



UNITED NATIONS THAILAND NETWORK ON MIGRATION

Annual Highlights 2023



Thailand United Nations
Network on Migration
Working Better Together

The UN Network on Migration in Thailand (the Network) continues to support the Royal Thai Government (RTG) as a Champion Country of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). It ensures that migration is meaningfully mainstreamed into the government's national policies as well as within institutional frameworks like the UN Country Team's Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). In 2023, the Network partners reaffirmed their commitment to inter-agency collaboration to improve migration governance and promote the well-being of migrants in Thailand.

Achievements of UN Migration Network Partners in 2023

Priority 1:

Promoting inclusion by ensuring migrants are part of the overall national development efforts in Thailand, with particular focus on healthcare and combatting discrimination.

The Network aims to support the RTG in realizing its pledges at the 2022 International Migration Review Forum (IMRF):



To make progress towards the achievement of universal health coverage, including for wider groups of migrants.



To promote public perception regarding the positive contribution of migrants and to end discrimination and stigmatization against them.

Towards this end, the Network partners worked together towards the following shared outcomes:

01

Migrants have increased access to health care and essential services.

In 2023 the UN Migration Network's Migrant Health Sub-Working Group (MHWG)¹ continued its efforts to formalize the role of Migrant Health Volunteers (MHVs) in national health programmes and enhance the capacity of the existing MHV network of over 7,000 volunteers. MHVs act as critical links between migrant communities and healthcare providers, sharing essential information about healthcare and health services and providing language assistance as needed.

The sub-working group was originally created in 2021 to coordinate COVID-19 response efforts. In 2023, the sub-working group re-defined priorities to build on the successes of COVID-19 response efforts and support the government's efforts to include migrants in Universal Health Coverage (UHC). In 2023, the MHWG met five times, and established new Terms of Reference and defined priorities to enhance collaboration between members and maximize collective impact to improve access to healthcare for migrants in Thailand.



Key Figures:

- **3,314 Migrant Health Volunteers** trained to raise health awareness, support community-based disease surveillance and facilitate access to health services. **MHWG**
- **295,188 migrants** supported to access health services. **MHWG**
- **32,485 migrants** provided with access to health insurance. **MHWG**
- **18 Shoklo Malaria Research unit staff** trained to communicate to address vaccine hesitancy among migrant population. **UNICEF**

¹ The Migrant Health Sub-Working Group includes UN Agencies, NGOs, CSOs and RTG representatives.

02

Migrants, regardless of status, are integrated in their communities and workplaces and recognized as vital contributors to Thailand's economy and society.

In commemoration of International Migrants Day, on behalf of the UN Migration Network, IOM launched a [digital advocacy campaign](#) focused on positive public perceptions of migrants and promoting social cohesion between migrants and host communities. [A video montage](#) was published featuring Heads of Agencies of Network members demonstrating a collective UN voice reshaping the narrative around migrants by highlighting their contributions to society. Through advocacy, the campaign aimed to call for empathy and support for migrants among the Thai public. The campaign advocated for the respect of migrant rights and encouraged the Thai public to share positive experiences with migrants that could contribute to positive narratives on migrants and migration.

The Ship to Shore Rights South-East Asia programme, a UN inter-agency programme led by ILO and supported by UNDP and IOM, organized a photo exhibition with SEA-Junction for "Migrants' Labour & Lives in Thailand's Blue Economy" at the Bangkok Arts and Cultural Centre from 28 March to 9 April 2023.

Another exhibition was also organized by the ILO and UN Women, in collaboration with UNODC titled "Safe Journey with Her: Ending Violence against Women for Safe and Fair Migration", the exhibition not only showcased the programme's key messages, milestones and achievements, but also told stories of the remarkable journeys of women that embarked on international labour migration within the ASEAN region.



Key Figures:

- **100,000 users** reached through International Migrants Day Campaign. [UNCT](#)
- **2 public exhibitions** highlighting migrant stories and raising awareness of migration issues in Thailand. [ILO](#) [UN Women](#) [UNODC](#)

Priority 2:

Ensuring the protection of migrants in situations of vulnerability.

Network partners continue to collaborate to reduce protection risks of individuals in vulnerable situations, particularly those who are exposed to abuse, exploitation, violence, neglect and deliberate deprivation. This is done by addressing protection threats and vulnerabilities while increasing the capacities of individuals, communities and duty bearers.

The RTG maintains its commitment to achieving Alternatives to Detention (ATD), in line with its 2022 IMRF pledge to "effectively implement alternatives to detention measures for migrant children." At the same time, the RTG's commitment to combatting Trafficking in Persons (TIP) remains steadfast. Network members

remain committed to further strengthening government capacity to implement ATD and prevent TIP, protect victims and prosecute those responsible.

Working in partnership with other stakeholders, network partners collaborate to achieve three main outcomes:

01

The rights of migrants in detention settings are respected and conditions in immigration detention facilities are improved through strengthened operationalization of the “Memorandum of Understanding on the Determination of Measures and Approaches of Alternatives to Detention of Children in Immigration Detention Centres” (MOU-ATD), and there is an increase in the range of ATDs for adults and the number of individuals benefiting from them with particular attention to vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, women at risk, families and those in poor health.

In 2023, OHCHR and the International Detention Coalition led the UN Migration Network’s Sub-Working Group on Alternatives to Detention² and developed focused advocacy guidance on immigration detention for the UN Country Team in Thailand in the framework of the Call to Action for Human Rights. The Sub-Working Group also supported the RTG in carrying out an evaluation of the MOU-ATD. This evaluation is a vital step to understanding the progress and challenges in implementing ATD in Thailand.

The main recommendations from the study focused on enhancing capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) and frontline agents to respond to key issues related to ATD such as providing support and care for children and other vulnerable groups in the short run. Long-term recommendations included advocacy at various levels, promoting positive narratives of migrants and promoting the consistent use of screening mechanisms.

To this end, the sub-working group members consolidated resources and technical expertise to provide capacity building support to RTG officials to enhance understanding and facilitate the implementation of the MOU-ATD. The sub-working group also supported the Department of Children and Youth with the review and revision of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for ATD as well as delivering capacity-building support for improving the delivery of protection services and case management for social workers and law enforcement personnel. In 2024, the sub-working group will prioritize supporting the implementation of recommendations from the evaluation in continued close partnership with the government.

At the same time, as part of the response to the increasing number of migrants in detention in 2023, IOM has coordinated with UNHCR – which works with asylum-seekers and refugees under its mandate - to ensure that humanitarian assistance and protection services are provided to these vulnerable populations. UNHCR has been providing family tracing and contact services, cash for assistance for populations in detention, Shelters and Welfare



² ATD sub-working group members include: OHCHR, International Detention Coalition (IDCoalition), IOM, UNICEF and UNHCR.

Protection Centres for victims of trafficking. IOM has been complementing this assistance with Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Non food items (NFI) and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and ad-hoc education sessions.

Key Figures:

- **146 officials** from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the Royal Thai Police were trained on ATD. [IOM](#) [UNICEF](#) [UNHCR](#)
- **1 evaluation** on the implementation of the MOU ATD completed. [IDCoalition](#) [IOM](#) [UNICEF](#) [UNHCR](#)
- **1,000 vulnerable migrants** in detention provided with humanitarian assistance. [IOM](#)
- **446 children and 32 caregivers** supported with ATD. [UNICEF](#)

02 Victims of trafficking (VOTs), and other migrants who are in situations of exploitation or human rights abuse and violations, have access to rights-based, gender-responsive, child-sensitive, victim-centered and trauma-informed services through strengthened identification, referral and protection.



In 2023, the Government boosted its efforts to combat human trafficking by increasing the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of traffickers. This has largely been a result of intensified coordination efforts between law enforcement, government agencies, including the multi-disciplinary teams, UN Agencies and CSOs.

With the operationalization of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Victims of Trafficking, an increasing number of VOTs have been identified and assisted this year. Around 500 individuals were identified and assisted by the RTG and partners³ in 2023 compared to over 400 in 2022. The RTG's increased capacity to screen and identify VOTs comes at a critical period as trafficking for the purpose of forced criminality continues to be a critical issue in the country and the region.

To support law enforcement officers in victim-centered identification and assistance of VOTs, including those trafficked for forced criminality and organ removal, UNODC developed and delivered two capacity building trainings for frontline law enforcement, including officers within the Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) network. As part of this training, the Attorney General's Office (AOG) and IOM delivered a session on the NRM.

IOM and UNDP also worked together to support the reinvigoration of the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking in Persons (COMMIT). They jointly supported the 15th Senior Officials Meeting and Regional Task Force meeting, convening senior officials as well as the six national COMMIT Taskforces, each comprised of government officials from the ministries relevant to the fight against human trafficking, including police, justice, social welfare, and women's affairs. Both meetings enabled stakeholders to reflect on the fourth Sub-Regional Plan of Action (SPA-IV) and provide concrete inputs for the development of the SPA-V.

³ N.B 245 were supported by IOM in 2023, up from 134 in 2022

Key Figures:

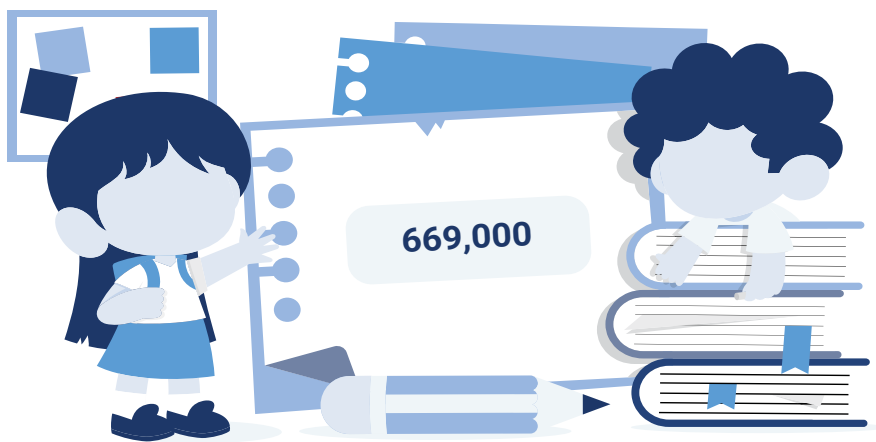
- **298 migrants** in vulnerable situations provided with access to specialized protection services. [IOM](#)
- **539 mothers and children** in VOT Shelters provided with essential food and non-food items. [IOM](#)
- **1 Regional Cooperation Roadmap** to Address Transnational Organized Crime and Trafficking in Persons Associated with Casinos and Scam Operations in Southeast Asia developed. [UNODC](#)
- **57 judicial officials** provided with the knowledge, skills and tools to be able to interpret the law related to cases of human trafficking. [UNODC](#)
- **44 law enforcement officials** provided with the knowledge, skills and tools to conduct trauma-informed investigations of human trafficking. [UNODC](#)
- **104 interpreters** supporting labour inspectors trained to support human trafficking and forced labour investigations. [ILO](#)
- **8 Migrant Resource Centres** supported to provide migrants with information on safe migration, labour rights and other essential services. [ILO](#)
- **15,519 migrant workers** received legal assistance and essential services with the support of a UN Migration Network partner. [ILO](#) [IOM](#)

**These activities are preventive measures for those at risk of exploitation due to lack of legal status but also align with efforts to resolve statelessness.*

- **305 children** have been assisted with obtaining the 13-digit number, which denotes their legal status in Thailand.* [UNICEF](#) [UNHCR](#)

03

Migrant children and youth in Thailand have increased access to inclusive and equitable quality education.



UNICEF and UNESCO continue efforts to enhance access to quality education for migrant children and youth. In the academic year 2023, a total of 134,734 students lacking civil registration or G-code students were enrolled in educational institutions across Thailand. In Tak province alone, there were 15,139 migrant children, including those who had

fled conflicts in Myanmar, benefiting from educational programmes offered at 64 migrant learning centres (MLCs).

The Government, through the Migrant Educational Coordination Centre (MECC) of Tak Primary Educational Service Area Office 2, ensures the coordination of these MLCs and 950 teachers and staff with relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health, and Ministry of Interior, NGOs, UN agencies and development partners. This collaborative effort aims to provide comprehensive access to education and essential services for migrant children.

Key Figures:

- **64 MLCs** supported to provide education and skill development to migrant children and youth. [IOM](#) [UNDP](#) [UNESCO](#)
- **Over 400 video lessons** in core subjects and life skills development were produced in Myanmar languages. [UNESCO](#)
- **107 migrant teachers have been trained** to utilize the video lessons in their classes. [UNESCO](#)
- **20 MLCs were provided with ICT devices and the internet access** to equip learners with life skills and recover their learning loss. [UNESCO](#)
- **17 MLCs' facilities are being improved.** [UNESCO](#)
- **Over 7,000 migrant students** benefitted from school meals. [UNESCO](#)
- **261 migrant children** accessed education through UNICEF-supported programming. [UNICEF](#)
- **Four contracted teacher** and lunch subsidy provided to **five learning centers** in Chiang Mai. [UNICEF](#)



Network Partners support ASEAN collaboration on Migrant Protection



In 2023, two ASEAN Declarations on the Protection of Migrant Workers were adopted by ASEAN Leaders: the ASEAN Declaration on Protection of Migrant Workers in Crisis, and the ASEAN Declaration on Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers.

Developed with the support of IOM, ILO and other regional partners, these declarations are complemented by two ASEAN Guidelines to support Member States in operationalizing these commitments. The adoption of these two declarations at the ASEAN-level and guidelines for operationalization at the national level provide the formal political commitment and framework to advocate for improving migrant protection in the fisheries sector, and inclusion of migrants in disaster responses, utilizing a rights-based and gender-sensitive approach.

Priority 3:

Ensuring that labour migrants have access to safe, orderly, regular and affordable migration channels and that their rights are respected.

Effective regular pathways will better protect migrant rights and enable governments to plan for and manage movements in an orderly way. Regular pathways will also contribute to the socio-economic development of Thailand as well as that of migrants' countries of origin. Network partners recognize the need to bring together government, civil society and the private sector to establish labour migration programmes and mechanisms that balance stakeholder interests, and address migrants' needs. To this end, Network partners continue to work together to achieve two main outcomes.

01

Ethical recruitment and decent employment options are available for migrant workers.



In 2023, the RTG continued to allow work permit extensions through in-country registrations to enable migrant workers to regularize their status in Thailand. These registrations contributed to enhancing Thailand's workforce, contributing to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 1.3 per cent in 2023. Simultaneously, these measures provided migrants with broader regularization opportunities, with over 2.5 million migrant workers benefiting from these regular pathways.

In 2023, the RTG participated in the 16th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) on the theme "Enhancing the effectiveness of legal pathways for labour migration in ASEAN", organized with support from ILO, IOM and UN Women. In this forum, the RTG reinforced the importance to collaborate with countries of origin in streamlining and simplifying migration processes, including MOUs, border employments and regularization schemes without compromising the rights protection of migrant workers.

This year, network partners increased engagement with private sector actors in an effort to raise awareness on Migration, Business and Human Rights in the private sector and improve the treatment of migrant works in Thailand. More than 80 private sector actors benefited from the collaborative efforts of IOM and UNDP to build their capacity on human rights due diligence and ethical recruitment and responsible employment.

Key Figures:

- **99 stakeholders** provided with knowledge, skills and tools on management of migrant workers in line international standards. [ILO](#) [IOM](#)
- **84 companies** representing nine industrial sectors across the country were trained on human rights due diligence and ethical recruitment and responsible employment. [UNDP](#) [IOM](#)
- **133 employers** were trained on violence and harassment at work. [ILO](#)
- **43 subcontractors** in the construction sector trained on fair recruitment and labour rights. [ILO](#)
- **131 employers** in the agriculture sector consulted to improve policies and practices related to recruitment of migrant workers. [ILO](#)
- **70,000 workers (pre-dominantly migrants)** benefit from monitoring of employment practices under the Seafood Good Labour Practice Programme. [ILO](#)
- **52 stakeholders** were trained on occupational safety and health (OSH) in fishing to improve the effectiveness of the Port-in/Port-out (PIPO) inspections. [ILO](#)



02

Migrant workers, their employers and the general public have increased awareness on the rights and contributions of migrant workers

Network partners continue to work with migrants, employers and other key stakeholders to raise awareness on migrants' rights and contributions of migrant workers.

Key Figures:

- **152,585 migrants** provided with information on regular migration and rights at work. [ILO](#)
- **258,475 migrant workers** reached through information campaign. [ILO](#) [IOM](#)
- **1,084 migrant fishers** have joined the migrant network (Fishers' Rights Network) as part of the efforts to expand unionizing of migrant workers. [ILO](#)
- **450 Thai employers** reached through in-person interviews on employment of Myanmar workers, their skills and their productivity compared to Thai counterparts. [World Bank](#)



Thailand Migration Report 2024

In 2023, UN Migration Network Partners initiated the process to develop the 2024 Thailand Migration Report. The Thailand Migration Report is a collaborative inter-agency publication previously published in 2019 and 2014. Its development relies on contributions from migration experts from the UN and academia. As a joint publication of the Network, the report aims to provide a single updated reference for key migration statistics and topics relevant to Thailand.



UN Migration Network Publications on Migration in 2023

| Title | Author | Publisher/Agency |
|---|---|------------------|
| Domestic workers: Skilled to care, forced to work? Recognizing the skills profiles of migrant domestic workers in ASEAN amid forced labour and exploitation (ilo.org) | ILO | ILO |
| Protection in Practice: Challenges and perceptions of domestic workers accessing social protection in Thailand (ilo.org) | ILO | ILO |
| Learning from Provincial and District Responses to Trafficking in Persons for Forced Criminality | George May, Harley Hamilton, Ingpat Pakchairatchakul, Saphasakon Songsukkai | UNDP |
| Make Learning Count | UNICEF Thailand | UNICEF |
| Multi-sectoral assessment of needs (MYA migrants) | IOM | IOM |
| Online Scam Operations and Trafficking into Forced Criminality in Southeast Asia: Recommendations for a Human Rights Response | OHCHR | OHCHR |
| Recommended principles and guidelines on human rights at international borders (Thai translation) | OHCHR | OHCHR |

| Title | Author | Publisher/Agency |
|--|---|--|
| Precarious pathways: Migration patterns and service needs of Lao migrant workers | Siliphaithoun Xayamoungkhoun and Benjamin Harkins | ILO |
| Situation of children affected by migration in ASEAN and Case study related to child migrant in Thailand | UNICEF EAPRO | UNICEF |
| Recommendation 115 on migrant workers housing | ILO | ILO |
| Adequate Housing for Migrant Workers: A Guide for Employers in Thailand (published in Thai language) | Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT) | ILO |
| E Learning on statelessness (Thai) | The Legal Research and Development Center (LRDC), Faculty of Law, Chiang Mai University, UNHCR Thailand and UNICEF Thailand | UNHCR / UNICEF |
| MOU-ATD Implementation Evaluation Report (Thai, unofficial English translation only executive summary) | DCY, MSDHS, UNICEF Thailand, International Detention Coalition | DCY, MSDHS, UNICEF Thailand, International Detention Coalition |

