



EVALUATION BRIEF

6 September 2023

FINAL INTERNAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT “STRENGTHENING MONGOLIA’S EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING”

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator(s) for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

Evaluation type: Internal independent final evaluation

Evaluator(s): Christina Moly, Regional Protection Officer, IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Field visit dates: 27 July - 17 August 2023 (remotely)

Final report date: 31 August 2023

Commissioned by: IOM Mission in Mongolia

Managed by: Munkhchuluun Serd-Yanjiv, Senior Project Assistant, IOM Mongolia

Evaluation purpose: The evaluation assesses the progress made against set targets outlined in the project results matrix and helps make evidence-based strategic decisions in relation to the project. The evaluation will serve both learning and accountability purposes, in order to identify emerging good practices that may be replicated. The findings will be presented internally within IOM to the project management team and shared with the donor, partners, and government counterparts.

Evaluation criteria: Relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and cross-cutting themes.

Evaluation methodology: Document review, semi-structured interviews, and triangulation.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Domestic and cross-border trafficking in persons for the purpose of forced labour and sexual exploitation is prevalent in Mongolia. To help the Government of Mongolia (GoM) consistently identify and protect victims, the project had a prevention and protection components.

On prevention, the project launched the Dream Umbrella campaign, targeting young women and girls to generate positive behavior change. To better guide the private sector on ethical recruitment, training for Private Recruitment Agencies was provided and a self-assessment tool to review the recruitment practices was made available. IOM's MigApp, a mobile application to prepare one's migration journey was customized, targeting aspiring Mongolian migrants in vulnerable situations. The project also engaged with educational sector, students included, on TiP issues through a debate competition.

On protection, IOM developed a comprehensive baseline assessment and recommendations on the underlying causes, dynamics, vulnerability and resilience levels to trafficking in Mongolia, to inform CT policies as well as IOM training to Mongolian and Chinese frontlines officers. These protection efforts also included the development of an e-training module for Consular Officials on victim identification and protection. To address the urgent need to improve assistance and protection

Project information:

Geographical coverage: Mongolia

Project type: Protection and Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants

Project code: PX.0134

Gender marker: 1

Project period: 1 December 2019 to 31 May 2023

Donor: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

of trafficked persons, the project had a victims' assistance component combined with collaboration work with Anti-Human Trafficking Network of NGOs, and capacity building trainings to case workers on VoT identifications and protection.

KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The project has remained relevant to the Government due to the very close collaboration with the Coordination Council for Crime Prevention and regular consultations through the Sub-Council for Prevention of Human Trafficking. However, this level of consultation, particularly in identifying priorities and needs, has been weak or non-existent with regard to affected communities, including victims of trafficking. Lastly, we note the weakness in project design due to the absence of SMART indicators to measure project results.

The project has contributed to the objective by helping the government to create a structural environment conducive to the combat against TiP. It resulted in increased collective vigilance, empowered female VoTs and data and research availability to inform a more protective legislative framework for VoTs. In addition, the foundations have been laid for better coordination between NGOs and the government in assisting the reintegration of VoTs.

While the impact was hampered by COVID-19, the project could have taken advantage of this circumstance to keep the combat against TiP at the top of the agenda and increase the number of victims identified and assisted under Outcome 3 of the project. Lastly, to avoid unintended negative effects, the project should have further adapted the activities to make it more age-appropriate.

The project has adopted a number of measures to ensure the sustainability of activities beyond project closure. These range from the development and provision of an e-course for consulates, to capacity-building for journalists, teachers and Temporary Protection Shelter Staff, so that they can, at their own level, mainstream prevention of human trafficking and protection of VoTs in their daily work.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The project focused on a vulnerable demographic group - young women and girls - who are disproportionately affected by the scourge of human trafficking. Based on the project's assessment findings, the project challenged gender stereotypes, whether they are female or male VoTs.

The identification of rights was well integrated into the various training courses, however, rights holders did not seem to be as informed of their rights (from Mig App to Dream Umbrella and direct assistance). Considerable

efforts were made to include a wide range of CT stakeholders, especially through the Sub-Council for Prevention of Human Trafficking and the NGO CT Network. The best example was certainly provided by the focus discussion groups organized for the target audience to actively contribute to the design of the "Dream Umbrella" campaign. In terms of accountability, certain shortcomings were observed regarding VoTs case management.

GOOD PRACTICES

1. Acted as a knowledge hub by capitalizing on the Organization's best practices, namely IOM's X C4D campaign for people-centered, results-oriented awareness-raising initiatives.
2. Demonstrated strong convening skills at the Anti-Trafficking Sub-Council and Counter-trafficking NGO Network meetings, to bridge the gap between government and NGOs, hence strengthening the foundations for a more coordinated and comprehensive response to trafficking in persons.
3. Involved the private sector to expand an emerging but crucial counter-trafficking space in Mongolia.
4. Consistently integrated the Baseline Assessment of the Causes, Dynamics, Vulnerability and Resilience levels to Human Trafficking in Mongolia findings for the development and implementation of evidence-based activities and advocacy, in particular in favor of male victims of trafficking.
5. Carefully listened, regularly consulted and remained flexible for an effective coordination with the Government of Mongolia (CCCP) and a strong national ownership.

LESSONS LEARNT

First, the project has shown that, in the absence of clear standardized processes within and between the governmental and non-governmental entities, awareness-raising, training and coordination activities will hardly result in consistent identification and protection of VoTs. Second, without embedding training in a broader strategy or post-training follow up action plan, skills and knowledge are unlikely to be applied systematically by participating entities. Lastly, in situations of economic distress, awareness-raising proves to have a limited impact, as individuals are willing to risk unsafe migration as a last resort option, despite being informed of these risks.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support the government of Mongolia to build or improve current legislation and processes for clear guidelines and well-defined responsibilities of relevant stakeholders in the identification and protection of VoTs.
2. Integrate training courses into action plans to actively adjust and monitor VoT identification and/or protection processes, while applying newly acquired skills and knowledge.
3. Engage more closely with NGOs and affected populations, not only at the activity level, but throughout the project cycle, to identify and address obstacles to timely VoTs identification and protection.
4. Make activities more child-friendly: Involve child protection specialists in all activities with children to develop age-appropriate spaces and content.
5. Sustain the Dream Umbrella Campaign: Utilizing existing resources, ensure the regular continuation of the Dream Umbrella campaign. This sustained effort should progressively drive behavioral change, shifting societal attitudes, norms, and behaviors pertaining to trafficking in persons. Stakeholders recognized the appeal of the UN label in this campaign, particularly among children and young people.
6. Support Government Research: Respond to the request of the Human Trafficking Debate Project participants by continuing to assist the government in conducting research on trafficking in persons, given the scarcity of TiP data noticed during the research conducted for the debate's preparation.
7. Complement awareness-raising activities with livelihood interventions to prevent the individuals in the most vulnerable situations from exposing themselves to the risk of trafficking
8. Design SMART indicators to effectively measure project results.