



End of Project Update – USAID-funded EDVP Report

Offering Vulnerable Cambodians Alternatives to Trafficking

The USAID-funded Cambodia MSME Project is tackling human trafficking at its root by providing vulnerable individuals with the skills, training and funds that allow them to set up and run successful micro businesses.



A USAID-funded EDVP beneficiary takes advantage of a business opportunity at a rural trade fair in Kampong Cham province, where she now owns and operates a mobile food stall.

Individuals at-risk of human trafficking have been given a new option: micro businesses that allow them to earn a living and support their families without having to leave their villages.

Impoverished rural Cambodians face an alarming risk of being trafficked to neighboring countries to work in slave-like conditions in factories, farms, homes and on fishing boats, while young girls are often sold to brothels within and outside the country by destitute families. Individuals with little or no education whose families are trapped in poverty and debt face the highest risk. Better laws, stricter enforcement and international cooperation are helping to stem the tide of trafficked Cambodians, but it is vital to address the conditions that fuel this desperate migration.

A two-year sub-program of the MSME Project, completed on September 30, 2008, has shown dramatic results in alleviating the economic and social conditions that fuel human trafficking in rural Cambodia. The Economic Development Support for Vulnerable and Trafficked Persons Project, or EDVP, assisted 67 beneficiaries at risk of trafficking in three provinces where it is prevalent: Kampong Cham, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng.

Originally, the MSME Project had intended to include the beneficiaries within its existing value-chain programs. This failed due to the difficulty of integrating two very distinct socio-economic groups and because those at-risk of trafficking need highly-specialized support. A separate program tailored to their needs was developed. Beneficiaries received skills-training and seed money to start micro businesses, such as barber shops and mobile food stalls. They also received business counseling, coaching and encouragement from Program staff, as well as mentoring from successful entrepreneurs in their area.

Beneficiaries have seen their income and savings rise, diets improve and have paid off debts. Before EDVP only four of the 67 beneficiaries had an adequate diet. Now, all of them do. “I don’t have to leave Cambodia to try to make a living because I can support my family in my own village now,” said Marn Neng, 24. He had spent a year working illegally as a fisherman in Thailand in 2006 only to return to his village in Kampong Cham penniless and with an injured back. Through EDVP, Mr. Marn received training as a barber as well as \$150 to start a business. Today, he is paying the school fees of his sister and niece and has an occupation that will last him a lifetime.