

An assessment of non-governmental organizations' roles in combating women/children trafficking in Vietnam

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Abstract. Confronting the problems of human trafficking, the government of Vietnam has made great efforts to combat it. In addition, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations in Vietnam have supported the country with anti-trafficking activities. They provide health care, accommodation and shelter, repatriation and reintegration programs. They have also implemented activities regarding prevention of victims, advocacy, community awareness raising and law enforcement. Despite of many successes, there remain numerous constraints NGOs confront in implementing the anti-trafficking programs effectively. This paper assesses the roles of NGOs in combating women/children trafficking in Vietnam; investigates the roles of NGOs in combating women/children trafficking; assess the coordination mechanism between government and NGOs, and between NGOs and NGOs; and evaluate the effectiveness of NGOs in combating women/children trafficking. The problem could not be resolved in a couple of year due to complicated social, traditional and global issues. Moreover, loose border patrol and geographical difficulties make it easy for citizens to cross the borders thus the trafficking activities happen.

Keywords: Human trafficking, Vietnam, non-governmental organizations.

1. Introduction

Human trafficking is a major social phenomenon in a globalised and borderless world. According to the Article 3 of the United Nation (2000) Protocol, "trafficking in persons" means "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of

coercion, of abduction, of fraud, or deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation". Trafficking in persons or human trafficking is a worldwide phenomenon due to its ramification on the social and cultural life of a nation, it exists in many forms but the major forms of human trafficking include: forced labor, bonded labor, debt bondage, and involuntary servitude among

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migrant laborers, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labor, child soldiers, sex trafficking and prostitution, children exploited for commercial sex, and child sex tourism (U.S Department of State, 2008).

Human trafficking in general, with trafficking of women and children in particular, takes place in almost all countries globally and regionally. Asia and the Greater Mekong Sub-Region are no exceptions. It is estimated that 200,000 to 225,000 women and children are trafficked annually out of Southeast Asia (Ren, 2004). In the case of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), the estimated trafficked victims range from the hundreds to thousands. According to World Vision (2005), approximately 250,000 people in the GMS are trafficked annually and some 1.2 million children are trafficking victims. Women and children are victimized of trafficking for the purpose of domestic work, bride, begging and child adoption.

Located in Greater Mekong Sub-region, Vietnam confronts similar human trafficking problems men, women and children. In Vietnam, domestic trafficking is closely linked to migration from rural and mountainous areas to urban areas and mainly involves trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation to destinations where prostitution is prevalent, such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, etc. Trafficking in the form of labor exploitation also occurs within the country in the sectors such as agriculture and construction, as well as in factories, sweetshops and karaoke bars (UNIAP, 2008; Thi Tue Phuong, 2008).⁽¹⁾

It is estimated that nearly 400,000 Vietnamese women and children have been trafficked across border mainly via paths and border gates in the northern and southwestern

boundaries, since the end of the Cold War (Lam, 2005; UNIAP, 2008). Women, children, and newborn babies are trafficked from Vietnam Northern provinces (e.g. Lang Son, Quang Xi) to Yunnan Province of China for marriage (under the form of mail-order-bride), labour exploitation, sex service, and adoption. Trafficked Vietnamese women into China account for 70% of the total number of trafficked Vietnamese women worldwide (UNIAP, 2008).

Quite a few cases of trafficked babies are found for adoption purpose. Baby trafficking is lucrative business in Vietnam and babies can be sold for up to \$50,000 each (http://www.humantrafficking.org/action_plans/16). Vietnamese officials reveal that overseas families have adopted 2,000 babies in the last decade. Many of them have been taken to the US and France. For example, *Asian Economic News* (2010) reported that authorities in the northern province of Bac Kan uncovered a child-trafficking operation alleged to have sold 77 children to foreigners during the previous 18 months. Similarly, authorities in the northern province of Ninh Binh discovered more than a dozen people, including health and justice department officials, for alleged involvement in a racket involving the sale of some 350 children to foreigners over a three-year period. Trafficked Vietnamese women into China account for 70% of the total number of trafficked Vietnamese women worldwide (UNIAP, 2008), and around 4,000 Vietnamese women are trafficked to be prostitutes in Cambodia (IOM, 2007). Vietnam is also identified as a destination country for trafficked Cambodians and a transit country for Chinese children into Cambodia (IOM, 2000; UNIAP, 2008; Thi Tue Phuong, 2008).

Confronting the problems of human trafficking, the government of Vietnam has made great efforts to combat it. In addition, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations in Vietnam have supported the country with anti-trafficking

⁽¹⁾ Thi Tue Phuong (2008, p3) further argues that the stringent migration policy adopted by Vietnam government, which is meant to protect women from exploitation, can lead to more irregular migration or aggravating trafficking since it "it has diverted the flow of migrants away from established migration routes to the most dangerous and least populated areas".

activities. They provide health care, accommodation and shelter, repatriation and reintegration programs. They have also implemented activities regarding prevention of victims, advocacy, community awareness raising and law enforcement. However, these efforts are insufficient to the needs of victims and unable to solve trafficking problems thoroughly. Furthermore, the deficiencies in legal framework also impair its capacity of effectively countering trafficking, which may include insufficient national laws on trafficking (e.g. lack of effective definition of trafficking, absence of protection clause for trafficked victims and prosecution clause for traffickers), weak law enforcement (for example, weak judicial institutions, poor knowledge of legal procedures by enforcement officials, corruption and absenteeism among government workers), and lack of effective cooperation and coordination among concerned stakeholders such as governments, NGOs and international organizations.

Despite the significant efforts made by the Vietnam government towards combating human trafficking, Vietnam does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the eradication of trafficking according to the TIP Report by U.S. Department of State (2009). This report indicates that the Vietnam government has not made sufficient efforts to prosecute criminals of labor trafficking or protect the victims of labor trafficking while the government pursues the prosecution of sex trafficking offenders. Although the government has taken steps to counter cross-border sex trafficking by expanding investigations and prosecutions of traffickers, it is yet to make progress on internal trafficking, both sex and labor.

This raises particularly, the question from the public, donors, and NGOs why women trafficking is on the rise. This paper assesses the roles of NGOs in combating women/children trafficking in Vietnam; assess the coordination mechanism between government and NGOs, and between NGOs and NGOs and evaluate the effectiveness of NGOs in combating women/children trafficking.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: the next section provides a brief review of the non-governmental organizations in human trafficking in Vietnam. The third section discusses the data and methodology. The fourth section presents the results while the fifth section presents concluding observations on the roles of NGOs in combating women/children trafficking in Vietnam followed by policy implications and limitations.

2. Overview of non-governmental organizations human trafficking in Vietnam

NGOs in Vietnam respond positively to the combat of human trafficking in terms of prevention, protection and prosecution, and play important roles in prevention (including IEC), repatriation assistance and community reintegration, crime prevention and law enforcement and international cooperation. There is a great deal of appreciation for services provided by NGOs to combat trafficking, but it is clear that the services provided are inadequate for the size of the population concerned. In addition, some NGOs could not perform their anti-trafficking programs effectively because of the lack of effective administrative personnel, lack of cooperation with other NGOs, lack of coherent and cohesive governmental policy to address the abuse and exploitation of women, lack of relevant information, concremented data and accurate statistics about trafficking. These factors raise demands for intensive investment and effective performance of NGOs' roles in combating human trafficking in Vietnam.

Compared to the total number of NGOs in Vietnam, the number of NGOs involved in anti-trafficking activities is modest. One reason is that each NGO has its own goal or target and anti-trafficking is not a focus by most NGOs. Most NGO projects/programs focus on the development of the economy; health and education; overcoming wars' consequences; hunger elimination and poverty reduction;

environmental problems. Besides, while some big NGOs have separated projects/programs entirely focusing on combating human trafficking, many small or medium-size NGOs have anti-trafficking activities as sub-project or minor project under one program (e.g., human rights, women's rights, children's rights, immigration, etc.), and thus, such NGOs frequently do not consider themselves as professional anti-trafficking NGOs. Moreover, some NGOs' anti-trafficking programs are short term because they largely depend on donors' funding, and once donors stop sponsoring their programs, the NGOs then have to terminate the anti-trafficking programs. In addition, some NGOs could not perform their anti-trafficking programs effectively because of the lack of effective administrative personnel, lack of cooperation with other NGOs, lack of coherent and cohesive governmental policy to address the abuse and exploitation of women, lack of relevant information, concremented data and accurate statistics about trafficking.

According to the Asia Foundation (2008), there are 222 local NGOs in Vietnam. The number of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Vietnam increased from approximately 200 in the early 1990s to 750 in 2009. The INGOs in Vietnam implement around 6,500 projects. INGOs' activities spans over all 63 provinces/cities of the country.

3. Data and methodology

We identified 20 NGOs who have implemented anti-trafficking projects/programs. Fifteen of the NGOs are based in Hanoi, two in Hochiminh City, one in Nghe An province, one in Da Nang city and one in Hue city. Due to the reasons such as limited number of NGOs involved in combating human trafficking, too busy to participate in the interview and difficult access to appropriate program staff, only 13 NGOs both local and international were identified and interviewed using face-to-face interview (see Table 1). The 13 NGOs do not include international organizations (such as

International Labor Organization (ILO)), inter-government organizations (such as International Organization of Migration (IOM)), and UN agencies (such as United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP), and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC). IOM refused to participate in the interview as they do not consider their organization as an NGO. ILO completed their projects and are preparing for the next phase of work and the former officers have left the organization; thus there is no one in charge of the project to help with the interview.

Table 1. List of non-governmental organizations interviewed in Vietnam

Save the Children UK
ActionAid International in Vietnam (AAV)
The Asia Foundation (TAF)
Centre for Research, Family, Health and Community (CEFACOM)
Oxfam Quebec
Gruppo Trentino Volontariato (GTV)
Vietnam Handicraft Research and Promotion Centre (HRPC)
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
The Centre for Reproductive and Family Health (RaFH)
SHARE centre
Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad (APHEDA)
Centre for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender, Family, Women and Adolescents (CSAGA)
Centre for Education Promotion and Empowerment of Women (CEPEW)

This study uses a survey questionnaire to identify NGOs' roles in anti-trafficking women and children. The survey questions consist of a mixture of close-ended and open-ended questions. The survey questionnaire is designed and implemented according to the Dillman Total Design Method (1991), which has proven to result in improved response rates and data quality. To assess the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a pre-test was conducted. Following the pre-test, some modifications to

the questionnaire were made. The revised questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese language and then administered face-to-face interview with 13 NGOs staff.

4. Result and discussion

4.1. Overview of anti-trafficking programs done by NGOs in Vietnam

A total of 13 respondents from different NGOs outfit were interviewed in the city of Hanoi, Vietnam. All respondents are female and married at the time of the survey. Majority of the survey respondents are between 26 to 35 years old (61.5%) and 36-45 years old (38.5%) and have either a master degree (53.8%) or bachelor degree (46.2%). In regards to their

position in the women/children anti-trafficking projects/programs, 30.8% are officers, 30.8% are coordinators and 38.5% are managers. Majority of the respondents have been working on the women/children anti-trafficking projects/programs between 3 to 5 years. Only three respondents (23.1%) have worked in women/children anti-trafficking projects/programs for more than 5 years. The respondents are experienced and actively involved in the anti-trafficking activities.

The size of the respondents' work organization ranges from 2 to 140 staff with an average of 33 staff (see Table 2). The organizations were founded as early as 1920 and the latest was 2001. However, most of the organizations' anti-trafficking projects/programs for women/children started between 2002 and 2006.

Table 2. Profile of respondents in women/children trafficking programs in Vietnam

Variables	Responses	Count	Percent (N=13)
Gender of respondents	Male	0	0.0
	Female	13	100
Age group of respondents	26-35 years old	8	61.5
	36-45 years old	5	38.5
Marital status of respondents	Married	13	100
Highest level of education of respondents	Bachelors Degree	6	46.2
	Master Degree	7	53.8
Respondents position in the women/children anti-trafficking projects/ programs	Officer	4	30.8
	Coordinator	4	30.8
	Manager	5	38.5
Years working on the women/children anti-trafficking projects/programs?	3 to 4 years	5	38.5
	4 to 5 years	5	38.5
	More than 5 years	3	23.1
	2	1	7.7
Size of the organization	4	1	7.7
	9	1	7.7
	10	1	7.7
	22	2	15.4
	25	2	15.4
	30	2	15.4
	35	1	7.7
Year organization founded	60	1	7.7
	140	1	7.7
	1920	1	7.7

	1943	1	7.7
	1957	1	7.7
	1984	1	7.7
	1989	1	7.7
	1991	1	7.7
	1993	1	7.7
	1997	3	23.1
	1999	2	15.4
	2001	1	7.7
	2002	1	7.7
	2003	5	38.5
Year organization commence implementing anti-trafficking projects/programs for women/children	2004	2	15.4
	2005	2	15.4
	2006	3	23.1

Source: Survey Questionnaire “An Assessment of Non Governmental Organizations’ Roles in Combating Women/Children Trafficking in Vietnam,” April 2010.

Table 3 shows the cross tabulation starting year and implementation of the women/children trafficking programs. For example, 23% of the NGOs’ women/children trafficking programs has been in service for between 1 to 3 years and 7.7% between 7 to 9 years. These figures show that trafficking problem actually became

NGOs’ concern in early 2000s when the consequences of trafficking were on the rise and became a social phenomenon worldwide. It was critical for every organizations and agencies, regardless of governmental, non-governmental societies to work together to combat human trafficking.

Table 3. Cross tabulation commencement and implementation women/children trafficking programs

Program commencement vs year of program implementation	Year of program implemented			Total (N=13)
	1 to 3 years	4 to 6 years	7 to 9 years	
2002 (7 years as end of 2008)	0	0	1	1
2003 (6 years as end of 2008)	0	5	0	5
Commencement of the Program 2004 (5 years as end of 2008)	1	1	0	2
2005 (4 years as end of 2008)	0	2	0	2
2006 (3 years as end of 2008)	2	1	0	3
Total (N=13)	3	9	1	13

Source: Survey Questionnaire “An Assessment of Non Governmental Organizations’ Roles in Combating Women/Children Trafficking in Vietnam,” April 2010.

All the respondents acknowledged that there are anti-trafficking projects/programs within their organization assigned to oversee women/children trafficking cases. The sources of finance for the NGOs’ women/children anti-trafficking projects/programs include United Nation fund (7.7%), own fund (30.8%), foreign donors (such as world bank, IMF) (7.7%), and others (69.2%) (see Table 4). Majority of the

NGOs used *other financial source* as EC, USAID, IOM, Embassy of America, Australia, England and Holland. Considering *Other financial source*, 11 NGOs represents only 1 financial source, only 2 NGOs have more than 1 financial source (15%). As NGOs have to rely on the funding of other agencies or embassies, they sometimes cannot actively carry out their activities. They need approval from donor(s) or

sponsor(s) for every new arise action, leading to the discontinuation in implementation and the unsustainability of their projects/programs.

Provision of training courses is the main activity conducted by the NGOs for capacity

building for the staff in charge of anti-trafficking projects/programs. Surprisingly, only 38.5% provided training to staff in charge of anti-trafficking projects/programs on how to identify and respond to women/children trafficking cases.

Table 4. General information on women/children trafficking programs/projects in Vietnam

Variables	Responses	Count	Percent (N=13)	Percent (N=5)
Are there any anti-trafficking projects/programs within your organization assigned to oversee women/children trafficking cases?		13	100	
What are the financial sources for the women or children anti-trafficking projects/programs?	UN funding	1	7.7	
	Own sources	4	30.8	
	Foreign donors (such as World Bank, IMF, etc.)	1	7.7	
	Co-funded by the organization and other organizations/donors	0	0.0	
	Others	9	69.2	
Does your organization provide training to staff in charge of anti-trafficking projects/programs on how to identify and respond to women or children trafficking cases?		5	38.5	
Type of training organization provide to staff in charge of anti-trafficking projects/programs?	In house training	2	15.4	
	Training for new recruit	2	15.4	
	Roll call briefing	2	15.4	
	Local workshop	3	23.1	
	Regional conferences	2	15.4	
	National conferences	3	23.1	
	Offsite professional training	3	23.1	
	Others	0	0.0	
Number of training programs provided	1	1	7.7	20.0
	2	1	7.7	20.0
	4	2	15.4	40.0
	6	1	7.7	20.0
Who provides the training?	Independent consultant/trainer	1	7.7	20.0
	Trainer of the organization	2	15.4	40.0
	Community-based agency/service	0	0.0	0.0
	Local trainers	1	7.7	20.0
	International trainers	3	23.1	60.0
	Others	1	7.7	20.0
Number of trainers used in NGO	1	2	15.4	40.0
	2	3	23.1	20.0

Source: Survey questionnaire "An assessment of Non Governmental organizations' roles in combating women/children trafficking in Vietnam," April 2010.

Table 4 shows the training programs provided to NGOs staff are inadequate. For example, 8 NGOs (61.5%) do not provide any training programs to their staff. Two provided 2 or less training programs (1 program provided: 7.7%, 2 programs provided: 7.7%). Only 3 NGOs provided 4 to 6 training programs to staff (4 programs provided: 15.4%, 6 programs provided: 7.7%). This lack of thorough training for staff may originate from many reasons that are often referred to by officers in charge. First is the shortage of qualified national and international trainers in the country. In some cases, training activities are developed and included in the work plans but the actions only end in brief introduction of the human trafficking situation or simply the statistics of cases but not on teaching skills for staff to deal with a specific problems and issues. Secondly, the unavailability of training curriculum and communication materials also contribute to the omission of training sessions for staff in charge of anti-human trafficking in Vietnam. Most of the curricula are translated from foreign languages which are not very adaptable to the context in the country.

“When I was appointed for the position of the program officer, I did not receive any training about human trafficking and related issues. I was introduced about the program implemented by the organization and had to study by myself to carry out program activities. Lucky me, I had experiences working with women in my previous job, which makes my work easier. “Learning by doing” is best experience for me”, said a program officer.

In terms of types of programs provided, 3 NGOs (23.1%) provided Local workshop, National Conference, and Offsite Professional Trainings programs. Two NGOs provided In-house training, Training for new recruit, Roll call briefing, and Regional Conferences. These training programs are often provided by 1 or 2 trainers (15.4% and 23.1% respectively). International trainers are more commonly used (23.1%) by the organization. Other trainers used by the organization include Trainer of the organization (15.4%), Independent consultant/trainer (7.7%), and Local trainers (7.7%) (see Table 5).

Table 5. Cross Tabulation Number of Training versus Number of Trainers

Number of Training vs Number of Trainer	No. of Trainers			Total (N=13)
	0	1	2	
0	8	0	0	8
1	0	1	0	1
2	0	0	1	1
4	0	1	1	2
6	0	0	1	1
Total (N=13)	8	2	3	13

Source: Survey Questionnaire “An Assessment of Non Governmental Organizations’ Roles in Combating Women/Children Trafficking in Vietnam,” April 2010.

Training is a vital activity which helps enhance capacity of NGOs’ staff as well as partners in handling human trafficking problems. However, training

activities/programs have not received sufficient investment from NGOs. No specific training programs such as how to identify trafficking cases, how to access trafficked victims and how

to refer trafficked victims to relevant addresses have been provided to officers when they take assume the position. What NGOs' staff in charge of anti-trafficking programs be delivered with trainings include workshops and seminars about trafficking problem, related issues or prevention of human trafficking. Officers from nine NGOs say they have attended national and local trainings which are also held for local partners or program beneficiaries. Three NGOs often send their staff to related meetings, workshops and seminars, which are organized at national or local level. Only one NGO has sent their staff to UNIAP training. It is therefore very important to train officials in charged on knowledge and skills of human trafficking prevention and consultation.

“During program implementation, we found that capacity of our local partners have been improved remarkably. They are now very active in performing their jobs. I think, when the program ends, they can sustain the program well or propose to commence activities to other donors to get support for trafficked victims. We are thankful for training activities. Actually, we benefit from these trainings. We learn and share with the trainers as well as update ourselves in national and local workshops, seminars or trainings,” a program coordinator said.

It is evident that NGOs can have qualified staff and capable partners if they promote their training activities. It also means that they can spread influences to targeted localities, leading to the increase in prevention and protection of trafficked victims.

4.2. Prevention and rehabilitation programs to reduce the vulnerability of women/children trafficking

Table 6 shows the prevention and rehabilitation programs the NGOs engaged in to reduce the vulnerability of women/children trafficked. For example, all NGOs focus on prevention programs, and 84.6% focus on rehabilitation programs, and 46.2% focus on

protection and support programs. Other types of anti-trafficking programs are focused by limited NGOs. The survey shows that 92.3% of the NGOs are engaged in education and awareness and advocacy followed by working with the media (46.2%) in their prevention programs. Most of the NGOs focused on 2 to 3 prevention programs (46.2% and 38.5% respectively). However, there are 2 NGOs (15.4%) focused on 5 programs. According to the interviewed NGOs, prevention is the most important factor to help combat human trafficking. If prevention activities are adequate and well implemented, then the people will not have to confront trafficking consequences. Therefore, to promote these activities, NGOs have cooperated with local partners, mass organizations and mass-media to carry out advocacy and communication strategies to help increase awareness of community on trafficking issues as well as mobilise participation of authorities. Prevention actions done by NGOs demonstrate certain impacts.

“We established a hot-line to provide information about trafficking and help trafficked victims whenever necessary. Our organization also signed a contract with Vietnam radio station to broadcast information about trafficking and give our hot-line number to audience. Many people, including trafficked victims, phoned us and ask for our assistance, regarding information about overseas labour markets, tricks of traffickers, where to get support when returning after trafficked. We also act as friends to listen, talk to them and share their feelings. I think this is a really good communication channel to help prevent trafficking,” one project officer shared.

Following prevention, rehabilitation plays crucial roles in supporting trafficked victims after their return. Almost all women after being trafficked to destination countries are treated badly or face very hard life. They escape and return home. However, it is not easy for them to start lives again due to their embarrassment, social discrimination and life difficulties. If they cannot find ways to live and reintegrate

their social lives with others, they can become re-trafficked or traffickers. Thus, assistance and support for repatriation are very vital.

In terms of legal framework development, 30.8% of the NGOs are engaged in national laws while only 1 NGO (7.7%) focused on international related laws and human rights laws. The NGOs explain that Vietnam is in the process of developing law on human anti-trafficking. The most common law which all NGOs refer to when implementing anti-trafficking programs is Criminal Law in which articles about human trafficking are documented. We also found that seven NGOs (53.8%) are not engaged in development of any legal programs while 5 NGOs focused on at least one legal program and 1 NGO focused on 3 programs. Similarly, 9 NGOs (69.2%) are

engaged in protection of the victims while 4 NGOs (30.8%) engaged in training law enforcement agencies in women/children trafficking. Three NGOs (23.1%) did not participate in any law enforcement activity. More than half of the NGOs focused on 1 to 2 types of law enforcement programs (38.5% and 30.8% respectively). The reason for the low participation of NGOs in legal development and enforcement is that the NGOs in Vietnam are not directly involved in policy making. They play the roles as lobbying, advocacy and resource mobilisation for anti-trafficking strategies. The area which NGOs involve in law enforcement is provision of training regarding trafficking related laws for local partners and community.

Table 6. Prevention and rehabilitation programs to reduce the vulnerability of women/children in Vietnam

Variables	Responses	Count	Percent (N=13)
Types of anti-trafficking programs/projects your organization focus on to combat trafficking of women and children	Prevention	13	100
	Legal framework and law enforcement	1	7.7
	Protection and victim support	6	46.2
	Policy and advocacy	5	38.5
	Rehabilitation and reintegration of victims	11	84.6
	Others (consider 1 program only)	3	23.1
Number of programs focused	2	4	38.5
	3	3	30.8
	4	1	23.7
	5	5	7.7
	Education	12	92.3
Types of prevention activity your organization engaged in	Awareness raising and advocacy	12	92.3
	Networking and information sharing	3	23.1
	Working with media	6	46.2
	Consultation services	1	7.7
	Hotline/direct counseling	3	23.1
Number of types of prevention engaged	2	6	46.2
	3	5	38.5
	5	2	15.4
Types of legal framework activity your organization engaged in	International laws related to trafficking	1	7.7

	International criminal laws	13	100
	International human rights laws	1	7.7
	National laws related to trafficking	4	30.8
	Others (consider 1 program only)	2	15.4
Number of legal framework activity engaged	0	7	53.8
	1	5	38.5
	3	1	7.7
	Protection of victims	9	69.2
Types of law enforcement activity your organization engaged in	Investigation of complaints of trafficking	1	7.7
	Training law enforcement agencies	4	30.8
	Prosecution of trafficking cases	1	7.7
	Trial of trafficking cases	13	100
Number of types of law enforcement engaged	None	3	23.1
	Others (consider 1 program only)	1	7.7
	0	3	23.1
	1	5	38.5
Types of protection and victim support activities your organization engaged in	2	4	30.8
	3	1	7.7
	Providing shelter	1	7.7
	Legal assistance	6	46.2
Number of protection and victim support activities	Financial assistance	4	30.8
	Providing health care or psychological assistance	6	46.2
	Vocational training	8	61.5
	Others (consider 1 program only)	1	7.7
Types of policy and advocacy activities your organization engaged in	0	1	7.7
	1	3	23.1
	2	5	38.5
	3	3	23.1
Types of advocacy activities engaged	4	1	7.7
	Advocacy on related laws, plans and strategies	10	76.9
	Supporting development of national and/or local plans	3	23.1
	Information collection, collation and dissemination	9	69.2
Types of policy and advocacy activities your organization engaged in	Policy development and implementation	0	0.0
	1	6	46.2
	2	5	38.5
Types of advocacy activities engaged	3	2	15.4

Do your anti-trafficking projects/programs collaborate or receive support from government agencies?	Yes	13	100.0
	Police	1	7.7
	Women's Union	11	84.6
Which government agencies have given support to your anti-trafficking projects/programs?	Youth Union	1	7.7
	Mass Media	2	15.4
	Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs	5	38.5
	Other (consider 1 program only)	4	30.8
	1	8	61.5
	2	2	15.4
Number of government agencies given support	3	1	7.7
	4	1	7.7
	5	1	7.7

Source: Survey Questionnaire "An Assessment of Non Governmental Organizations' Roles in Combating Women/Children Trafficking in Vietnam," April 2010.

4.3. Non-governmental organizations' roles in combating women/children trafficking

From the interviews with the NGOs, we could not obtain sufficient information about the number of women/children trafficking cases which NGOs investigated in the period 2005 to 2008 (that is, the number of trafficked women/children who seek help from their projects/programs) because majority NGOs refused to give us the correct numbers of victims or beneficiaries who are supported by their projects due to confidentiality between the victims. Most NGOs have their own criteria in selecting beneficiaries for their programs. Some NGOs keep the number of their investigations confidential. The interviewed NGOs say that they often base their selection on current data from the government, police agencies or local authorities to select beneficiaries. That's why only few data are collected regarding investigations of women/children trafficking. The number of trafficking cases investigated also quite varied in different NGOs. In 2005, only one NGO investigated 500 women/children trafficking cases; in 2006, three NGOs investigated on an average of 270

women/children trafficking cases (10, 60 and 500 respectively). Similarly, in 2007, four NGOs investigated an average of 226 women/children trafficking cases (35, 50, 60, and 500 respectively). Only one NGO has investigated 500 women/children trafficking cases throughout 4 years (from 2005 to 2008) (see Table 7).

When asked about the possibility of doing investigations, only 3 NGOs (23.1%) believe their organization could enhance women/children trafficking investigations and only one NGO acknowledge they have a reporting mechanism in place within their organization to track women/children trafficking cases. However, the NGOs say that they can promote investigations if they have funding and sufficient resources.

A program officer shared: "Our organization conducts baseline survey before commencing program implementation. However, the survey only covers locality where the program is carried out. We also obtained data from existing sources. Nevertheless, the data are inconsistent with the sources. I think it is necessary to make

an overall survey on trafficking situation in Vietnam to identify the indicators and numbers of trafficking cases. If our organization has funding, we can do it.”

The average age of most of the women trafficked since 2005 were between 25-29 years old (84.6%) and 30-39 years old (69.2%). Two NGOs reported less than 18 years old (15.4%) and one NGO reported more than 50 years old (7.7%). The main explanation why most women as young as 25-39 years old are trafficked includes high demands for prostitutes, domestic assistants or labor force. The average age of trafficked women has changed recently. In the past, more young girls are trafficked. However, currently even elder women are trafficked as they are in demands for labor forces. Another reason is that there is a high percentage of unemployment, poverty in the countryside, tragedy in love or divorce issues, or just at most profitable as a kind of

goods. Information about average age of children trafficked is limited as most NGOs interviewed do not involved in anti-trafficking children activities. Anti-trafficking children actions are integrated with child rights programs done by their organizations.

Nine NGOs (69.2%) reported that local law enforcement referred the trafficked victims to them while five NGOs (38.5%) reported referrals from other service providers. Only one NGO (7.7%) reported self referral. The NGOs do not investigate and find the victims to benefit their program' activities. They conduct surveys to identify the high risk and targeted localities where trafficking issue becomes alarming. Then local authorities, law enforcement agencies or mass organizations who work closely with victims will introduce the trafficked victims to the NGOs. Thus, the NGOs' anti-trafficking actions depend largely on cooperation and assistance from related agencies.

Table 7. Non-governmental organizations' roles in combating women/children trafficking in Vietnam

Variables	Responses		Count	Percent (N=13)
	Year	Number of cases		
Approximately how many total women/children trafficking cases have your organization investigated each year since 2005?	2005	500 cases	1	7.7
	2006	10 cases	1	7.7
		60	1	7.7
		500	1	7.7
		500	1	7.7
	2007	35 cases	1	7.7
		50	1	7.7
		60	1	7.7
		500	1	7.7
	2008	25 cases	1	7.7
		80	1	7.7
		500	1	7.7
The average age of most of the women trafficked since 2005	Less than 18 years old		2	15.4
	18-24 years old		6	46.2
	25-29 years old		11	84.6
	30-39 years old		9	68.2
	40-50 years old		3	23.1
	More than 50 years old		1	7.7
The average age of most of the children trafficked since 2005	Less than 5 years old		1	7.7
	5-10 years old		1	7.7

	11-15 years old		2	15.4
	16 to 18 years old		2	15.4
How are the trafficked victims referred to you?	Self referral		1	7.7
	Local law enforcement		9	69.2
	Neighbours, concerned citizens groups, community groups		1	7.7
	Other service providers		5	38.5
	Others		2	15.4
On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 = very important and 6 = unimportant, please rank the following reasons why women are trafficked (all the women trafficking cases)	Poor education opportunity	Very important	4	30.8
		Important	9	69.2
	Poverty	Very important	9	69.2
		Important	4	30.8
	Poor legal frame work	Less important	4	30.8
		Neutral	6	46.2
		Unimportant	3	23.1
	Weak actions against trafficking	Less important	6	46.2
		Neutral	2	15.4
		Unimportant	4	30.8
		Very	1	7.7
	Gender inequality in employment opportunity	Less important	3	23.1
		Neutral	4	30.8
		Unimportant	3	23.1
		Very unimportant	3	23.1
	Restrictive immigration policies	Neutral	1	7.7
		Unimportant	3	23.1
		Very unimportant	9	69.2
On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 = very important and 6 = unimportant, please rank the following reasons why women are trafficked (all the Children trafficking cases)	Poor education opportunity	Very important	4	30.8
		Important	4	30.8
	Poverty	Important	4	30.8
		Unimportant	1	7.7
	Poor legal frame work	Neutral	3	23.1
		Unimportant	1	7.7
	Weak actions against trafficking	Less important	3	23.1
		Very unimportant	1	7.7
	Traditional prejudice towards girls	Neutral	1	7.7
		Unimportant	2	15.4
		Very unimportant	1	7.7
	Lack of caregivers/ parental support	Less important	1	7.7
Unimportant		1	7.7	
Very unimportant		2	15.4	

For all the women trafficking cases that you have worked on since 2005, which country are the destinations?	Cambodia	4	30.8
	China	12	92.3
	Taiwan	2	15.4
	Thailand	2	15.4
	Korea	1	7.7
For all the children trafficking cases that you have worked on since 2005, which country are the destinations?	Cambodia	1	7.7
	China	4	30.8
	Taiwan	1	7.7
	Thailand	1	7.7
Which methods do traffickers often use to trick women/children?	Promise of good jobs	13	100
	Promise of a better life	10	76.9
	Marriage	11	84.6
	Labor broker	4	30.8
	Others	2	15.4
Methods used to trick women/children	Promise of a better life	3	23.1
	Marriage	7	53.8
	Labor broker	2	15.4
	Others	1	7.7
What is the average length of time you spend investigating a woman/child	Less than 5 months	2	15.4
Since 2005, has your organization brought any formal charges against individuals involved in women/children trafficking?	Yes	1	7.7
What crimes are women/children trafficking associated with?	False identification	7	53.8
	Prostitution and pornography	12	92.3
	Gangs	1	7.7
	Illegal immigration	8	61.5
	Others	1	7.7

Source: Survey Questionnaire “An Assessment of Non Governmental Organizations’ Roles in Combating Women/Children Trafficking in Vietnam,” April 2010.

From all the women trafficking cases that the NGOs have worked on since 2005, we asked them to rank on a scale of 1 to 6, 1 = very important and 6 = unimportant, the reasons why women are trafficked (see Table 8). Table 8 shows poverty is the most important factor women are trafficked followed by poor education. In terms of the destinations trafficked, 12 NGOs (92.3%) reported most of the women were trafficked to China, and

followed by Cambodia (30.8%) (see Table 8). Apart from illiterate countryside women, new generation of girls and women in cities who have high level of education are also traded by organized gangs. The traffickers often search for lonely girls on the internet and lure them to participate into a high profitable projects or lucrative paying jobs in big cities. Following this, they sell these innocent girls into brothels in a foreign country.

Table 8. Reasons why women are trafficked

Responses		Count	Percent (N=13)
Poor education opportunity	Very important	4	30.8
	Important	9	69.2
	Total	13	100.0
Poverty	Very important	9	69.2
	Important	4	30.8
	Total	13	100.0
Poor legal framework	Less important	4	30.8
	Neutral	6	46.2
	Unimportant	3	23.1
	Total	13	100.0
Weak actions against trafficking	Less important	6	46.2
	Neutral	2	15.4
	Unimportant	4	30.8
	Very unimportant	1	7.7
Gender inequality in employment	Total	13	100.0
	Less important	3	23.1
	Neutral	4	30.8
	Unimportant	3	23.1
Restrictive immigration policies	Very unimportant	3	23.1
	Unimportant	3	23.1
	Neutral	1	7.7
	Total	13	100.0
Restrictive immigration policies	Very unimportant	9	69.2
	Unimportant	3	23.1
	Total	13	100.0

Source: Survey Questionnaire "An Assessment of Non Governmental Organizations' Roles in Combating Women/Children Trafficking in Vietnam," April 2010.

Similarly, from all the children trafficking cases that the NGOs have worked on since 2005, we asked them to rank on a scale of 1 to 6; 1 = very important, and 6 = unimportant, the reasons why children are trafficked (see Table 9). Table 9 shows poor education opportunity is

the most important factor children are trafficked followed by poverty. In terms of the destinations trafficked, 4 NGOs (30.8%) reported most of the children were trafficked to China (see Table 8).

Table 9. Reasons Why Children are Trafficked

Responses		Count	Percent (N=13)
Poor education opportunity	Very important	4	30.8
	N/A	9	69.2
	Total	13	100.0
Poverty	Important	4	30.8
	N/A	9	69.2

	Total	13	100.0
	Neutral	3	23.1
	Unimportant	1	7.7
Poor legal framework	N/A	9	69.2
	Total	13	100.0
	Less important	3	23.1
	Very unimportant	1	7.7
Weak actions against trafficking	N/A	9	69.2
	Total	13	100.0
	Neutral	1	7.7
	Unimportant	2	15.4
Traditional prejudice to girls	Very unimportant	1	7.7
	N/A	9	69.2
	Total	13	100.0
	Less important	1	7.7
	Unimportant	1	7.7
Lack of caregivers	Very unimportant	2	15.4
	N/A	9	69.2
	Total	13	100.0

Source: Survey Questionnaire “An Assessment of Non Governmental Organizations’ Roles in Combating Women/Children Trafficking in Vietnam,” April 2010.

According to the NGOs, traffickers often use promise of jobs (100%), marriage (84.6%), and promises of better life (76.9%) and labour broker (30.8%) to trick women/children. It is understood that as poverty is the most common reason for women/children trafficked, women/children are easily cheated by the traffickers for the better life, better jobs with high income as they want to overcome poverty. Therefore, many traffickers pretend to be labor brokers to cheat women/children. In addition, due to increasing demands for Vietnamese wives from Chinese men, a lot of young girls believe in the marriage with foreigners with the hope for a better life. This is a major reason why China is the main destination for Vietnamese trafficked women. The women are often sold to other men or to brothels or have to work as laborer for families upon arriving to their husbands’ countries. Following China, Cambodia is a country where Vietnamese girls are trafficked to serve as prostitutes. This why prostitution and pornography (92.3%) is the

dominant crimes associated with women/children trafficking, followed by illegal immigration (61.5%), false identification (53.8%) and gangs (7.7%) (see Table 7).

4.4. Major factors contributing to the success of NGOs anti-trafficking projects/programs

A major factor that contributes to the success of NGOs’ anti-trafficking projects/programs is the strong commitment and close cooperation from their local partners. All 13 interviewed NGOs say they have received active and strong support from local partners for all activities of their projects, from the baseline survey and victims access to the implementation, evaluation and sustainability of project activities.

One program coordinators said: “Our programs greatly contribute to the anti-trafficking of women/children. We should thank our partners for this achievement. They are very cooperative, supportive, active and helpful. They not only

work closely with us during activities implementation but also make very good initiatives to help trafficked victims.”

Secondly, six NGOs reported good design and work-plan development their programs have achieved. The NGOs focus on the beneficiaries' needs and consider the appropriateness of the program in the local circumstances. Three NGOs reported close coordination with various anti-trafficking agencies (such as network of government, and non-government and related agencies) as a key contributing factor to the success of their anti-trafficking programs. Such activities include regular meeting, joint performance of some activities or publication of newsletters or bulletins of the network have exerted great impacts to combat trafficking. Two NGOs emphasized the contribution of the organizations' capacity, their qualified staff and valuable technical advisors to enhance the achievement of their organizations in anti-trafficking programs. Other critical factors identified by NGOs which contribute to the success of their anti-trafficking programs include: great psychological impacts of their program activities, the provision of vocational training and establishment of vocational villages, support for production groups, good counselling activities, volunteer contribution and community participation.

“Many activities have been done by our organization to help prevent trafficking and support victims. For me, one activity which I think have great influences on victims' life is that we help establish one vocational village where victims can work, get jobs and earn income. This will not only improve their life but help reduce burden to their families and society as well,” according to comments of one program coordinator.

4.5. Major constraints NGOs faced in dealing with the trafficking issues

Despite many achievements, the NGOs also confronted many constraints in implementing

their anti-trafficking programs. The constraints can be divided into two categories. One depends on the policy or legal related issues and the other arises during program implementation. Regarding the first constraint category, one NGO says that although the government promulgated national action plan to combat human trafficking, there is no budget to carry out the activities. Locals rely on the funding from NGOs or other sources to carry out the anti-trafficking activities. Thus, local authorities are not active or proactive in combating human trafficking. In addition, one NGO discussed the difficulty in determining a case of trafficking crimes as there is no clear definition of what is trafficking crime is. For instance, one person is approached when he/she is leading others to cross the border. However, that person does not admit involving in trafficking as no evidences related to money were found, leading to the difficulties to identify trafficking criminals. Furthermore, one NGO acknowledges that law enforcement activities in Vietnam remain weak. Vietnam does not have any specific anti-trafficking law. All trafficking cases are judged according to criminal law.

One NGO reported lack of resources is the main reason why there are no anti-trafficking projects/programs within their organization assigned to oversee women/children trafficking cases. In addition, another NGO says their organization does not have a formal procedure in place that provides instructions for staff on how to identify and respond to women/children trafficking cases.

In regards to the difficulties arising during the implementation of the anti-trafficking programs, three NGOs reported the access to victims as a critical factor. Because trafficking is a sensitive issue and lack of understanding on the rights of victims amongst people, victims feel shy, embarrassed or do not want people to know their situations. In addition, the victims are busy with their work, especially in the harvest seasons, leading to limited accessibility to them. The difficulties in referral of victims

are mentioned by one NGO. When the victims come to the local authority or NGOs to seek for support, after first aid assistance (such as temporary shelters, psychological support and financial assistance) upon their return, it takes time to send them to their home or appropriate addresses. In addition, five NGOs have faced issues related to insufficient funding and human resources in organizing the program activities. The funding is short-term or allocated annually leading to breakdown implementation. The officers are also over worked. Local partners who work only part-time for the women/children programs are generally busy with their full-time job, so it is difficult for them to allocate time sufficiently and

appropriately for the program activities. Four NGOs reported their concern about jobs and income for victims. They provide vocational training for the victims but it is difficult to network them with the market to sell their products to earn income. Other constraints faced by the NGOs include people's limited understanding on the rights of victims, discrimination, management of reintegration cases and the limited understanding of local authorities about the programs' activities.

The survey interview also asked the respondents how frequently their organizations encounter the following issues when investigating cases of women/children trafficking:

Table 10. Problems encounter by NGOs investigating cases of women/children trafficking

Frequency NGOs encounter following problems	Frequently		Occasionally		Seldom		Never	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Lack of victim cooperation	1	7.7	2	15.4	4	30.8	5	38.5
Language barriers	1	7.7	0	0.0	1	7.7	10	76.9
Lack of adequate translator services	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	92.3
Lack of coordination with local authorities	0	0.0	1	7.7	5	38.5	7	53.8
Lack of support with victim service providers/community	1	7.7	0	0.0	9	69.2	2	15.4
Lack of adequate resources (e.g. time, money, staff)	2	15.4	5	38.5	5	38.5	1	7.7
Lack of adequate training and knowledge	1	7.7	4	30.8	6	46.2	2	15.4
Lack of procedures to identify and respond to women/children trafficking	6	46.2	3	23.1	3	23.1	1	7.7

Source: Survey Questionnaire "An Assessment of Non Governmental Organizations' Roles in Combating Women/Children Trafficking in Vietnam," April 2010.

Table 10 shows 6 NGOs (46.2%) frequently encountered lack of procedures to investigate cases of women/children trafficking, 3 NGOs (23.1%) reported they seldom encountered lack of procedures to identify trafficking, and 1 NGO (7.7%) never encountered lack of procedures to identify trafficking. Similarly, 2 NGOs (15.4%) reported they lack adequate

resources to investigate cases of women/children trafficking while 5 NGOs (38.5%) reported they seldom lack resources and 1 NGO (7.7%) never lack resources.

Table 11 shows 11 NGOs (85.6.2%) frequently faced feelings of shame or embarrassment when working with victims of women/children trafficking while 6 NGOs (42.6%) reported victims do not identify

themselves as a victim. Almost all NGOs (92.3%) reported they do not face language and culture barriers when working with victims of women/children trafficking. The results also

show in general that most NGOs reported they seldom face lack of support with victim service providers or community based organizations in helping victims of women/children trafficking

Table 11. Challenges encounter by NGOs working with trafficked victims

Frequency NGOs faced following challenges	Frequently		Occasionally		Seldom		Never	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Lack of trust in the criminal justice system	1	7.7	5	38.5	6	46.2	1	7.7
Victims do not identify themselves as a victim	6	46.2	4	30.8	1	7.7	1	7.7
Language and culture barriers	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	7.7	12	92.3
Lack of support with victim service providers/community based organizations	1	7.7	1	7.7	9	69.2	2	15.4
Lack of adequate shelter	3	23.1	5	38.5	4	30.8	1	7.7
Feelings of shame or embarrassment	11	85.6	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0.0
Lack of knowledge about victim's rights	3	23.1	6	46.2	4	30.8	0	0.0
Victim engaged in potentially illegal activity	1	7.7	6	46.2	3	23.1	3	23.1

Source: Survey Questionnaire "An Assessment of Non Governmental Organizations' Roles in Combating Women/Children Trafficking in Vietnam," April 2010.

Discrimination remains one major problem in human trafficking despite many advocacy, education and communication activities to eliminate this taboo. However, it is not easy to achieve. We can see the shame or embarrassment of victims themselves. They do not want to identify themselves. This is because discrimination still exists. Victims cannot easily repatriate to normal life. They may be not employed as they have been trafficked and considered an outcast of society. In fact, in some cases they are considered as criminals.

4.6. Main problems NGOs face in rehabilitating and reintegrating trafficked victims

Rehabilitation and reintegration is vital in helping trafficked victims after they return home. However, most of the NGOs admit that there are many problems in rehabilitating and reintegrating the victims. The first problem mentioned by five NGOs is the social discrimination towards the victims. Due to the

lack of knowledge about trafficking and trafficked cases, many people think trafficking always relates to crime regardless who are the traffickers and who are the victims. The second problem inability to acquire a job and income for returnees to help them stabilize their lives and not be a burden to the families, relatives and society. Most of the trafficked victims do not have specific qualifications or skills needed to get a job. In addition, they are also in short of capital to start a new business on their own.

The third problem is the health care for the victims. As being transported to far away areas, having to work hard and being treated badly, trafficked victims suffer from health related problems. For example, some of them have mental health related issues or psychological diseases. The fourth issue is that most victims disappeared for a long period of time and often lost their roles and consideration as part of the community. Other problems include shame or embarrassment of victims leading to difficult access to them or legal support such as issue of

identity cards, personal documents or birth certificate for their children. One NGO is concerned on how to develop good policy for reintegration and close coordination among government and NGOs to identify the victims' needs to help them further. Another NGO reflects on the application of comprehensive reintegration model, which can assist the victims to have jobs, repatriate to social life and be able to get married to have families like normal people. The coordinator of that NGOs reports that she and her local partners are happy when receiving news of a victim's wedding than news of a victim's new job because they know the victim finally integrate to normal life.

From the interviews, we found that the general NGO support for victims' reintegration and repatriation programs, are vocational trainings. Only few NGOs focused on psychological support for victims. Overlapping activities exist among the NGOs. Therefore, it is good if NGOs work together so that each NGO will support a different function such as, vocational training, shelter, health care, legal assistance or credit which will contribute to more effective and comprehensive assistance for the victims. In addition, most victims return home with empty hands.. Some of them have no family members, relatives or friends to ask for assistance. Thus, shelters are important for such victims when first returning. At present, government agencies are responsible for managing and providing shelters to the victims. NGOs act as funding agencies or provide technical assistance for operation and maintenance of those shelters. Therefore, close cooperation between NGOs and government agencies in managing shelters for victims should be fostered and promoted.

4.7. Coordination efforts between government and NGOs; and NGOs and NGOs in combating women/children trafficking

Nine out of 13 interviewed NGOs rank prevention as the most important area that anti-trafficking programs should focus on.

According to them, once prevention programs are implemented, there should be a reduction in trafficking of people. In order to achieve good prevention of trafficking, concentrations should be put on advocacy and communication to raise awareness of the community and attract investment and care from higher authorities. Four NGOs say rehabilitation and/or reintegration of victims are vital components of their anti-trafficking programs. Many trafficked victims have to face severe difficulties in their lives in the destination countries and are treated very badly. They escape and return home but majority of them are being discriminated socially. Therefore, assisting the trafficked victims to reintegrate into society and community is very crucial. Parallel with reintegration of victims, jobs and income are also very important for returnees. Four of the interviewed NGOs reveal that most trafficked victims returned home empty handed. Thus, most NGOs support these victims with vocational trainings so as to facilitate them with jobs to earn a living for themselves and help their families in the long-term.

Five of thirteen interviewed NGOs reveal that they have not engaged in any activities through partnership to combat women and children trafficking. Three NGOs conducted communication events in cooperation with others. One says they have developed and published communication materials and training manuals on raising awareness and conducted training courses. Only one NGO serves as a member of reintegration network to advocate and another joins the network of anti-trafficking organizations. The remaining three NGOs attend regular children forum, provide counselling activities, and participate in advocacy with UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) respectively.

Table 12 shows the NGOs have collaborated and/or received support from other agencies, including both government and non-government agencies. All NGOs reported that they either collaborate or receive some support from government agencies in their anti-

trafficking programs. For example, 11 NGOs (84.6%) receive support from the Women Unions, and 5 NGOs (38.5%) from Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). Most of the NGOs received at least one support from government agencies (61.5%). Women Unions greatly support women/children anti-trafficking programs. It is easy understood that this mass organization performs their functions including prevention of women and children's rights. Such government agencies as Women Unions and MOLISA protect interests of women and laborers who are vulnerable to trafficking. In addition, they also act as contact person to access to trafficked victims or targeted beneficiaries.

Table 12 shows 76.9% of the interviewed NGOs collaborated with both local and international agencies. They cooperate with others to organize communication events, exchange materials or share implementation experiences. Besides, meetings for NGOs who have carried out anti-trafficking programs are organized for updating related documents and strategies or development of joint-action plans. However, 15.4% of the NGOs collaborated with local agencies only and do not maintain relationship with other NGOs involved in the anti-trafficking programs. This shows that the cooperation amongst NGOs, although are developed and maintained, has not included all related organizations.

Table 12. Coordination efforts between government and NGOs;
NGOs and NGOs in combating women/children trafficking in Vietnam

Do your anti-trafficking projects/programs collaborate or receive support from government agencies?	Count	Percent
Yes	13	100
Which government agencies have given support to your anti-trafficking projects/programs?		
Police	1	7.7
Women's Union	11	84.6
Youth Union	1	7.7
Mass Media	2	15.4
Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs	5	38.5
Other	4	30.8
Has your organization collaborated with other non-government organizations to carry out similar anti-trafficking projects/programs?	Count	Percent
Yes	12	92.3
Which non-government organizations have collaborated with your anti-trafficking projects/programs?	Count	Percent
Local and International non-governmental organizations	2	15.4
Are there other ways you believe your organization could enhance women/children trafficking investigations?	10	76.9
Is there a reporting mechanism in place within your organization to track women/children trafficking cases?	3	23.1
Is there a reporting mechanism in place within your organization to track women/children trafficking cases?	1	7.7

Source: Survey Questionnaire "An Assessment of Non Governmental Organizations' Roles in Combating Women/Children Trafficking in Vietnam," April 2010.

5. Conclusions

Our research findings reveal of the 13 NGOs interviewed, 30.8% are officers, 30.8%

are coordinators and 38.5% are managers. They have been involved in women/children anti-trafficking projects/programs between 3 to 5 years with an average of 33 staff. Most of the

organizations' anti-trafficking projects/programs for women/children started between 2002 and 2006. Majority of the NGOs used other financial sources beside United Nation fund and foreign donors. In addition, only 38.5% of the NGOs provided training to staffs in charge of anti-trafficking projects/programs on how to identify and respond to women/children trafficking cases.

The average age of most women trafficked since 2005 were between 25-29 years old and 30-39 years old. Poverty is the major factor women are trafficked followed by poor education. Most of the women were trafficked to China and Cambodia. Similarly, poor education opportunity is the most important factor children are trafficked followed by poverty and were trafficked to China. Traffickers often use promise of jobs, marriages, promise of better life, and labor broker to trick women/children. Prostitution and pornography is the dominant crimes associated with women/children trafficking, followed by illegal immigration, false identification and gangs.

Most of the interviewed NGOs cited commitment both at the local and national level and good collaboration with local partners as the major factors contributing to the success of their anti-trafficking programs. Furthermore, the survey results show all NGOs agreed that prevention, rehabilitation, protection, and support programs help to reduce the vulnerability of women/children trafficking. Concerted efforts should be made on advocacy and communication to raise awareness of the community and attract investment and care from higher authorities in preventing trafficking of people. Parallel with reintegration of victims, jobs and income are also very important for returnees. Thus, most NGOs support the victims with vocational trainings to enhance their job opportunities so that they can fend for themselves.

Most of the interviewed NGOs frequently encountered lack of procedures to investigate cases of women/children trafficking. In

addition, they faced lack of funding and human resource to implement most of the programs. They also faced difficulties to access the victims due to lack of understanding on the rights of victims, poor legal assistance and support for the victims and lack of prosecution against traffickers. In addition, the victims are socially discriminated by the community because of the lack of knowledge about trafficking and trafficked cases and people in general relate trafficking to crime regardless who are the traffickers and who are the victims. Surprisingly, almost half of the NGOs interviewed did not engage in any legal programs in protecting trafficked victims.

6. Policy implications

The research findings reveal that 92.3% NGOs reported most of the women were trafficked to China, followed by Cambodia (30.8%). This means that trafficking between cross-border countries remains an alarming issue, especially between Vietnam and China. The problem could not be resolved in a couple of year due to complicated social, traditional and global issues. For example, the term "border" seems not to exist in ethnic minority groups of both Vietnam and China and "to buy a wife" in the village nearby is universal in these remote areas. The enforcement of one child policy and the unbalanced gender in China also help increase the demands for Vietnamese women for wives or child adoption. Moreover, loose border patrol and geographical difficulties make it easy for citizens to cross the borders thus the trafficking activities happen. Vietnamese women are brought to brothels in Cambodia and children are sold as forced labor. Therefore, it is important for the governments of neighboring countries to work together for joint-solutions to solve the trafficking problems as well as cooperate with others to support victims.

For example, Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam have vowed to increase momentum on combating human

trafficking at the 7th Senior Officials Meeting for the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT) held in Bagan, Myanmar (January 20-21, 2010). The meeting brought together over 135 representatives from the six governments in the Mekong region and observers from other ASEAN countries, the United Nations and INGOs as well as donors to review their plans and priorities related to counter-trafficking and discussed future joint actions, focusing in particular on the areas of law enforcement and criminal justice, and recovery and reintegration for victims (News Strait Times, January 22, 2010).

NGOs' networks have implemented anti-trafficking programs and cooperation between NGOs and government agencies has been maintained. However, the NGOs' networks anti-trafficking programs are not on a large scale. Some small NGOs do not join the network or implement their programs in partnership. NGOs have mainly received support from Women Unions (84.6%). Consequently, the network and cooperation among different parties have not been efficient or optimal. Therefore, better coordination mechanism in anti-trafficking programs between NGOs, related government agencies and concern organizations should be foster and promoted so as to develop comprehensive and intensive anti-trafficking programs.

NGOs play vital roles in fighting trafficking. However, most of their programs focus more on prevention, advocacy and communication activities than legal framework or law enforcement. Thus, it is very important to involve NGOs in development of legal programs or anti-trafficking related laws. For example, the Vietnamese government should involve NGOs in developing Vietnam's human anti-trafficking law. Following the NGOs' recommendations and working closer with NGOs in policy making process, assuring policies and laws are developed to suit to the situation at the country level as well as of the regional level.

Human trafficking has been a problem in Vietnam, for a long time and many NGOs have

been involved in some form of anti-trafficking of humans of decades, but the staff in charge of the programs have not received adequate trainings for service of program implementation. The survey result shows that staffs in charge of anti-trafficking programs are experienced generally officers/coordinators or managers. They have 3 to 5 years working experience in anti-trafficking field. However, only 38.5% of the NGOs provide their staff with trainings on how to identify and respond to women/children trafficking cases. Most of the in-charge staff managed the programs by self-learning and experiences, which lead to the limitations in overseeing women/children trafficking. To provide better reintegration and rehabilitation programs, it is important that officers have sufficient knowledge about women/children trafficking, the knowledge can built from the senior staff in-house training, regular workshop and conferences, etc.

As indicated in the study, poverty and poor education are leading causes of trafficking. Once a person is trafficked, his/her life is stuck in a vicious circle. He/she is sold and tries to return home. However, if he/she cannot overcome the poverty, he/she can be trafficked again or involve in trafficking crimes. Thus, the Government of Vietnam should continue investing and promoting activities for hunger elimination and poverty reduction. Creating jobs is not only important in prevention of trafficking but also for reintegration and rehabilitation of trafficked victims. Networking between vocational trainings and jobs should be promoted to help trafficked victims. In addition, education for children and advocacy to increase people's awareness on trafficking related issues should be promoted. This will not only help people, especially women and children, to prevent themselves and be able to identify traffickers' tricks but also contribute to reduction of social discrimination towards trafficked victims. The education, advocacy and communication activities should access every social stratum, outreach rural and mountainous areas where people's educational standards are very low.

7. Limitations

When administering the survey questionnaire in Vietnam, we have difficulty in obtaining full cooperation from the NGOs interviewed due to the sensitivity of human trafficking issues. This prevented the study from carrying out a detailed statistical analysis and impacted the robustness of our research results and findings. The research results are obtained from the perspective of NGOs rather than from opinions of beneficiaries of NGOs' anti-trafficking projects/programs.

During the interview, we found that most NGOs use the term "human trafficking" when providing information on trafficking of women or/and children. Consequently, the data they provided reflects human trafficking in general (men, women, and children). The data did not reveal the number of women and children but all trafficked cases. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the definition of trafficking is still ambiguous between different agencies as they classified all cases as human trafficking because but there is no specific definition of women or children trafficking.

Some NGOs provide the answers based on the existing data and they have their own criteria in selecting beneficiaries. Most NGOs reported that there are different sources of data on human trafficking but no consistency among the reported data. In addition, not all questions are answered by NGOs for personal reasons. For example, most NGOs refused to give the numbers of trafficked cases they have investigated. Furthermore, officers could not reveal information related to crime, arrest or prosecution because their organizations did not engage in the investigation or arrest of crime or prosecution.

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Đánh giá vai trò của các tổ chức phi chính phủ trong cuộc chiến chống buôn bán phụ nữ và trẻ em ở Việt Nam

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Tóm tắt. Chính phủ Việt Nam đã thực hiện nhiều nỗ lực đấu tranh chống nạn buôn người. Bên cạnh đó, các tổ chức phi chính phủ Việt Nam và quốc tế cũng ủng hộ Chính phủ trong các hoạt động này như chăm sóc sức khỏe, tạo điều kiện về nơi ở hoặc nhà tạm lánh, tổ chức các chương trình hồi hương và tái hòa nhập. Ngoài ra, các tổ chức cũng triển khai nhiều hoạt động phòng chống buôn người, tuyên truyền, nâng cao nhận thức cộng đồng và hiểu biết về pháp luật. Mặc dù đã đạt nhiều thành công song các tổ chức phi chính phủ vẫn gặp phải nhiều khó khăn khi triển khai các chương trình phòng chống nạn buôn người. Trong bài viết này, tác giả đánh giá vai trò của các tổ chức phi chính phủ trong phòng chống nạn buôn bán phụ nữ và trẻ em, sự phối hợp giữa Chính phủ và các tổ chức phi chính phủ, giữa các tổ chức phi chính phủ với nhau cũng như hiệu quả của các chương trình phòng chống nạn buôn bán phụ nữ và trẻ em; công tác quản lý đường biên giới. Theo báo cáo của nhiều tổ chức phi chính phủ, phòng chống nạn buôn bán phụ nữ và trẻ em là vấn đề nóng bỏng và không thể giải quyết trong một thời gian ngắn.