

MIEUX

Case Study

Thailand 2013-2017 and 2017-2018

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How to read this case study?

MIEUX Thematic Areas



Migration and
Development



Legal Migration
and Mobility



Irregular Migration
and Trafficking in
Human Beings



International Protection
and Asylum Policy



Horizontal
Interventions

Ten features of good practice in MIEUX Actions

- 1 There should be ownership on the part of the partner country
- 2 Actions should provide an opportunity to be innovative in their context
- 3 Actions should be able to be replicated
- 4 Actions should provide tangible results
- 5 Actions should be endorsed at a high level
- 6 Actions should be integrated into existing priorities
- 7 Actions should be based on the highest levels of experience
- 8 Actions should complement and be in synergy with other initiatives
- 9 Actions should provide EU added value
- 10 Actions should act as a catalyst for the acquisition of knowledge through the exchange of experiences

PREVENTION AND PROTECTION OF THB VICTIMS AND HOMELESS MIGRANTS

Thailand 2013-2017 and 2017-2018¹

The Division of Anti-Trafficking in Persons (DATIP) and the Department of Social Development and Welfare adapted EU practices to the local context to improve service delivery to VoTs, including a review of existing legislation and initiating a pilot project based on lessons learnt from EU MS.²

Context

Thailand is a destination country for the trafficking of men, women and children. Foreign victims hail mainly from the rest of South-East Asia and are trafficked for the purpose of sexual and labour exploitation. Thai victims are subject to trafficking for the purpose of labour and sexual exploitation inside Thailand and abroad.³

In spite of this, Thailand has taken significant steps moving forward to fight THB and homelessness. Regarding homelessness, Thailand includes destitution in this category, which explains the high number of cases, compared to other countries, especially in the EU. As per government data as of January 2016, 4,049 persons were provided assistance within the 11 homes for the destitute across the country managed by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS). For instance, in 2018, 631 VoTs were identified, of whom 401 or 64% were assisted in government shelters run by the MSDHS. Thai authorities repatriated 201 foreign victims exploited in Thailand and facilitated the return of 103 Thai victims exploited



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**MIEUX
FEATURES**

1 This case study is the summary of two consecutive Actions in Thailand.
2 More information is available at: <https://www.mieux-initiative.eu/en/actions/146-thailand-trafficking-in-human-beings>.
3 U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, 2019*.

abroad.⁴ Moreover, a range of measures have recently been introduced to address homelessness, including the enactment of the Destitute Protection Act B.E 2557 in 2014, and the Policies on Beggars Regulation in 2016.

Wishing to improve service delivery to victims by training its staff in specific areas, the MSDHS submitted two requests to MIEUX to train staff at the Division of Anti-Trafficking in Persons (DATIP) and the Department of Social Development and Welfare (DSDW).

Impact

VoTs and destitute individuals will benefit from a review in legislation and a new approach to housing. Firstly, after exposure to the legal directives, procedures, investigative forms and indicators used to address THB in Belgium during a study visit to Brussels, DATIP reviewed its procedures and processes for the identification and investigation of potential victims. Secondly, following a study visit to Ireland, the DSDW developed a pilot project based on the Irish housing-first approach to homelessness, which encourages self-accommodation, rather than housing victims in shelters. This three-year pilot project is still being implemented but seems to have already produced very positive effects: 270 small houses in total have been created in self-help land settlements spread out over 24 Thai provinces. It is reported that the people in this housing project have been able to regain their self-esteem and to earn their own income.

In terms of prevention, during a study visit to the Netherlands in April 2018 in the context of the second MIEUX Action with the Thai authorities, delegates were able to meet *Centrum 16 22*, a local NGO in The Hague which works on the prevention of trafficking among young people, especially through workshops aimed at strengthening teenagers' self-esteem and assertiveness. Some of these ideas were replicated and adapted in a shelter in the North of Thailand. 3,800 children in 22 schools were informed about THB, also through activities aiming to empower them and teach them about their value, alternatives and opportunities. Another project on prevention, following the involvement of the Chiang Rai shelter in the MIEUX activities, was an information project on alternatives to work abroad without going through illegal agencies. The project focused on hill tribe people.

At institutional level, the two MIEUX Actions strengthened capacities of the personnel working on trafficking and homelessness issues within the MSDHS. During the first Action, MSDHS officials were trained in protection of THB victims and on managing victims of homelessness due to migration. During the second Action, three workshops targeting workers of the nine shelters providing assistance to VoTs were foreseen in specific fields, namely protection of and assistance to children; gender-based approach to protection; and psychosocial support.

4 U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, 2019*.

DATIP developed three brochures to capture the Action's learning and to train its staff: "*Safe Use of Modern Technologies in Combatting Trafficking of Children*", "*Gender and THB*" and "*Identifying and Caring for Victims of Severe Physical, Psychological and/or Social Trauma*" linked to THB. The first brochure presents key information that shelter governmental staff can provide to children and their families when they are preparing to leave the shelters, so as to take the necessary precautions to avoid re-trafficking. The second brochure provides key information about trafficking targeting LGBTQ+ individuals and the way these victims can be assisted. The third brochure provides information on providing psychosocial support to victims of THB, especially in cases of severe psychological trauma.

Finally, bilateral cooperation between Belgium and Thailand was strengthened, as Thai delegates and Belgian NGOs agreed to initiate a bilateral exchange programme between Belgian NGOs and DATIP staff for hands-on training within specialised centres dedicated to THB victims. In the same vein, the DSDW is currently discussing the possibility of a cooperative framework with Irish NGOs on homelessness prevention and protection.

Challenges

Upon understanding that the differences in policy framework and overall context would make the replication of EU practices impracticable, the experts deployed for the second Action worked with the staff to review what tools, procedures and legislative requirements they would use in their daily work. The participants chose the brochure topics that reflected their own needs, and aspects that are applicable to their roles and responsibilities in the shelters. EU/EU MS practices were consequently tailored to the Thai context. As mentioned by the Thai authorities when evaluating the Action, this adaptation exercise became one of the most useful achievements deriving from the MIEUX Action.

Practices

- 1. Expert selection:** The mixed team of governmental and non-governmental experts was important to showcase best practices from the civil society sector to encourage the Thai Government to do the same. The choice to work mainly with non-governmental experts was linked to the fact that, in the EU, NGOs are closer to the everyday realities of homelessness and VoT protection.
- 2. Multi-level cooperation:** The full involvement of the MSDHS and its shelters during the different stages of the Actions or activities ensured the ownership and sustainability of the knowledge acquired and its application in realistic scenarios, contributing to the overall strengthening of institutional capacities. It was proposed that staff from the ministry-led THB shelters could participate in the training organised around a demand-driven agenda.

3. **Demand-driven training content:** The MIEUX experts, in cooperation with the DATIP, developed demand-driven training to address the ministry's gaps and needs, in particular in relation to the participants' difficulty in applying the concepts to THB response activities. The workshop on referral systems constituted a good example of this approach. The focus was not to duplicate existing training, but rather to apply learned concepts to THB scenarios. During the workshop planning, DATIP proposed topics for the agenda based on the training needs of the participants; during the workshop itself, the participants, who came from different Thai regions and seniority levels, were encouraged to exchange on good practices, confront their respective realities and get to know each other. The experts adopted a technique focused around the trainees, which in turn contributed to a peer-to-peer exchange within the ministry staff, as well as with the MIEUX experts.

Lessons Learnt

In situations where multiple institutions are involved in a single request, or where multiple institutions will be tasked with implementing an Action's outcomes, it is beneficial to nominate focal points within each institution. In this case, four focal points were assigned to this Action: two from the Division of Anti-Trafficking in Persons and two from the DSDW, of which one was from operational level and one from strategic level. This system of double focal points allowed for continuous flows of information between the two levels, contributing to good implementation of the activities.

Involving DATIP and DSDW management was key to the Action's success. In fact, they provided guidance and support to this Action by attending activities such as study visits where they were exposed to EU/EU MS experience, methodologies and tools. Their participation was essential in the sustainability process, as the replication by adaptation of EU/EU MS practices and approaches is defined from the top. The senior stakeholders fully supported the implementation of some deliverables, as mentioned above.



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Since launching operations in 2009, the Migration EU eXpertise (MIEUX) Initiative has provided space to request capacity development activities and EU expertise, allowing the sharing of knowledge and practices between peers working in institutions in and outside of Europe.

The adoption of the Global Compact on Migration and the creation of the UN Network on Migration coincided with MIEUX's ten-year anniversary. To mark the occasion, MIEUX undertook a comprehensive analysis of its achievements, methodologies and practices.

By delving into MIEUX's portfolio of over 100 interventions, this series of case studies intend to offer a glimpse of the broad range of tools, methodologies and approaches that can inspire or be used by governments and migration and development practitioners to advance a cooperative and sustainable international architecture of migration.