

LOL

- Live Our Lives Group -

Our Past, Present, and Future



A PEER SUPPORT GROUP

COMMITTED TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING



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Achievements at a Glance

- Assisted 113 trafficked persons including men (7 men, 106 women)
- Provided assistances to those being trafficked throughout Thailand, not limited to Bangkok
- Assisted foreign victims of trafficking from Lao PDR in Thailand
- Conducted awareness raising sessions among youth at 133 schools in 8 provinces in Thailand
- Two-time fund receiver from Thai government's Anti-Trafficking in Person (TIP) Fund and successfully implemented awareness raising projects
- Provided safe migration counseling to 150 people who were interested in working abroad
- Mobilized victims of human trafficking to form LOL. Currently, LOL has 117 members
- Registered in 2012 as an organization working against human trafficking according to the Anti-TIP Act 2008
- Awarded as a group that worked on protection of women's rights and female victims of human trafficking by women's rights committee, Thailand National Human Rights Commission in 2016
- Ms. Pathapimath Weechokchansang, LOL Coordinator, awarded as a person who had an outstanding performance in anti-trafficking in person by Prime Minister of Thailand in 2015

Our Past, Present and Future

Background

Everyone wants opportunities for better work with higher wages, especially for women whose career options are limited in Thailand due to low educational attainment. Therefore, they desire to seek employment opportunities that are seemingly better with a hope that they can earn more money for them and their families. Buying a house, a car and other necessities for their families, especially for their children, and paying off their debts are their wishes. Unfortunately, not all will be met with the success they hoped for. Many may find themselves exploited or deceived by traffickers and face terrible experiences in foreign countries. Some may not be able to return to Thailand ever, while others may come back with broken wings and large debts.

Upon their return, these women will need an assistance and moral support, which will help them get back to their feet and start a new life. But this is not an easy task for many, especially for those who returned empty-handed or worse, in exorbitant amount of debt. Starting a new life with debts and broken soul is challenging, even when an assistance is provided by the government agencies and NGOs. Still, they need to start somewhere. Some women have to start a new life completely by themselves, because they do not know how to seek an assistance, or do not come forward to actively seek an assistance with a fear of revealing themselves as victims of human trafficking.

Recognizing the importance of direct involvement by trafficked women themselves in the prevention and suppression of increasingly intensifying and complex situation of trafficking in persons in Thailand, Foundation for women (FFW), an NGO based in Thailand, with Division of Anti-Trafficking in Persons (DATIP), Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) organized a meeting for Thai victims of human trafficking overseas (hereafter returnees) for the first time in 2006. Allowed to meet and talk about their own experiences in a judgment-free environment, the participants found out that they were not alone, and many women shared a similar experience as trafficked victims, which was deeply rooted in gender inequality. At this meeting, they also learned about their rights as trafficked persons.

As a result of this meeting, the returnee found their own group called “Live Our Lives (LOL)” with the aim to provide moral support to each other, to inform and assist recent returnees in starting a new life and to raise awareness on the issues related to human trafficking and safe migration. According to a member’s definition, “LOL members are those who had gone through hell but survived to tell their stories to support others in their struggles. It is LOL’s mission to make their voices heard as well as assist other returnees.”

From then on, LOL worked with FFW in the Women’s News Center project from 2007-2008. Funded by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the project aimed to create and strengthen a returnees’ network to give advices to Thai women seeking foreign employment,

as well as recent returnees. The project allowed the LOL members to learn from the FFW staff on how to organize LOL as an independent group. Those who have fought to demand justice as trafficked persons used their experiences to advise and assist other trafficked women with understanding and empathy.

For over 8 years, JICA has been working closely with LOL. From the 1st Phase of its anti-TIP project, JICA has been supporting for capacity development of LOL's members. For example, every year, LOL's members gather to share their experience with each other as well as new returnees. Through this annual gathering, they have been empowered with moral support and some of them have turned themselves from service recipient into service provider who is ready to assist other victims or those in need. As the only peer support group in Thailand, LOL's capacity is highly valued by JICA. The group has been encouraged to be a resource person for JICA's capacity development workshop and forum with MDT especially on the issues related to gender sensitivity and victim-centered approach. Hence, the voice of the victim can be heard and the service provided for VOT has been improved to meet with their actual needs in a sustainable manner. Last but not least, through these activities, the networking between MDT and LOL is strengthened; thus, the coordination in protection and assistance provision for VOT is facilitated.

Our Past, Present and Future

Mission statement

To protect the victims of trafficking and help them get access to full spectrum of assistances including social reintegration assistance according to the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act B.E. 2551

Menu of Services

Over the course of 12 years, LOL has developed a wide range of menu of services to assist victims of trafficking. The spirit of their services stems from their own experience as victims of trafficking who had little understanding of their situations, rights and entitlements and means to access them.

Having felt lost, ashamed and isolated, which was a major impediment for the victims to take the next step forward, LOL members intentionally provide a safe and judgement-free environment for victims to share their own stories and provide assistances based on their needs.

The *peer-to-peer* support approach is powerful as the service providers and receivers both share a similar pain in life, which bonds them relatively easily.

So far, LOL provided 76 direct support services to the fellow victims and assisted 113 victims, who were predominantly female. LOL also provides services to raise awareness on human trafficking, to sensitize practitioners on victim's perspectives and to be available for MDT and its operations.

Menu of Services by LOL

Direct Assistance to VOT

1. Counseling Service for Victims of Trafficking
2. Airport Reception
3. Rights Notification
4. Escort to Police for Reporting
5. Counseling on Prosecution Process
6. Preparation for the Trial and Walk through It Together
7. Enforcement of Judgement
8. Assisting Debt Problem
9. Group Rehabilitation
10. Referral to Medical Services
11. Securing Housing/Temporary Shelter for VOT
12. Capacity Building of LOL Members – Provide Vocational Training
13. Counselling Services for Prospect Overseas Workers

Resource for MDT**

14. Cooperation with ATPD, the Royal Thai Police
15. Working with Juvenile Observation Center
16. Networking for effective referral

Delivery of VOT's Voice

17. Educating practitioners on the victims' perspectives
18. Inspiring others to create a peer support group
19. Policy Advocacy -MDT-VOT Forum-
20. Publications

Awareness Raising

21. Awareness Raising among Youth – Theatrical performance

*VOT means officially identified victim of human trafficking

** MDT stands for Multi-Disciplinary Team for anti-trafficking in persons



Direct Assistance to VOT

1. Counseling Service for victims of trafficking

LOL provides 24-hour counseling service via LINE and phone.

Over the course of 12 years, LOL established its organizational reputation as an organization that can assist trafficking victims. Its long-standing commitment and tireless efforts to assist trafficking victims are well recognized in Thailand, and in 2015, Ms. Pathapimath Weechokchansang, LOL Coordinator, was awarded by the Prime Minister of Thailand for her outstanding work in anti-trafficking in persons. In addition, LOL backed by FFW enjoys the extended international network of Women's Network Overseas, through which potential trafficking victims at the destination countries and/or their concerned families can contact LOL for consultation, information gathering and referral assistance.

Around 10 LOL members are trained by FFW, supported by JICA to provide counselling, help access to various funds, accompany to hospital, police, court and other government offices.

Assisted Case Example:

A Victim from Malaysia



Initiated by a call from her family back in Thailand to LOL, LOL successfully rescued a case (32-year-old female) from Malaysia, the destination country. She was persuaded by the acquaintance to work as traditional Thai masseuse in 2016; however, she was forced into prostitution upon arrival at Malaysia. She later managed to ask her family in Thailand to contact LOL based on the LOL's information leaflet she had picked up from the airport when she left Thailand. Her family brought this matter to consult with LOL and sought the way to help their daughter. LOL, then, talked to this woman in Malaysia over the phone to comfort her, explained the rescue operation and preliminary notified her rights. After careful discussions among the members, LOL coordinated with Immigration Bureau of Thailand to check her travel records and managed to rescue her in coordination with Malaysian police.

2. Airport Reception

Sometimes LOL is requested to join the group of MDT (Multidisciplinary team) members to receive Thai human trafficking victims who is returning home from overseas at the airport. Usually, a victim if she/he comes home through the diplomatic channel and his/her return is informed officially to the Thai authority, the victim will

be received by representative(s) from Immigration Bureau, Royal Thai Police, a social worker from the Division of Anti-Trafficking in Persons, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (DATIP-MSDHS). Although she/he would be very happy to return home after a traumatic experience as being trafficked overseas, it is emotionally exhausting and sometimes stressful to come home to face Thai government officials upon arrival.

The LOL members could ease their return by just being there for them and by providing some useful advice to the victims. At times, the LOL members went to the airport to receive victims who were not officially identified as victims of trafficking, based on the information gained from their own network. At times, LOL spotted trafficking cases through broadcasting news on TV and took an initiative to go to the airport uncalled, just to be at victims' service in case they need some information. So far, LOL has received Bahrain cases at the airport.

Assisted Case Example:

A Case from Bahrain



This Bahrain case was assisted in 2015. A Thai woman was recruited to work in a spa as a masseuse in Bahrain. In the first month, she worked in the spa as per her contract as masseuse, but soon enough she was forced into commercial sex business. She then managed to contact her relatives in Thailand for help.

Her relatives found LOL by searching on the internet and reported her relative's case. Immediately after LOL managed to get the case's contact from her relatives, the staff could contact the concerned case in Bahrain via LINE.

Later, she was successfully rescued by the Royal Thai Embassy in Manama, Bahrain and stayed there for a while. She could borrow some money from the embassy for travelling back to Thailand. Before the travel date, LOL asked if she wanted anyone to pick her up at the airport via LINE. With her request to LOL, the LOL staff got all her travel details and her dress code with a view to safely meet her at the pick-up point at the airport in Thailand. When two parties finally met each other, the LOL staff introduced themselves and offered her some food and drinks before they left the airport for FFW office.

At FFW office, she was allowed to take a rest, only after that, the staff asked her for an interview to understand her case better; who convinced her to work overseas, how she went there and other related information as long as she felt comfortable to talk about. The information provided by the case was kept confidential as a record to better identify if she was actually considered as an official case of human trafficking victim or not.

She decided not to receive any assistance from the government agencies; however, she requested THB2000 travel allowance from LOL in order to return home.

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LOL continued to contact her to see if she would change her mind to receive any assistance, but she still refused to accept any additional assistance. All she wishes is to live her normal life in the community she grew up in with her family.

Did you know?

In the past, traffickers forced women into prostitution immediately after their arrival to the destination. However, the current trend is that traffickers allow women to work as per their contracts in the first month or so to make them believe in them. During this time, their passport would be seized, and then eventually forced them into sexual service.

3. Rights notification to VOT

Victims, when they are officially identified as victims of trafficking, have specific rights to claim as victims of trafficking in Thailand. But many of them are not either aware of their rights because no one has explained to them or forget about their rights that are explained by government officials upon arrival as they were quite overwhelmed with many new information given to them at once. LOL members can notify the rights as victims of human trafficking to victims, and inform them of the way to claim their rights. LOL can provide such information to victims upon arrival from overseas, while they are still overseas via phone, during their consultation with victims in Thailand face to face or via phone.

Rights Notification by LOL

Financial Assistance: VOT can apply for subsidy from Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office which provides financial support 3,000 baht/time (limited 3 times a year). In case VOT has a child, he/she can receive subsidy from Home for Children and Families located in every province.

Pursuing legal prosecution: VOT can press charge against the trafficker. LOL can inform them pros and cons of suing the trafficker, prosecution procedures, including challenges VOT may face during the court process.

Occupation: In case VOT are interested in developing their skills or feel that they do not know where to start to build their new lives, LOL can suggest them to apply for vocational training program at Skill Development Center which is under Employment Department, Ministry of Labour or Women and Family Development Center under Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in their domiciles. These centers provide training for everyone with no charge.

TIP Fund: TIP Fund is a government fund to assist VOT and to promote anti-human trafficking efforts in Thailand. VOT can apply for his/her compensation from TIP Fund. However, only those who are identified as VOT and notify his/her case to the police will be considered by the TIP Fund committee.

Extension of Pay Back Period: Some people had to borrow money from the Royal Thai Embassy in the destination country for their repatriation to Thailand. Normally, after his/her return to residence in Thailand, the embassy will send a collection letter to inform the pay-back amount and due date. In case that the victim decided to enter the official VOT identification process in Thailand and identified as a VOT, TIP Fund on behalf of the victim will be responsible for the repayment of the dues to Division of Protection Thai National Overseas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, for those who are not enter into such process (not identified as VOT), they have to pay the dues by themselves. LOL can help them receive an extension of the due date for repayment by preparing necessary documents for the extension, and submit them to Division of Protection Thai National Overseas.

Compensation for Victims in Criminal Case: VOT can apply for compensation not only from TIP Fund but also from Rights and Liberty Protection Department, Ministry of Justice as a victim in a criminal case. In particular, those who are physically and mentally abused by the traffickers should consider this option.

Health Care: LOL can give advice to VOT about health services that are available for VOT

- Physical health: In general, LOL takes VOT to government hospitals and covers treatment cost for VOT.
- Mental health: LOL coordinates with Srithanya Hospital (the country's best-known mental institution) to refer VOT who have mental health problems and traumatic conditions, which affect their daily routines and social reintegration. LOL also manage to refer VOT who receive treatment in Bangkok to a hospital close to their domiciles for their convenience when they need to see a doctor. Since most of VOT that LOL had assisted come from northeast region, LOL would refer them to Khon Khaen Rajanagarindra Psychiatric Hospital in Khon Kaen and Prasimahabhodi Psychiatric Hospital in Ubon Ratchathani.
- Person living with HIV: If he/she is a person living with HIV, LOL can coordinate with Thai Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, and refer him/her for free treatment and medicine.

4. Escort to the Police for reporting

Some victims are taken to the Anti-Trafficking Police Department (ATPD) office immediately after their arrival to Thailand. However, they can take some time to report to Police for their cases, which would be a daunting task for many. LOL can escort victims to Police to report their cases. LOL can also prepare them by sharing information about what to expect at the interview at Police and make them feel more at ease for the up-coming interviews.

So far, LOL has escorted 22 cases to Police.

Assisted Case Example:



A Case from Bahrain

LOL received a case from Bahrain in 2014. A woman was persuaded by her acquaintance to work in a spa; however, she was forced into prostitution right after she arrived at the workplace. She managed to contact the Royal Thai Embassy in Manama. After she was rescued, she told LOL that the embassy had already briefed her on how the government and NGO can protect and provide some assistance to VOT.

She preferred to receive assistance from LOL to any government organization. LOL assured her to keep her confidentiality, and her rights to be fully protected and respected. LOL received her at the airport. She was later preliminary identified as a VOT by LOL and FFW.

The case decided to press charges against the broker.

LOL helped her in getting ready for reporting to the Police, including gathering as much relevant documents such as her job application, travel documents and documents given by the broker. Then, LOL encouraged her to tell her story chronologically from the beginning till the time she was rescued. LOL also informed that she would not need to answer all the questions if she felt that her rights were being violated or she did not want to answer.

By accompanying the case, LOL sometimes intentionally asks the Police officer to repeat him/herself to re-inquire the case in order for the victim to be aware of the importance of the particular question, and allow her to take some time to answer the question as accurately as she can.

5. Counseling on prosecution process

LOL is available for counseling for victims on prosecution process and referring victims to the right organization/people.

Assisted Case Example:

A case from Turkey



A female victim, who came back from Turkey contacted LOL directly after she searched for an organization that could assist her in reporting on what had happened in Turkey.

She went to Turkey with a promise to work as a masseuse through a recruitment agency, but her documents were seized right after arrival and sexually harassed by the receiver and her employee's husband. She managed to escape from the situation and sought assistance at the Royal Thai Embassy. After her return to Thailand, she was not assisted in any way, so she needed to search for it on her own and she found LOL.

LOL provided counseling and took her to report the case to the Police. Unfortunately, the victim received an allegation by the broker for having stolen THB20,000 from her when the victim escaped. Thus, LOL needed to address this allegation as well as the victim's charge

6. Preparation for the trial and walk through it together

For those who have never experienced any legal process, it is confusing and intimidating with all the interviews and testimonies to be made. LOL can assist victims to be prepared for their trials, starting from filing a criminal case, a civil case and/or a labor case by referring them to a right organization/person and by holding their hands at every step of the way.

Assisted Case Example:

Two Cases from Italy



Two women from northeast region were deceived to work in Italy 2006 by two different brokers in the same province they lived. These two cases shared similarities in terms of visa and passport arrangements made by the brokers but one was promised to work as a traditional Thai masseuse and the other a waitress. Upon their arrival at the destination, both women were told that both of them were heavily in debt for the travel and employment arrangements, and they would need to work to repay their debts in full. Contrary to the promises made to these women, they were sent straight to work in prostitution.

LOL assisted these women to sue the concerned brokers. First, the LOL staff informed the victims of their rights in a simple language that they could understand. Based on their own personal experiences, the LOL staff could tell the victims on what they could do...

- Contact Provincial Office for Social Development and Human Security in their respective residence for assistance;
- Ask for protection if they were threatened for their lives by dangerous people (mostly agent or broker);

- Apply for the Occupational Fund from Skill Development Center;
- Apply for the TIP Fund in order to receive due compensation;
- Receive financial assistance (incl. accommodation, travel costs and food) if she decided to press charge against trafficker.
- Apply for the Fund from Rights and Liberty Protection Department, Ministry of Justice for hiring a lawyer or requesting the department to appoint a lawyer for the victim.

After she decided to press charge against the broker, the LOL staff brought her to notify the case to the Police. The LOL staff accompanied the victim to the Police station whenever the Police called for additional interrogation.

Prior and during the court hearing, LOL prepared the victim by informing her about the court process, possible questions to be asked, additional information that may be requested, the layout of the court room, the name of the prosecutor, dress code, appropriate language and behavior at the testimony etc. Additionally, the LOL staff were there to be with the plaintiff during the whole court process to give her advice and moral support.

7. Enforcement of the judgement

When the court reached a judgement that is not the end of the battle for the victim who filed the case. Reaching a judgement and enforcing the judgement are two different things. LOL is persistent and committed to the cases that they get involved in.

Assisted Case Example:

Two cases from Italy



Yet another set of two women who were trafficked to Italy was assisted by LOL in 2006. Both women won their cases in the legal system. After the court ruled, the LOL staff took them to apply for the Justice Fund from Rights and Liberty Protection Department, Ministry of Justice, to hire a lawyer for the Justice Fund from Rights and Liberty Protection Department, Ministry of Justice, to hire a lawyer for legal execution. Considering for the victims' convenience, the LOL staff took them to apply for legal execution at their local Provincial Legal Execution Office for easy follow-ups. Even at this point, LOL continuously helps the victims to follow up their cases.

8. Assisting to solve debt problems

It is quite common to find victims of human trafficking heavily in debts even when they successfully return home. Traffickers and employers often impose costs associated with travelling and employment arrangements on victims. It is also not uncommon for the traffickers to charge the exorbitant and unreasonable interest rate on their debts. Usually, the victims would not know exactly how much they owed, on what, and how much they had repaid. Starting a new life upon return to Thailand with large amount of debts is not encouraging for the victims to stay positive to start anew. LOL had assisted cases with serious debt problems by reaching out to relevant organizations

Assisted Case Example:

A case from Poland



LOL successfully assisted a victim, who was heavily in debt from her travel and work arrangements made to work in Poland as an agricultural worker. She was one of the 38 Thai workers, who went to Poland through a recruitment company registered under Employment Department, Ministry of Labor. Each of them concluded and received a proper employment contract, which indicated their monthly salary of THB47,000 – 50,000 (excluding overtime) and the possibility of visa renewal up to 10 years.

However, the work and living conditions in Poland were not at all the same as they were indicated in the contract, and 7 of them ended up in Polish jail as they were relocated to an unreported work location against the Polish law by their employer.

The victim was aware of the THB100,000 debt in her contract prior to her trip to Poland, making her land asset as a collateral. But what she was not aware of was that her debt grew exponentially while she was in Poland. She managed to repay 4 times more (THB400,000) than what she had borrowed to the lender after she returned to Thailand, yet her land that she made a collateral was not made available for her.

LOL sought assistance from the Dhamrongdhamma Center (DMC) and Provincial Bureau of Justice for this case. Dhamrongdhamma Center, Ministry of Justice is a service and information center where people can consult their any social issues and seek assistance to solve them. DMC then contacts relevant organizations or departments to solve the problem for those in need. Thanks to the hard negotiation by LOL, the land was successfully returned to the victim 6 months after reporting the case.

9. Peer to Peer Rehabilitation

At first, this program was created by FFW to promote mental and physical recovery of victims of trafficking from traumatic experiences. FFW places importance on mental and physical rehabilitation since this greatly affects victims' overall success in building new lives and their social reintegration.

After participating in the first batch of this peer to peer rehabilitation program, Ms. Pathapimath Weechokchansang, who later formed LOL and worked as the LOL Coordinator, was inspired to apply this group exercise model to the LOL members in 2008. Some victims of trafficking and the LOL members were invited to join this peer to peer rehabilitation program with an intention to let their worries and stress off the chest by sharing their personal experiences and doing activities together, which enhanced their rapport as a group. Many of them cannot even share their traumatic stories to their families; thus, this group session provided a safe space and invaluable opportunity for them to talk and vent their personal struggles to the people who experience similar pain.

All the participants of this program gave very encouraging and positive feedback to LOL, stating that they felt liberated from their struggles, felt empowered with some friends who they can share their feelings without any judgement; thus they felt that they were not alone. Having peers to work together, they could gain confident in building new life again.

10. Referral to medical services

Traumatic experiences often leave deep scars in the victim's heart and impact him/her ability to lead a normal and productive life. LOL provides a referral assistance to those who need medical services. Listening to victim's stories and empathizing with them without judgement, and then referring them to the appropriate medical services for professional care would greatly enhance the victim's recovery and social reintegration process in the long run.

Assisted Case Example:

A Case from Bahrain



This Bahrain case returned to Thailand in 2011. After her return, she was mentally unstable and had symptoms of mental health problems with insomnia and hallucination. She suffered from uncontrollable emotion, which made her cry all the time, woke up in the middle of the night, and she was unable to be left alone. The LOL staff provided her an accommodation and stayed with her right after her return to Thailand.

Her physical and mental situation; however, did not improve, which made LOL believe that they need to bring her case to a health professional. After discussion with FFW, the LOL staff wrote a letter to Srithanya Hospital (which is a well-known mental hospital) asking for its cooperation to refer the victim to see a doctor for mental health counselling.

It was not easy for LOL to convince the victim to seek professional medical help. In Thailand, most of people still have prejudice against mental hospitals and are hesitant to go there. LOL needed to use their soft skills to carefully explain to the victim on her need to seek a professional help. After much encouragement, she eventually decided to go to see a doctor. LOL staff accompanied her to Srithanya Hospital for the first couple months, then they managed to refer her to the hospital in Khonkaen when she returned to stay home in Ubon Ratchathani for her convenience.

11. Securing housing/temporary shelter for VOT

LOL has established its name in the Anti-TIP field in Thailand, which enables them to be flexible in responding whatever needs that victims may have. LOL can respond swiftly to assist special cases by coordinating with the government counterparts to fulfill the needs identified by the victims.

Assisted Case Example:

A Case from Denmark



In 2018, IOM was informed of a human trafficking case identified in Denmark. The victim was LGBT, and he considered himself as a female. She was rescued from commercial sex industry. Thai Embassy in Denmark consulted with DATIP on the temporary accommodation for her upon her return to Thailand.

Although there are 8 government-run shelters dedicated to victims of human trafficking in Thailand, they are sex-disaggregated, thus they cannot accommodate her case. DATIP consulted with LOL on an alternative option for housing/temporary shelter for her case. LOL was well connected with other civil society organizations in Thailand including an organization to protect the rights of LGBT people. Accordingly, LOL managed to refer the victim to the right organization so that she can receive an appropriate assistance together with IOM.

12. Capacity building of LOL members – providing vocational training opportunity

In the past, FFW allocated some money to LOL for providing short term vocational training programs for the victims of trafficking, such as building computer skills, cooking, making artificial flowers and sewing clothes. However, with less available funding, LOL explored alternative opportunities by contacting government agencies that were responsible for providing skills development and vocational training (under Ministry of Labour). LOL can refer victims to the office in each province when and if needs are identified.

Assisted Case Example:



A Case from Italy

One case from Italy received a training program at the skills development center thanks to the arrangement made by LOL. LOL gathered a group of 10 people (not all of them are victims of trafficking), who were interested in developing their skills to make hand-made bamboo baskets. Once 10 participants are guaranteed, an instructor can be brought to any community to provide a training program for them at the community for 15 days. After the training program, the center provided a group fund of THB 3,500 for the group to be used for setting up a group business and a micro lending scheme in the group. The case from Italy successfully finished the training program, and she could make her living by making bamboo baskets in her community.

13. Counseling services for prospective overseas workers

LOL provides counselling services for those who are interested in working overseas. Most of the prospective workers contact LOL via telephone to ask for advice. Normally, the LOL staff recommend them to carefully check the information provided for the concerned position before deciding on taking the position and leaving the country. And it is suggested to keep a copy of ID card of the agency/broker/employer. In case the prospective

workers successfully find a job overseas, the LOL staff recommend them to leave the information regarding their employment overseas, including the name and address of the company they will work, just in case that they may need some assistance from LOL in the future while they are in the destination countries.



Resources for MDT

14. Cooperation with ATPD, the Royal Thai Police

Thanks to the personal connection that the LOL staff had established through participation of the Thai-Japan Workshop organized by the MSDHS/JICA joint project on anti-trafficking in persons, Anti Trafficking Police Department (ATPD), the Royal Thai Police turned to LOL for assistance when LOL brought a possible victim-to-be, who was about to go to New Zealand with a fraudulent work contract. When LOL was contacted by a prospective migrant worker who was bound for New Zealand to work as a masseuse, LOL took her to report the case to Overseas Employment Administration Division (OEAD), Ministry of Labour for a possible human trafficking case. OEAD in cooperation with ATPD decided to conduct a sting operation to contact the concerned broker directly. LOL cooperated with ATPD to contact the broker, pretending that the LOL staff was a job seeker, to conduct another sting operation to get the wrongdoers arrested.

15. Working with Juvenile Observation and Protection Centre

LOL's assistance is mainly for Thai victims, but for some cases, they had opportunities to assist foreign victims. In the past, LOL together with its mother organization called Foundation for Women (FFW) worked with Laotian children (both boys and girls) in Juvenile Observation and Protection Center in Rachaburi, Nakon Ratchasima, Pathumthani, Phra Nakon Sri Ayutaya and Samutprakarn. LOL provided them with rights notification, case follow-ups, and rehabilitation assistance such as art therapy through painting, drawing, and watching a video about a girl victim named "Kamkeaw." LOL also provided an interpretation service to Laotian children, who cannot communicate well with the center staff due to their language barrier.

16. Networking for effective referral and immediate action

Over the course of 12 years, LOL has established a strong and functional network in assisting victims of trafficking. Two LOL members were nominated to join the workshop organized by the MSDHS/JICA project in Japan, where selected MDT members were trained on several topics including anti-trafficking in persons effort in Japan, the victim-centered approach for protecting victims, and gender sensitive service provision. It was a great opportunity to learn from each other and build a strong sense of commitment to work as a team to address human

trafficking in Thailand. LOL developed a good working relationship with many of the key organizations such as DATIP, Immigration Bureau and ATPD. They created a LINE group to share information and help each other in many ways.

The Network of LOL includes ...

Government organizations

- Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division (ATPD), the Royal Thai Police
- Department of Special Investigation (DSI), Ministry of Justice
- Division of Anti Trafficking in Persons (DATIP), MSDHS
- Home for Children and Families, MSDHS
- Immigration Bureau, the Royal Thai Police
- Juvenile Observation and Protection Center, Ministry of Justice
- Office of Attorney General
- Provincial Office for Social Development and Human Security (PSDHS), MSDHS
- Welfare Protection Center for Victims of Trafficking, MSDHS

International Organization

- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

The Network of LOL includes ...

Non-Government

- Alliance Anti-Traffic (AAT)
- Foundation for Women (FFW)
- SR Law

Overseas Network

- Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW)
- Thai Women Network in Europe (TWNE)
- Thai Network in Japan (TNJ)
- Thai Women's Association in Norway
- Ban Ying (Germany)
- For Bahrain and South Africa cases, LOL usually contact the organization in the destination countries through Thai Embassy



Delivery of VOT's Voice

17. Sharing knowledge on the victims' perspectives with practitioners

LOL, as the only peer support group of victims of trafficking in Thailand, carries a heavy duty to share knowledge on victims' perspectives with practitioners in the field of anti-TIP. LOL is very active in participating in events and symposiums to voice their concerns and recommendations to improve assistance for victims of human trafficking.

Delivery of VOT's Voice:

LOL members were invited by Meiji Gakuin University (JAPAN) to present and share their experiences at the international symposium on Business and Human Rights in March 2017, in Tokyo, JAPAN. In Thailand, the LOL members also joined an event to launch a magazine called Anti-Trafficking Review, Issue 10 by Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW). This issue was dedicated to life after trafficking and LOL's view on effective social reintegration assistance was shared at the event.

18. Inspiring others to create a peer support group

LOL believes in a peer-to-peer approach and the power of friendship. LOL is motivated to help other fellow victims of trafficking inspired to take the next step in life. Once they can be empowered, they should empower others too. Thus, LOL is supporting other victims of trafficking to create a peer support group, even outside of Thailand.

Working with Burmese victims in Myanmar:

LOL was identified as an inspiring organization to other victims in Myanmar by the government authority in Myanmar. In 2016, LOL was invited to share its organizational experience and to inspire the Myanmar counterpart to create a similar group to assist victims of human trafficking in Myanmar.

19. Policy Advocacy – MDT-VOT Forum

LOL, being the only peer support group of victims of trafficking in Thailand, has a mission to deliver the voices of victims to a wider audience including government officials to improve their assistance for the victims. The MSDHS/JICA project organized several MDT-VOT Forum where victims' voices were directly heard by MDT members and those concerned.

Success in Expedited Court Proceeding

At the MDT-VOT Forum in 2016, LOL had an opportunity to raise concerns on the pending court cases of human trafficking in South Africa. 9 female victims, who came home from South Africa, were assisted by LOL upon their returns and their cases were brought to court in 2014. However, the cases were pending at the court for a while without any progress. LOL shared their concerns over these cases at the MDT-VOT Forum and its plea got an attention from the representative of Department of Special Investigation (DSI), Ministry of Justice. With the support from DSI, the case received an expedited treatment to reach a judgement in February 2017.

20. Publications

As the only peer-support group of victims of trafficking in Thailand, LOL is committed to voice their concerns and to raise awareness on victims' perspective to a wider audience. JICA has provided an assistance to the publication of their awareness raising booklets in collaboration with FFW.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Link</i>
2009	Shattered Dreams – Real life stories of migrant women who fell victim to human trafficking	https://www.jica.go.jp/project/thailand/0800136/materials/ku57pq00001uvau3-att/yume_en.pdf
2012	Pursuing Justice – The Struggle of Trafficked Women	https://www.jica.go.jp/project/thailand/0800136/materials/ku57pq00001uvau3-att/seigi_en.pdf
2013	Live Our Lives – Stories of trafficked women starting new lives	https://www.jica.go.jp/project/thailand/0800136/materials/ku57pq00001uvau3-att/jibun_en.pdf
2017	Undue Justice – A long journey for victims of trafficking to achieve justice	https://www.jica.go.jp/project/thailand/016/materials/ku57pq00001yw2db-att/undue_justice.pdf
2018	Access to Justice (Thai only)	



Awareness Raising

21. Awareness raising among youth – theatrical performance

Just like many of the LOL members dreamed of going abroad to work and make a lot of money, youth in Thailand consider going abroad as a viable option to earn a living. They create a considerable amount of debt in order for them to go abroad, while expecting that everything will work out there and repay the debt with the earnings they will make abroad.

They leave Thailand with optimistic outlook for life and do not equip themselves with knowledge and information they need to survive if/when things go wrong. As the LOL members have experienced the process of falling prey to human trafficking first-hand, they have strong urge to share their message to prospective workers, especially youth, with a view to preventing youth from falling prey to human trafficking.

In two consecutive years, LOL successfully received funds for raising awareness on the risks associated with human trafficking and overseas labour migration among youth by the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Fund (TIP Fund), MSDHS. The TIP Fund is a specialized government fund established according to the Anti- TIP Act in 2008 to assist victims of trafficking and to take actions against human trafficking. LOL has implemented two one-year

projects (2015-2016, 2016-2017) in 8 provinces (Udon Thani, Sri Saket, Ubon Ratchathani, Nong Bua Lamphu, Bueng Kan, Nong Khai, Burirum, Surin) where the high percentage of youth migrates to other cities in Thailand and/or overseas.

The core members of LOL send their messages in a form of a theatrical performance – **Shattered Dream** -, which was performed around 133 schools in 8 provinces. They believe that schools can play a significant role in preventing human trafficking among youth. Their performance provides a good opportunity for both students and teachers to open their eyes on the risks associated with human trafficking and labour migration, and to have open dialogue regarding human trafficking and the students' life options.

LOL's performance is captured in a video clip and available for interested schools

Our Past, Present and Future

Message from LOL

LOL strives to assist victims of trafficking to ensure that they will receive appropriate protection in a timely manner and have access to their rights as a victim without discrimination. LOL will make sure that every victim can reintegrate themselves into a society where they feel comfortable to build and live their new lives.

Apart from providing assistance to victims of trafficking, LOL's future plan is to continue prevention activities including an awareness raising campaign on safe migration for youth in high risk areas. In addition, LOL is planning to expand its target group to hill tribe people living in the mountainous areas whom found to be still lacking of awareness on human trafficking and at risk of being trafficked.

Live Our Lives



Facebook: Liveourlives
Line ID: 081-9088483
E-mail: janchida008@gmail.com

Tel: +66-2-433-5149, +66-2-435-1246
Mobile: +66-81-908-8483
Fax: +66-2-434-6774

Address: 295 Charansanitwong 62, Soi Wat Paorohit,
Bangkok Noi, Bangkok 10700 Thailand

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