



ENHANCING WOMEN'S ROLE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND BORDER SECURITY TO PREVENT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

FOUR YEARS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN UN WOMEN
AND UNODC TO ACHIEVE LONG STANDING RESULTS



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Canada



From
the People of Japan

UN WOMEN

4 KEY OBJECTIVES



PHOTO: UN WOMEN/PLOY PHUTPHENG

In 2018, globally 65% of detected trafficking victims are women and girls. In Southeast Asia, the main form of exploitation is for the purpose of sexual exploitation which disproportionately affects women and girls (UNODC Global report on trafficking in persons, 2020).

Women in the security sector play a key role in improving the operational effectiveness of law enforcement, including to combat trafficking at border areas. Yet, the proportion of women in the police ranges from 6 percent in Indonesia to 20 percent in Lao PDR, a percentage which drops severely in remote locations, such as international border crossings.

To mitigate these issues UN Women and UNODC joined forces to achieve 4 objectives:

1. **Strengthen community awareness and the rapid provision of gender sensitive services for the reintegration and empowerment of survivors of human trafficking**
2. **Improve the understanding of the scope and impact of cross-border crime on women and their communities**
3. **Improve the capacity of front-line officers in border locations to meet the needs of women in the context of cross-border crime**
4. **Promote women's participation and leadership in law enforcement and border management**



PHOTO: UN WOMEN/PLOY PHUTPHENG

1. STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND THE RAPID PROVISION OF GENDER SENSITIVE SERVICES FOR THE REINTEGRATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Globally, among detected women victims of trafficking in persons, 77% were trafficked for sexual exploitation, 14% for forced labour and 9% for other forms of exploitation.

(UNODC global report on trafficking in persons, 2020)

- Through this project, more than 24 000 women became more aware of their rights in the context of safe migration and better understood the modus operandi of traffickers in their region, and how to report potential cases and access existing services.
- 372 women in Myanmar (129), Cambodia (185) and Thailand (58) increased their knowledge of financial management and marketing and/or benefited from vocational skills training. 207 of them received cash and in-kind support to start and upscale their businesses in the view to economically empower women who are at risk of trafficking.
- 81 women survivors of trafficking in Myanmar (24), Cambodia (55) and Thailand (2) were supported directly through legal aid, court representation or access to health and other relevant services.
- In Myanmar, 5 perpetrators were sentenced for 10 years of imprisonment.



AUNG JA IS A BURMESE SURVIVOR OF BIRTH TRAFFICKING TO CHINA. PHOTO: UN WOMEN/STUART MANNION

From where I stand: “They forced me to get pregnant”

“ [The broker] convinced my aunty that I could get a job in China. I had stopped school and was not doing anything, so I needed a job. She showed me a picture of a phone factory, and a shoe-making factory. But when I arrived in China in May 2017, they forced me to get pregnant. They gave me pills for 10 days to prepare the womb. Then I went for a medical checkup to see if my womb was ready and they injected the sperm in the hospital, in total, three times.

I overheard that if I didn’t take the pills and jumped around in my room I would not get pregnant. So, the second time I jumped a lot and hid the pills and I didn’t get pregnant.

Women are paid 250,000 MMK [USD 160] for each month for the first five months of pregnancy, then 1 million MMK [USD 632] towards the end of the pregnancy and 1 million MMK again if they give birth. If it’s a girl, they would get paid less than if it’s boy.

I didn’t get out of the room for five months, only to go to the hospital, blindfolded. My only hope was that someone would help us escape or that I would be sent back...

I overheard that if pregnancy failed three times, they would release you if you paid 500,000 MMK [USD 320], so I informed my aunty. The village leaders, the police and Htoi advised my aunty to pay the money to get me back, because it was the only way they could get me back and report and investigate the case.

I came back along with five victims.

I felt ashamed after I came back because all the villagers knew that I was trafficked. But I feel better now. I received legal support and anti-trafficking awareness training from Htoi and I started sharing my experience with friends. I took a class to learn weaving, and now I earn 25,000 MMK for each piece of fabric I sell.”

AUNG JA* WAS 18 WHEN A WOMAN FROM MYITKINA, NORTHERN MYANMAR, CONVINCED HER TO TAKE A ‘FACTORY’ JOB IN CHINA. SHE WAS RESCUED IN 2017 AND IS TAKING PART IN A UN WOMEN-SUPPORTED TRAFFICKING PREVENTION PROGRAMME.

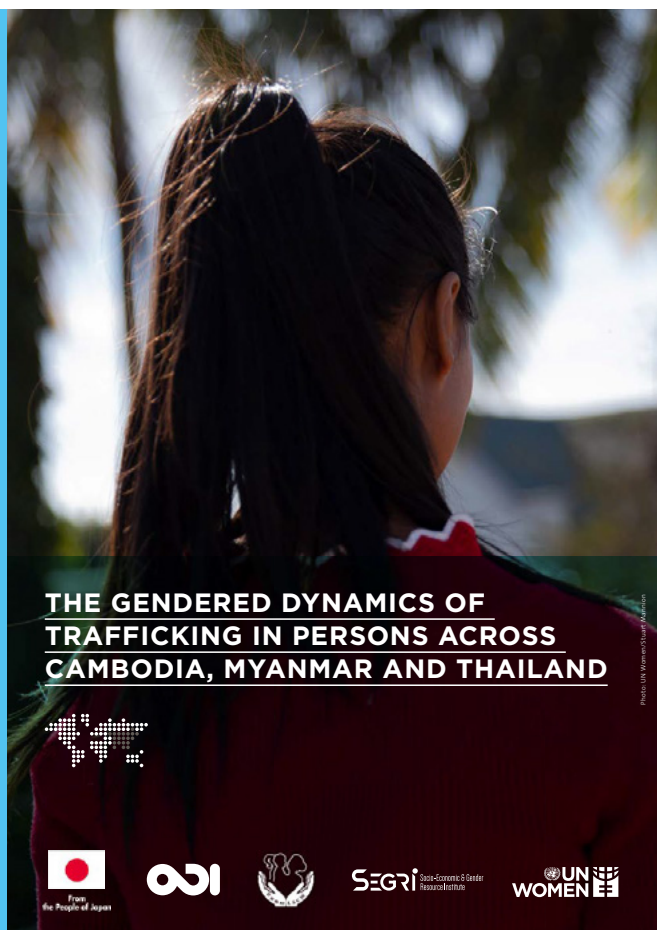
*Name changed to protect survivor’s identity.

2. IMPROVE THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCOPE AND IMPACT OF CROSS-BORDER CRIME ON WOMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE RELEASE OF TWO KEY KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

Gender is a significant factor in influencing the risk faced by women, men, girls and boys, and the sector into which they are trafficked.

(The Gendered dynamics of trafficking in persons across Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand, 2020)

In 2020, UN Women published two knowledge products discussed widely with policy makers, academia, CSOs and development partners.



3. IMPROVE THE CAPACITY OF FRONT-LINE OFFICERS IN BORDER LOCATIONS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT OF CROSS-BORDER CRIME



PHOTO: UN WOMEN AND UNODC

In today's world, we have various types of crimes where women are not only victims but also perpetrators so this is why we need women police officers.

(female officer, Indonesia)

The project facilitated the access of border front line officers at the national level to specialized knowledge, tools and mechanisms to adopt a gender sensitive approach in their work and thus protect cross-border women migrants including those who may be at risk of human trafficking.

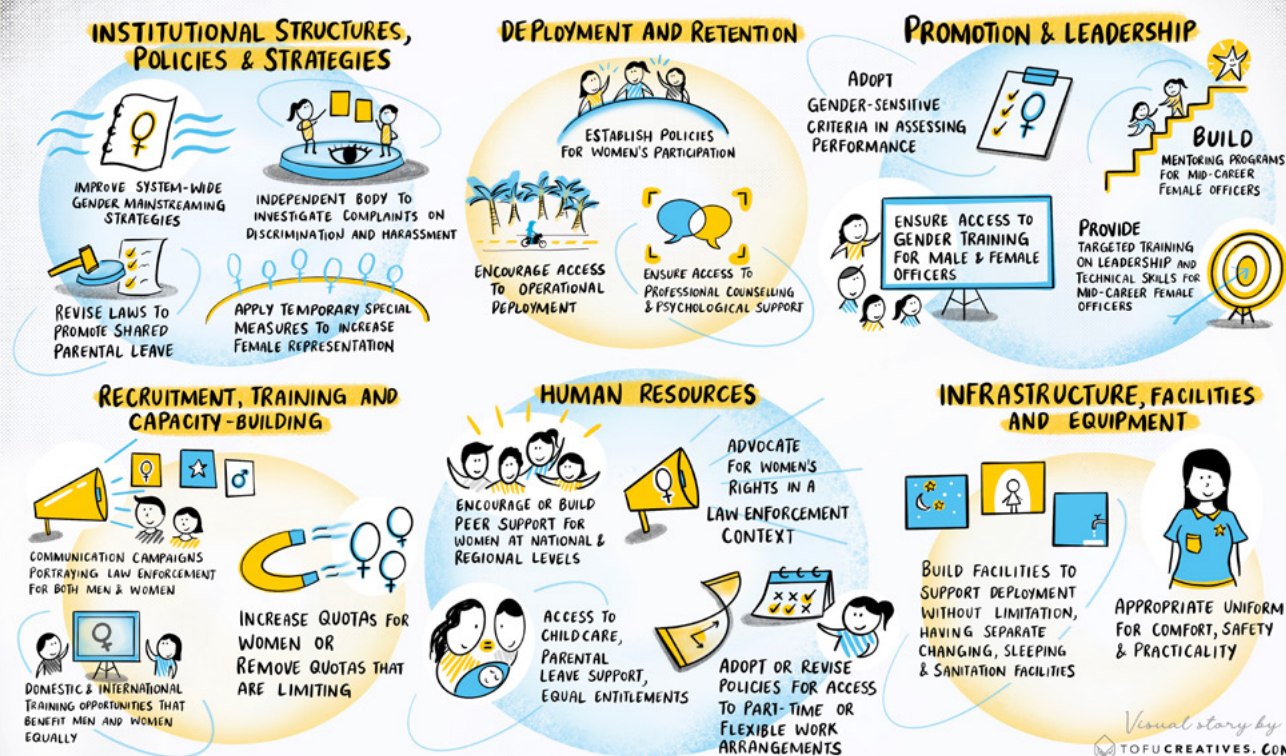
- **578** (48% women) **front-line officers** in Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Malaysia, Myanmar, Indonesia strengthened their capacities on **how to manage trafficking cases from a gender and victim centered perspective**.
- Three training modules available in **English and all ASEAN languages**
- The training are now delivered by a **cohort of national trainers** from law enforcement agencies from the ASEAN countries ensuring a high buy-in from the respective governments.
- Responding to the needs expressed by the Philippines National Police, 3 webinars on **selfcare and managing stress during the COVID-19** pandemic for officers of the Women and Children Protection Unit were organized.

4. PROMOTE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND BORDER MANAGEMENT

- INTERPOL, UN Women and UNODC produced a milestone research on Women in Law Enforcement in ASEAN region launched in August 2020 and discussed in more than 20 events at the international, regional and country level with law enforcement agencies in Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.
- The research contributed to a better understanding of the relevance and contribution of women law enforcement officers in handling criminal cases.
- It helped clarify through an evidence-based approach the key role women play in the de-escalation of conflict, and the establishment of reciprocal trustworthy mechanisms between police entities and local communities.
- To raise awareness, a photo exhibition entitled "Inspiring women: the vital contribution of women in law enforcement in the ASEAN", was organized at the Alliance Francaise and at Rangsit University reaching 3000+ people. Finally, one animated video and three humoristic videos were released which were viewed by 400 000 people.
- The research highlights the following recommendations :



WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE ASEAN REGION



- These advocacy measures generated spaces at the highest political levels in the South-East Asia region to discuss the advancement of women in law enforcement, its progress and pending challenges, which resulted in the introduction of legal, institutional and operational changes to improve the conditions of access, employment and promotion of female police officers. For instance, the ASEAN BORDER MANAGEMENT COOPERATION ROAD-MAP encourages the collection of disaggregated information that includes gender and includes a chapter dedicated to the increase capacity of border officials to address the growing incidence of human trafficking involving women targeted by criminals and mentions “To address this growing trend, law enforcement agencies strategies should consider refining their recruitment strategy to deliberately increase the number of female officers who participate in cross-border operations. This will improve the ability of border management teams to identify human trafficking involving women and girls and develop more effective and timely responses” (adopted by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime on 29 September 2021).

Women are good at intelligence gathering. In the community we excel at investigations. Women work in detail and we work very patiently. These are the qualities of a good investigator.

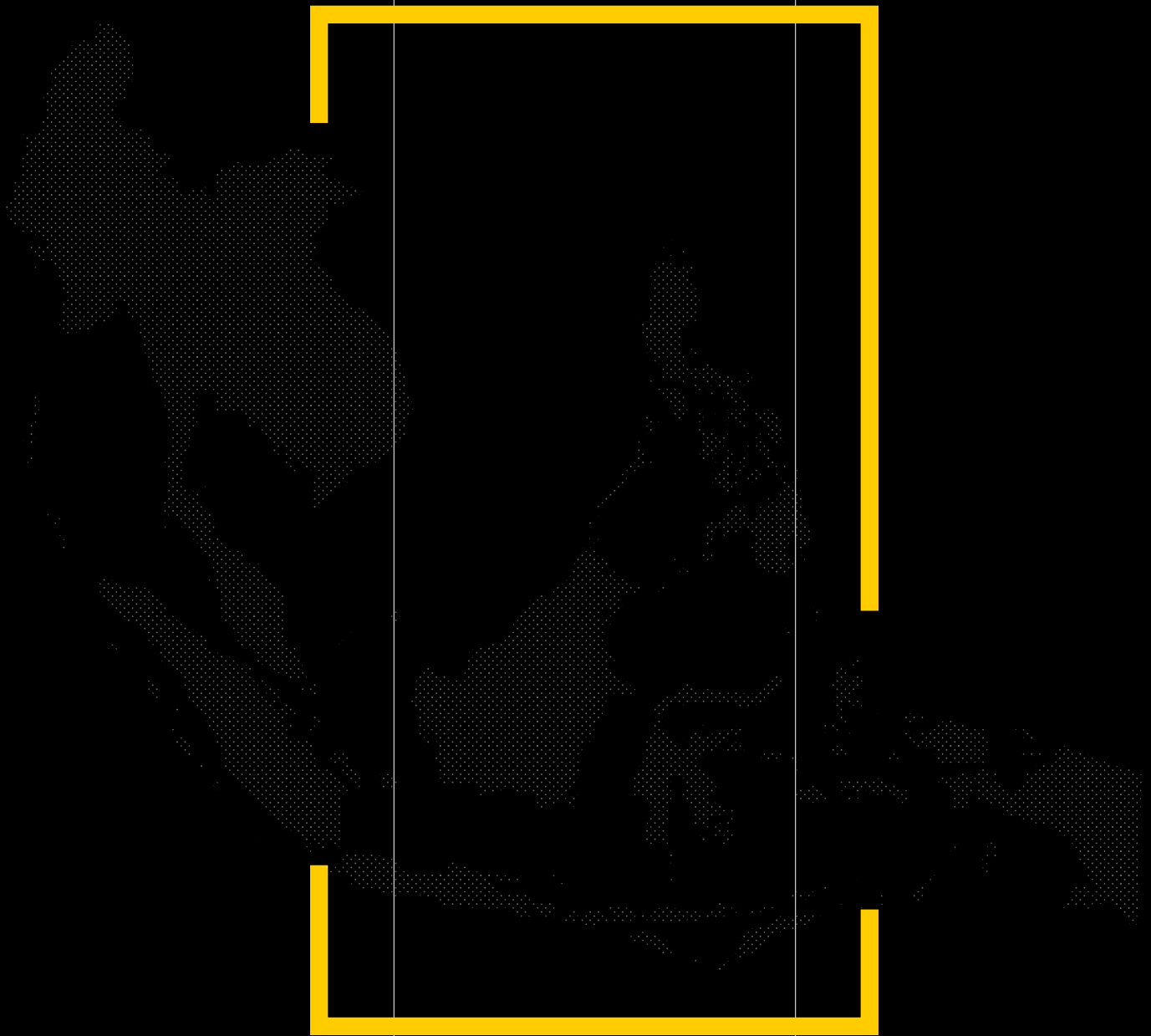
(female officer, Philippines)

Overall, this strong partnership between UN Women and UNODC produced long standing results and relationships with law enforcement bodies across the region. Government entities now have access to clear evidence that an increased participation of women in law enforcement will benefit the fight against transnational crimes, including trafficking.

Although this partnership has contributed to building a strong foundation for the promotion of gender sensitive law enforcement in the ASEAN Region, more needs to be done to leverage these results.



PHOTO: UN WOMEN/PLOY PHUTPHENG



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