children and adolescents – whatever their situation in life or their age – have been or remain victims of human trafficking and survive. They have felt threatened and deceived, have suffered violence, coercion and abuses of all kinds. They have been taken to other regions or countries and become victims of trafficking (VoTs) for sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, organ harvesting, etc.

Human trafficking is a visible crime in Nicaragua and the number of victims is high. Human trafficking survivors mainly encompass those made vulnerable because of their gender, age, field of work, level of education, lack of awareness, or misinformation.

The victims’ reintegration in his or her community is a complex process. It is hard to

start living a normal life and rebuild a solid psychological and social basis. Many of the survivors feel lost and above all lonely. Identifying survivors of human trafficking is necessary in order to provide them with specialized and comprehensive attention. In the city of Chinandenga and its outskirts IOM is together with governmental institutions and international agencies providing this specialized care to VoTs.

### The project location

The project was set up in Chinandenga because the city is located in a transit zone where in recent years the local authorities have identified and returned a high number of unaccompanied children who had been trafficked to Honduras and El Salvador. Moreover, the Municipal Child and Adolescent Commission’s ability to commit to and coordinate this type of project could guarantee its sustainability and effectiveness. Also, projects already existed in this area aiming to assist young people integrating back to work that created synergies for the reintegration of former VoTs.

In the first stage of implementation, IOM’s work with local partners focused on two fundamental aspects: (1) the psychological assistance the victims of human trafficking needed and (2) the reintegration of these people within their families and their communities. Experience suggests that economic reintegration must take place at an early stage of the process for the victim to gain a sense of empowerment in all areas of his or her life and thus become autonomous and able to leave behind the stigma of being a “victim” or a “survivor”. In order to successfully carry out the victim’s economic reintegration the creation of



strategic partnerships with the local economic sector is necessary.

### The strategic partner of the project

Forty per cent of the population in Chinandenga is unemployed; a situation that also refers to the rest of the country. Given these circumstances it was important to be able to build up relations with the private sector, starting with awareness raising activities on the specific subject of human trafficking and more generally on the people who are vulnerable to social exclusion. From the start of this project IOM began creating synergies with private sector companies, for example by signing an agreement with the Chinandega’s Chamber of Commerce. Taking into account the importance of the private sector for creating a sustainable situation for former VoTs in Chinandenga, it is instrumental to make private companies aware of their social responsibility and the potential influence they have.

*“We have never had the chance to support people with these problems, the truth is I had no idea we could help in the development of our town in this way.”* Entrepreneur of Chinandega

The survivors now face the challenge of having to start their own business or go to a job interview in order to work for instance as a product promoter or an office assistant.



The goal is to successfully include private companies in the reintegration strategy. While private companies need to comply with ethical principles to become involved in the reintegration strategy, a mutual dialogue on effective participation of all stakeholders is established. The final aim of these partnerships is to work towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Only going in this direction, will allow assure a contribution of the private sector to realizing the UN Millenium Development Goals that are related to CSR and sustainability. Thereby, the private sector becomes an active contributor in eradicating poverty, establishing sustainable reintegration schemes for former VoTs and at the same time reducing the risk of being re-trafficked. □

## Post trafficking in Nepal – Sexuality and citizenship in livelihood strategies

By Meena Poudel (IOM Nepal); Nina Laurie, Diane Richardson, and Janet G. Townsend (Newcastle University, UK)

Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is a priority issue for many governments; however, little attention is paid to the situation of trafficked persons who return home seeking to (re)establish a sense of belonging and respect.

'Post Trafficking in Nepal' is a research project that focuses on the livelihood opportunities available to returning trafficked women in the Nepalese context. Funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and jointly implemented by Newcastle University, the NGO Shakti Samuha and the IOM office in Nepal, the project is investigating how the stigma of being trafficked influences the reintegration of these women in patriarchal societies. It also examines how grassroots movements, NGOs and donors align themselves differently around human rights, violence against women, migration and anti-trafficking agendas and how these new alignments influence the citizenship identities of the returnee women.

The project started in November 2009 and will end in May 2011. Given the sensitivity of the topic, the research conducted has been mainly qualitative involving the discussion of policies of trafficking and models of citizenship operating in Nepal.

### Connection between the stigma of being trafficked and livelihood/return

Most of the women who have been trafficked are stigmatized as prostitutes and/or HIV carriers when they return to Nepal, whether or not they have been trafficked to India into the sex industry, the circus (trafficking into the circus can also happen for sexual purposes) or other forms of forced labour. These women suffer from discrimination and feel threatened and scared.

Birhani, a HIV-positive woman, explains:

*'...One person (man) told me that 'You came from uta' (symbolic meaning of Mumbai).....and 'you were working there as....' and I was angry and reacted strongly by saying 'why do you bother about me, what do you want from me? Did you see me going there and did you see what I was doing there? This has nothing to do with you it was my personal matter. After that he stopped saying those things to me.'*

Another woman, Sushila, who is also HIV positive, experienced harassment to the extent that she was not able to carry on with her new life as a shop keeper. After eight months she was forced to close her shop:

*'It was hard living in the village. The people gossiped. I opened one small tea shop. One of my friends who is a member of Shakti Samuha had given me 1000 Rs. It was at Sindhupalchok, ten minutes from my home. I used to make tea and local wine there and the men used to show me disrespect - trying to grasp me, touch my hands, talking in a stupid way, throwing stones at me. It was very embarrassing.'*

Sushila's experience occurred in Sindupalochk which is the central middle hill area of

Nepal. Research proves that stigma and discrimination are particularly common in this region. Its inhabitants are predominantly people from the Tamang ethnic group, one of the first communities to have been exposed to trafficking. A stereotype associated with the community assumes it as common practice to sell female community members, daughters, sisters, and wives into trafficking on a semi-organized basis, using the profits and remittances for family welfare. However, research found out that not 'selling' the female family members was common but due to their social location and political exclusion local elites (mainly political leaders from non Tamang community) used to use Tamang family members (both males and females) to lure female members, take them out from the villages to Kathmandu and across the border. Thus, Tamang were exposed to trafficking since late 19th Century. Today, upon this stereotype, female community members migrating are still stigmatized as 'prostitutes'.

Given the steady increase of Nepalese migrant workers to the Middle East and South East Asia Malaysia in recent years, it may be possible, though, that these regional stereotypes will soon be eroded. The Government of Nepal has set up labour agreements with specific countries in these regions where the labour supply is in shortage. Based on this trend, it can be easier for women to be considered as generic migrant workers when they return to Nepal today. Even if female migrant workers in the Middle East may face situations of sexual exploitation similar to those of trafficked women, they are likely to be considered as generic migrants in the moment they are in a position to send money home.

### Individual reintegration strategies

The research findings show that once these women return to Nepal, they tend to focus their individual reintegration strategies on the local labour market and count on local NGOs. NGOs, in particular, play an important role in facilitating the rehabilitation of the returning women, providing them with skills trainings which cover traditional female jobs such as sewing, cooking and carpet making.

NGOs such as ABC/Nepal provide start-up funding for business management skills to women who are interested in starting their own business. These funds are invested in occupations considered non-traditional female in the region, such as driving 'tempos' (motorized rickshaws), working as security guards, plumbers or electricians. In fact, ABC/Nepal states that women earn better incomes in non-traditional jobs. The research findings indicate that some of these 'non-traditional' jobs can be better options for women than others. Since skilled service jobs traditionally



dominated by men, such as plumbers or electricians, require building up a confident client base and going into people's home to work, returning trafficked women often face prejudices for being female, but also for being trafficked. Returning women seeking for a job after being trained by NGOs may be generally concerned with these jobs assuming to expose them to situations of personal safety. Certain work spaces are therefore considered by women more risky than others; however, it is not always immediately obvious to an outsider which job falls into the 'risk category': traditional female workplaces like carpet factories have historically been a place for recruiting girls for trafficking, while women may also fear working in an office room on IT for facing mainly male colleagues, potentially identification and prejudice. Therefore, traditional and/or non-traditional female and male jobs do not necessarily intersect with how risky a work space can actually be for women or for men. The current job reality for returning trafficked women has apparently contradicting implications.

Another popular job for returnee women is working in beauty salons. However, a successful beauty parlor had to close when it became known through media that it was run by a trafficked woman. The men would refuse to allow their wives to go there as it was seen as an unsafe and disrespectful place.

In addition, there is discrimination against returnee women, who have been given specific training skills to work in so called 'modern' jobs such as IT.

These preliminary findings prove that returned trafficked women clearly face severe obstacles in reintegrating into Nepalese society and struggle to create sustainable livelihoods for themselves. Moreover, it would be essential that the individual views of returnee women are heard to a greater extent, and that awareness among corporate sectors on their social responsibility is raised in order to create synergies that would help these women acquire new professional skills and could thus reduce their stigma of being trafficked facilitating their reintegration into society. □

For more information on the research project see: <http://www.posttraffickingnepal.co.uk/>

EVENTS

**Buy Responsibly**

Wondering where the **Buy Responsibly** cart will travel next? Have a look at the map! The counter-trafficking campaign Buy Responsibly, urging consumers to look at 'What's behind the things we buy' will travel to Warsaw, Poland, for the International Migrants Day from the 18th to the 21st of December 2010. The upside down shopping trolley, the symbol of the campaign, will be placed outside the metro exit 'Centrum' from 10am to 6pm every day. We look forward to seeing you there!

Past **Buy Responsibly** event launches have been a great success! The campaign last stopped in the city of The Hague, on the 14th of December 2010 for the 20th anniversary of IOM in The Netherlands.

More than 600 people attended the campaign launch event in Vienna (14-19 October 2010), with the campaign website [www.buyresponsibly.org](http://www.buyresponsibly.org) receiving more than 900 visits during the time of the Vienna launch.

The campaign has a brand new Facebook Page! We would like to invite the Global Eye readers to 'like' the Facebook Page **Buy Responsibly** in order to be updated on



the campaign launch events as well as being updated on latest ethical consumerism and counter trafficking news.

The direct link to the page is: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Buy-Responsibly/158983080805986>

PUBLICATIONS

**CSO Clean Clothes Full Package Approach to Labour Codes of Conduct Clean Clothes Campaign, November 2010**



The publication identifies four major steps that companies can take to ensure that their products are free from forced labour. It describes how sweatshop abuses are a systemic problem, and that there are no companies that are "totally clean" or "totally dirty". Every company that outsources on a global scale faces problems that need to be addressed from an ethical point of view. The Clean Clothes Campaign offers guidelines on what companies can do to better assess, implement, and verify compliance with labour standards in their supply chains, and eliminate abuses where and when they arise.

To access the publication online see: [http://www.cleanclothes.org/documents/Full\\_Package\\_Approach.pdf](http://www.cleanclothes.org/documents/Full_Package_Approach.pdf)

**Targeting the Sex Buyer. The Swedish Example: stopping prostitution and trafficking where it all begins. Swedish Ministry of Justice, November 2010**



The purpose of the evaluation is to investigate how the Swedish prohibition on the purchase of sexual services, which has been in force for over ten years, works in practice; moreover the effects it has had on the incidence of prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes in Sweden. The evaluation suggests that the ban has had the intended effect and is an important instrument in preventing and combating prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes.

To access the publication online see: <http://www.si.se/upload/Human%20Trafficking/Targeting%20the%20sex%20buyer.pdf>

**Human Trafficking in Europe: Character, Causes and Consequences Gillian Wylie and Penny McCremond, Palgrave MacMillan, 2010**



This publication focuses on human trafficking in Europe for labour and sexual exploitation. It includes empirical work on trafficking throughout Europe, identifying underlying causes in globalisation, migration policies and gender inequality. It questions whether European responses from policy makers or civil society are adequate to meet the challenge.

The Global Eye on Human Trafficking is a quarterly bulletin published by the International Organization for Migration

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