

# **An Assessment of the Materials and Methods Used in Disseminating Information on Human Trafficking in Two Barangays of Quezon City**

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**Leticia S. Tojos**

*Given the importance of popularizing human trafficking as a human rights issue, this study looks into the initiatives of local officials and non-government organizations in Barangays Botocan and Escopa 3 in Quezon City to disseminate information among residents . The assessment covered the following areas : messages or content of the materials, methods and media for disseminating information, consumers and extent of dissemination, and effects on receivers of information.*

*Data gathering was done by reviewing available information dissemination materials, interviewing key informants, and conducting focus group discussion with selected residents.*

*Findings show that the Quezon City government has a number of instructive materials on human trafficking that have targeted its social workers and other frontline service providers, and barangay officials and residents. The materials promote the human rights perspective. However, the contents or messages have not been fully understood by barangay residents. Methods of dissemination have also not facilitated comprehension and retention of information. This was because human trafficking as a topic was only one among several inputs to the barangays without benefit of discussion.*

*Positive outcomes of the efforts include the improved handling of human trafficking cases by direct service workers and local officials as well as reporting of cases by residents.*

## **Introduction**

In its 2009 Trafficking in Persons Report, the State Department of the United States of America put the Philippines on its Tier 2 watch list for the second straight

year. A Tier 2 classification means that a country has a very significant or a significantly increasing number of trafficking victims and/or its government has failed to show improving efforts to stop human trafficking (Panti, & Samonte, 2009).

In the Philippines, the government and non-government organizations (NGOs) estimate that there are between 300,000-400,000 victims of human trafficking, seventy per cent of whom are reportedly women. Women are trafficked for labor and sexual exploitation to West Asia (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain), Southeast Asia (Malaysia, and Singapore), East Asia (Japan, Hong Kong), South Africa, Europe and North America (US State Department 2006 Trafficking in Persons Report-Philippines).

Indeed, international trafficking in the Philippines remains to be a serious social concern despite the enactment of R.A 9208 or The Anti Trafficking of Persons Act in 2003. Increasing impoverishment and more than three decades of the government's overseas employment program are factors to be considered in understanding why people are vulnerable to promises of high-earning jobs overseas. Another explanation is the country's strategic location, facilitating the transport of people to other countries. One of the published articles identified Southern Mindanao as "the traditional crossing point to nearby Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia" (Pinoy Press, April 21, 2010).

The US State Department report cites pervasive corruption (e.g. anti-trafficking law enforcement personnel receiving bribes and allowing offenders, explicitly or tacitly, to continue trafficking activities) and an inefficient judicial system as severely constraining the prosecution of trafficking cases. Of 228 cases referred by law enforcement agencies to the Department of Justice, only eight individuals in five sex trafficking cases have been convicted. These convictions include two who remain at large.

It is no secret that organized crime syndicates, both national and international, are involved in human trafficking, particularly in the sex industry. This is more reason for the national and local governments as duty bearers to

intensify efforts to combat human trafficking. One way of doing this is to get families and communities involved through awareness raising programs. The latter is an integral albeit neglected component of current initiatives to address human trafficking, according to a key informant who is assisting survivors.

Because of devolution, local government units (LGUs) are the primary duty bearers in informing and organizing families and communities to combat human trafficking. And some LGUs have indeed launched information campaigns among communities. This study was undertaken to assess such initiatives from a rights perspective in order to identify both good practices and areas for improvement.

## **Background of the Study**

### ***Objectives***

The study aimed to identify the messages, format, and modes of popularization of the materials used by the Quezon City government through its Social Welfare and Development Office. It also sought to determine who the target recipients were and their access to information. Furthermore, it looked into the perceived outcomes of these efforts in two communities in Quezon City. Based on the findings, recommendations on how information dissemination can be more effective are put forth.

### ***Scope***

The study considered the target audience and content of the information materials disseminated by the Quezon City government. In relation to content, it wanted to determine if the materials contain the important information about the issue: nature, causes, mechanisms, sites and extent of human trafficking, its perpetrators and victims, and responses, including where and whom to contact for legal and other support services for survivors and families. Of critical concern is whether the materials effectively explain human trafficking from a human

rights perspective. Do the materials present trafficking as a human rights violation and a crime? Do they inform the audience about the local government's role as duty bearer to create a safe environment for them to work and provide accessible protective and legal services, and the citizens' own responsibilities?

The study also looked into the language and format used in the materials, whether they facilitate understanding of human trafficking.

Methods and structures of information dissemination were also assessed based on effectiveness and compliance with existing laws such as Section 16 of RA 9208 which provides for the setting up of the Migrant Advisory and Information Network (MAIN) desks in municipalities and provinces involving the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Commission on Filipinos Overseas, non-government organizations and other concerned agencies (Primer on the Anti Trafficking in Persons Act, p. 16).

Benefits as well as gaps in information dissemination activities and the materials, from the point of view of the receivers, were also identified. Specifically, the study wanted to know if the materials and activities had any effects on people's awareness and understanding of human trafficking, and if they were motivated to take action, individually and/or collectively.

### *Significance*

In highlighting the positive aspects as well as gaps in current practices regarding the conduct of effective information campaigns to combat human trafficking, the study can provide local government executives feedback on what they did well and what more ought to be done. This is crucial since traffickers target low income communities as sources of people to be recruited.

The results can also motivate other localities to undertake activities to popularize the issue of human trafficking more actively using participatory

methods. Furthermore, they may be the basis for concrete program and policy recommendations on awareness raising and information dissemination at the barangay level.

### ***Review of Literature***

The materials reviewed for this study indicate the magnitude and scope of human trafficking as well as the programs and services being done by government and non government organizations. They underscore the necessity of addressing the issue and carrying out information campaigns at the barangay level to create more impact.

Available literature provides basic information on human trafficking: what is it, why and where is it happening, to what extent, who are the perpetrators and who are the victims as well as what actions are taken to arrest the problem and who or what agencies or organizations are involved. There are also cases of survivors cited and the assistance given to them. With the belief that timely discovery and deterrence will definitely help in curbing human trafficking, the government undertook different advocacy and education initiatives. Similar activities have been done by non- government organizations. However, there are very few studies on the effects of information campaigns on human trafficking in a given locality.

The Research and Action Final Report prepared by the Coalitions against Trafficking of Human Beings in the Philippines covers the Philippines, Malaysia, Japan, Italy, and Australia. The findings on Malaysia, Japan and the Philippines show *“that the initial contact with respect to recruitment often takes place through family, relatives, or friends”* ([www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/human\\_trafficking/coalitions\\_trafficking.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/human_trafficking/coalitions_trafficking.pdf), 2003, p. 22).

Said report gave the researcher an idea on the syndicates' intricate system of operation, including the types of trafficking, the networks involved and the processes from the country of origin to the country of destination. It also contains the interventions provided by government and non government organizations,

their appraisal of these initiatives as well as recommendations for improvement like "prevention and awareness raising campaigns must target not only population at risk, but (also) families of young men and women" (2003, p. 22).

Addressing human trafficking is complicated. Nonetheless, features of successful initiatives have been identified, namely:

1. **A holistic and multidisciplinary approach.** In the article *Strategies against Human Trafficking in Human Beings*, Anna Kalbhenn enumerated the components of the holistic approach: *the promotion and protection of human rights, especially victim support; the prevention of trafficking by means of investigation and prosecution of cases involving trafficking; criminalization and punishment of traffickers; national and international law enforcement cooperation and assistance; awareness raising; research and evaluation* (Kalbhenn, p. 4).

Primary consideration is given to the survivor and his/her welfare. More concretely, it includes the following:

- 1.1. *prevention: tackling the root causes as well as the demand side in the countries of destination, ensuring research and policy evaluation, awareness raising, training, (and) administration of controls;*
- 1.2. *assistance, protection and social inclusion of trafficked persons: identification of victims, adequate residence status, appropriate witness protection, (and) compensation scheme;*
- 1.3. *specific care for child victims; (and)*
- 1.4. *law enforcement: sufficient financial and human resources to be allocated, THB investigations to be considered as priorities and to be done by specialized personnel, (and) adequate rules against money laundering and corruption* (Summary: December 22, 2004: Trafficking in Human Beings, Brussels).

2. **Coordinated involvement of international, national and local government agencies, communities as well as other stakeholders.** The involvement of stakeholders in the campaign against human trafficking is part and parcel of the holistic and multidisciplinary approach.

Cheah cites some legal bases for coordinated action by various stakeholders. These include the 2003 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of the Philippines which mandates 13 concerned government agencies to work together with non-government and other organizations to provide support services to survivors and their families, engage in policy and program advocacy, and disseminate information to communities. Section 16 stipulates the development and implementation of preventive, protective and rehabilitative programmes.

Cheah also mentions the 1999 Bangkok Declaration on Irregular Migration which stresses the need for international cooperation in the promotion of sustainable development in the countries of origin as a strategic option to address irregular migration (para. 9 and 10, Part I at <http://www.thaiembdc.org/info/bdim.html> 21-23, Apr., 1999 p.56); and the Asian Regional Initiative against Trafficking in Women and Children (ARIAT) which directs attention not only to the criminalization of trafficking, but to enhance inter-agency cooperation, the role of civil society, socio-economic measures and victim protection (ARIAT, par. 8 available at <http://secretary.state.gov/www/picv/trafficking/riarap.htm> accessed 29-31 Mar. 2000, p. 56).

3. **Community involvement and the use of ethical discourse in information dissemination and awareness raising to the public** Information dissemination is not simply relaying the information to community residents but engaging them in discussions to enable them to share their own experiences, ideas and understanding of human trafficking. This interactive method will strengthen the residents' understanding and broaden their perspective about the issue.

Klaus Krippendorff (1992) termed this exchange *ethical discourse*. Considered to be emancipatory, this discourse has the following elements:

- a) *"respect for the cognitive autonomy of the participants, i.e. individuals, social groups and whole societies admit to themselves that they interactively construct or collaboratively create their own realities; that from within them, each of these constructions are coherent, rational, plausible, obvious, (and without denying continual processes of reconstruction and internal drifts) held as such until proven non-viable";*
- b) *self referential reality constructions* which indicate that their own cognition is a circular process of continually constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing the reality one sees including the perspective from which one is looking at it; and
- c) *ability to shift one's own position into reality constructions of others and see one's own through the others' eyes* (pp. 31-32).

The experiences of some regional organizations involved in anti – trafficking initiatives reflect the aforementioned strategies. An example is the work of the Salvation Army World Service Office (SAWSO) in Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Sri Lanka which integrated education and community awareness into their other programs and services to reduce the incidence of trafficking ([www.humantrafficking.org/programs/INTERNATIONALANTI-HUMANTRAFFICKING.htm](http://www.humantrafficking.org/programs/INTERNATIONALANTI-HUMANTRAFFICKING.htm)).

In Albania, the six-year USAID-funded anti-trafficking program of the Coordinated Action against Human Trafficking (CAAHT) has yielded very good results. ([www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/HT-toolkit-en.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/HT-toolkit-en.pdf)). It was able to get local government and civil society representatives to initiate projects directed at rehabilitating and reintegrating survivors into mainstream society, and raising community awareness, including those at risk. It successfully created structures like the 12 Regional Committees in the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and provided funding to 22 civil society groups nationwide to help survivors and decrease the incidence of human trafficking. Furthermore, it



established temporary shelters for survivors and provided counseling services to more than 2,800 marginalized girls, boys and young women.

Other interventions include organizing fora, workshops and conferences, and publishing a tool kit on the conduct of anti-trafficking campaign.

CAAHT's information campaign reached almost 60,000 girls and boys, women and men. Six months after the conduct of the campaign, 90 per cent of the people remembered the messages. Other significant outcomes are increased knowledge on human trafficking and how to prevent it; "improved exchange of information techniques and strategies among different stakeholders, especially civil society and local government actors outside the capital and other major cities"; and the "increased the availability of information on the responsibilities of the government actors at the central and local levels" (USAID, 2004, p. 1).

The comprehensive assessment of CAAHT partner activities is a valuable material for this study because it provides guideposts in determining the messages and methodologies that should be used in raising awareness. In recommending that consciousness raising be done *in an interactive and participatory manner using a combination of different tools and through a series of sessions* (p. 2), it promotes Krippendorff's concept of ethical discourse which is part of the study framework.

In the Philippines, one good practice is the government's conduct of awareness raising in the form of advocacy, information and education on women and children's rights among policy makers, communities and other groups ([humantrafficking.org/](http://humantrafficking.org/)). Similarly, NGOs have also proactively engaged in said initiatives, and more. They have organized fora, conferences, symposia, and trainings, and published advocacy materials directed towards migrant workers and their families, government agencies, private sector and other civil society groups. Abby Kirkbride in Newsbreak also reported on the establishment of a Samar Satellite Office that would conduct *"raising awareness in communities*

*and work closely with the public justice system to hold the traffickers accountable” (May 28, 2009).*

Noting the Filipinos’ limited knowledge on human trafficking, USAID Regional Mission Director for Asia, Olivier Carduner, has underscored the importance of information dissemination in the fight against human trafficking. The non-governmental Coalition against Trafficking of Human Beings and the Visayan Forum Foundation share this view. To strengthen information dissemination, particularly in potential recruitment sites of traffickers, Mr. Carduner’s office funded a broadcast campaign project with MTV to reach the general public ([www.humantrafficking.org/updates/690](http://www.humantrafficking.org/updates/690)).

### ***Conceptual Framework***

This study views human trafficking as a human rights issue. As such, it is the government’s responsibility as duty bearer to protect its citizens, prosecute traffickers, and prevent human trafficking. This is embodied in legal instruments, both local and international. In this regard, the State is obliged to create and operationalize the necessary structures and mechanisms, including legal remedies, as well as allocate required resources to address the problem effectively. Such is the essence of the 2003 Anti Trafficking in Persons Act. Section 2 (Declaration of Policy) of said law states that “... *the State shall give the highest priority in the enactment of measures and development of programs that will promote human dignity, protect the people from any threat of violence and exploitation, eliminate trafficking in persons, and mitigate pressures for involuntary migration and servitude of persons not only to support trafficked persons but more importantly to ensure their recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration into the mainstream of society* (para 2).

Trafficking survivors as claim holders should assert their right to available and accessible protective, preventive and rehabilitative programs and services to enable them to recover from their trauma, and reintegrate themselves into society. Moreover, they should be actively involved in developing themselves

and their communities. Thus, opportunities to develop their capacities must also be provided by duty bearers.

As a preventive measure, information campaigns and community awareness about human trafficking are crucial. Knowledge is a powerful tool in transforming one's self and situation. In the article, *Empowering Domestic Workers*, the Visayan Forum Foundation Inc. acknowledges the value of the participation of LGUs and source communities in reducing, if not totally eliminating the incidence of trafficking. Increasing their knowledge leads to a local policy environment that is responsive to the vulnerabilities of children and women. Thus, it is important that communities have access to information that would make them understand the issue with a human rights perspective. By so doing, they can make informed choices, individually and/or collectively. This will protect them from the entrapment of unscrupulous recruitment and trafficking syndicates. Concomitantly, they must regard survivors not as criminals but as people who have been victimized by human traffickers.

The method of disseminating information is also quite critical. Those who provide needed information should provide spaces for community residents to discuss, share their knowledge, experiences and suggestions. Such exchanges are fruitful because the interaction increases people's appreciation of the nature and scope of the problem and possible courses of action. In Krippendorff's concept of "*ethical discourse*", this process of interacting with each other, bringing into the open certain notions or practices which have become untenable can create opportunities for people to self-reflect and discover new ways of looking at their situation. Holding community assemblies or conducting home visits can be venues for challenging their views and reconstructing their perspectives on human trafficking.

### ***Methodology***

The study chose two low income urban areas where the Quezon City government through its Social Services and Development Department (QCSSDD)

has disseminated information on human trafficking. These are Barangays Botocan in Project 2 and Escopa in Project 4. They were selected in consultation with Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. (KCFI), an NGO working for the promotion and protection of the rights and interest of overseas Filipino workers and their families. The bases for selection were a) the existence of human trafficking; b) presence of a people's organization- SAMMAKA or Samahan ng Manggagawang Migrante at Kapamilya in Escopa, and KAMIGMA or Kanlungan ng mga Migranteng Manggagawa at Kapamilya, registered in 2005, and composed of former overseas workers and families of overseas workers in Botocan - addressing international migration concerns, including human trafficking, in partnership with KCFI; c) the city government's efforts in disseminating information on human trafficking; and d) the willingness of the communities to participate in the research.

Most families in the two communities are informal settlers whose members have worked or are presently working abroad.

Materials on human trafficking that were distributed to the two barangays were assessed based on the adequacy of the content, format or design (comprehensibility to the residents) and accessibility to information and knowledge about information technologies.

Key informants were interviewed. They were two Quezon City government social workers, three barangay officials, and four officers of KAMIGMA and SAMMAKA. The research team used a structured interview guide to determine the extent of the problem in the community, their initiatives in popularizing human trafficking as a human rights issue, their method for dissemination and the perceived results on the residents.

One focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted in each barangay. A total of thirty - seven adult residents from the two identified communities

participated in the FGDs. The participants were chosen with the assistance of the SAMMAKA and KAMIGMA officers. The criteria for selection were at least five years residence in the barangay and willingness to participate in the study.

Through the FGDs, the research team asked what the participants knew about human trafficking, where they got the information, how they viewed the efforts of their local government officials and other organizations in informing them about the issue and the effects of the information on them. Their recommendations as to what and how vital information can be better understood by the residents were also elicited.

### **Definition of Key Concepts**

Human trafficking - "recruitment, transportation, transfer or harboring, or receipt of persons with or without the victim's consent or knowledge, within or across national borders by means of threat of use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or position and taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person" (RA 9208).

Popularization - the attempt at making the issue of human trafficking understandable to the community residents through clear and simplified use of messages and interactive methods.

Preventive strategies - methods that are used by government agencies and non-government organizations to minimize the occurrence of human trafficking in the Philippines

Informed choice - the decision arrived at after weighing pertinent and adequate facts, in this case on human trafficking, to avoid victimization

## **Results of the Study**

### ***A. Available Materials on Human Trafficking:***

1. The available materials at the Quezon City Social Services Development Department were:

- 1.1. Two sets of manuals

The first set is composed of the training materials prepared by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in partnership with the International Labor Organization (ILO) aimed at increasing the awareness of direct service workers on human trafficking and improving their capacities to respond to the needs of survivors. The collection includes:

- 1.1.1. Training Manual on Psychosocial Recovery, Social and Economic Recovery of Trafficked Persons
- 1.1.2. Coaching Returned Victims/Survivors of Human Trafficking Toward Gainful Careers: A Manual for Coaches
- 1.1.3. Catalogue of Skills and Livelihood Training Programmes and other Support Services
- 1.1.4. Referral System for the Recovery and Reintegration of Trafficked Persons

The second set includes DSWD instruction booklets, namely "Manual on the Recovery and Reintegration Program for Victims-Survivors", and "Philippine Guidelines for the Protection of Trafficked Children."

- 2.1. Primers

The primers - one prepared by the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Solidarity Center and USAID, the others by the

Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal (SALIGAN) and the Coalition against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific - contain basic information meant to increase readers' appreciation of the issue.

2.1.1. Selected Documents to Implement the Philippine Anti-Human Trafficking in Persons Act

2.1.2. Let's Get to Know RA 9208

2.1.3. Anti Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003

3.1. Video entitled "Coming Back and Moving On: Life after Human Trafficking"

4.1. Quarterly Newsletter of the ILO in the Philippines entitled "Decent Work for All"

Basic information about human trafficking are included in the materials reviewed such as the definition of concepts; a description of perpetrators, how and where they operate; a description of victims and the abuses they suffer. They also identify the various agencies providing assistance to survivors. In addition, the manuals and the primers explain at varying levels, the pertinent human trafficking legislations as well as some processes involved in the application of the law. After the introductory discussion of human trafficking, the manuals focus on the development of specific skills to rehabilitate the survivors and enable them to recover and reintegrate themselves in the mainstream of society. The quarterly newsletter and the video illustrate actual cases of trafficking who have been assisted by their country agencies with support from international bodies.

The intended consumers are social development practitioners addressing human trafficking. The topics, particularly in the manuals and primers, indicate the need for protecting the victims-survivors, prosecuting the perpetrators and preventing the occurrence of the crime. The government as duty bearer is reflected in the national agencies' assigned functions, and

the programs and services they should implement. The creation of an inter-agency committee against trafficking supports the view that holistic and multidisciplinary interventions are needed to tackle the complexity of the problem.

The documents, all in English, give service providers a good foundation to understand human trafficking. The manuals and the primers, more particularly, are meant to broaden their perspective and sharpen their analysis of trafficking cases. The iterative technique in the presentation of the basic information about human trafficking in each material provides the reader greater opportunity for knowledge retention and reflective learning.

The detailed explanations of the programs and services aim to build the direct service workers' capacities to assist victims - survivors recover and take action towards improving their status and wellbeing. They also put across the message that one need not risk one's life just to earn a living abroad because there are opportunities for productive endeavors in the Philippines.

The information in the primers and newsletter may also be disseminated to communities provided they are translated into Filipino and are presented in a popular form.

The materials are of relevance and value to social workers who work at the district and barangay levels.

However, missing in the materials examined was information on how to build the service providers' capability in information dissemination and awareness raising.

2. At the barangay level, the materials shown to the researchers by the officers of SAMMAKA and KAMIGMA included posters, a primer and comics. They were given by their partner NGO, the



Kanlungan Centre Foundation Inc. for community education purposes.

Although the two communities had the same set of materials, Botocan had additional posters mounted in their barangay hall.

### *Posters*

The posters commonly found in the two communities are in English and contain one line slogans with symbols or images that can easily be associated with human trafficking. However, the text did not have much impact since the messages were not clearly understood by the residents.

The additional posters in Botocan are written in Filipino. They contain helpful information that enlighten the public about what an illegal recruiter does and who a legal overseas worker is.

### *Primer*

Entitled "Saan Ka Man Naroroon" (which, in English, means "Wherever You May Be") the primer was published by Kanlungan Centre Foundation Inc. Written in Filipino, it uses a question and answer format to impart basic information every prospective overseas worker should know, including his/her rights as contained in existing laws.

### *Comics*

The comics, also in Filipino, discuss how traffickers operate. The format is reader friendly and may easily be understood by both adults and youth.

The materials cited above are intended for community residents and the general public. The primer, comics and the posters in Botocan are valuable materials for the intended audience since the contents

are a "must know" for those interested to work abroad. They equip the people with knowledge on what questions to ask from a labor recruiter to lessen vulnerability to illegal recruiters and traffickers. They also provide a human rights perspective to understanding human trafficking.

#### ***B. Methods of Information Dissemination***

According to the key informants and the FGD participants, several methods of providing information about human trafficking were used. They include the conduct of orientation sessions, seminars, home visits, trainings, and distribution of materials.

The most common method was the conduct of an orientation on human trafficking during meetings, general assemblies and special community celebrations because they could reach a bigger number of people. For instance, the LGU social workers would inform the parents of day care students about human trafficking at least once a year. Barangay officials, on the other hand, informed their constituents, on different occasions, about legal provisions and their role in assisting survivors in partnership with other government agencies.

The activities were done with some regularity, e.g once or twice a year, once or twice a month or every first Monday of the month for general assemblies. Announcements were made at least 3 days before the event to enable the residents to attend. This was usually done by mobilizing area leaders to spread the information in their vicinity, posting announcements in places where people usually converge, and going around the community to spread the word about the scheduled event through the use of a sound system.

KAMIGMA and SAMMAKA also conducted orientation sessions on human trafficking among their members. Their leaders hoped that the

knowledge they imparted would be used by the members to protect themselves from perpetrators, and would be shared with relatives and friends.

Apart from orientation sessions, city officials also conducted trainings and workshops together with or under the sponsorship of their national and international partners. The participants were LGU implementers such as social workers, and officials of community organizations.

### ***C. Results of the Information Dissemination Initiatives***

The responses of the LGU social workers, barangay officials and community leaders indicate positive results that came out of their information dissemination efforts. The orientation sessions created and/or enhanced awareness on human trafficking. This may be gleaned from residents reporting cases of human trafficking to the Barangay Council and to the LGU social workers.

The trainings led to an improvement in the capability of LGU social workers and barangay officials to respond to the needs of survivors. The social workers and barangay officials could now explain the conduct of rescue operations, their respective roles, and the mechanics of case management. They have also coordinated with each other in the rescue of reported victims of human trafficking as well as in the provision of protective and legal services through referrals to concerned agencies.

Initially, a significant number among the community residents in the FGDs could not recall efforts by their local officials to disseminate information on trafficking. It was the community leaders in the FGD who helped the participants recall that the trafficking was discussed, albeit in a limited way. In Botocan, the orientation sessions conducted by KAMIGMA, were more significant to some participants. However, the latter did not know that the activities were jointly undertaken with the Barangay Council.

Neither were some community residents aware of the barangay officials' efforts to rescue victims of trafficking, and to link up with non-governmental and people's organizations for referrals. However, in the course of the discussions, they remembered instances of cooperation between barangay officials and leaders of people's organizations.

There is unevenness as well as gaps in the way key informants and FGD participants understood the concept and features of human trafficking, pertinent legislation, and available programs and services (refer to Table No. 1).

The FGD participants did not seem to fully understand what trafficking is. For instance, child abuse cases or the employer's withholding of a worker's benefit were given as examples of human trafficking. This might be due to the dovetailing of the topic with the discussion of the different committee reports and the tackling of other concerns by the barangay officials. With a minimum of 150 to 200 people attending each general assembly and the variety of topics discussed, the participants could not even remember that human trafficking was taken up. The LGU key informants admitted that their information dissemination activities were not focused, intensive and had to be combined with other activities, thereby inadvertently diminishing the importance and impact of the messages. One barangay official remarked that what people usually remembered was the distribution of goods rather than the information that were imparted to them.

Another area for improvement is the method of dissemination. The FGD participants said that, based on their experience, just reading the materials they received from the fora did not automatically increase their knowledge. There were no opportunities for *ethical discourse* or sharing of experiences and ideas, clarifying, or questioning. Many of them agreed that there should be venues to discuss, clarify, and share ideas, opinions, experiences and their understanding of the information they acquired in order to say with confidence that they clearly understood the issue.

Table 1. Results of the Information Dissemination Activities

Subject Areas	LGU Social Workers	Barangay Officials	Officials of People's Organizations	FGD Participants
Concept and features of human trafficking	Could define the concept but in their examples, they confused the issue with VAW or child abuse cases; believe that individuals who continue selling their bodies chose that option; had awareness that the operation is syndicated but also recognized the role of kin in the perpetuation of the problem	Could define the concept in very general terms; identified victims based on actual cases they handled; named individuals, friends, and relatives as providing the worker	Many of them could explain the issue together with some of its features; identified victims based on actual cases they handled; named individuals, friends, and relatives as providing the worker	Most of them had a general notion about the issue; do not have a clear understanding about its manifestations and operations
Existing legislations and referral to legal services	Have knowledge about the existence of the RA 9208, but not its provisions; they refer cases for legal services	Are aware of the existence of the 2003 RA 9208 Anti Trafficking in Persons law, not its provisions	Know about the existence of RA 9208 but not its actual provisions; they refer cases for legal services	Most are not aware of the existence of the legislation.
Available programs and services for victims-survivors	Are knowledgeable about existing government programs and services; are involved in rescue operation; and implement programs and services for survivors	Have knowledge about existing government as well as NGO partner's programs and services	Have knowledge about existing NGO partners' programs and services	Except for a few, the rest are not aware of the programs and services for survivors

The posting of advocacy or campaign materials was also not effective. In Botocan, no one, including the research team, noticed the posters in the dark corner of the Barangay Hall where they were mounted. A community leader said the posters had been there for some time. But, the FGD participants were surprised to know of their existence. Although quite informative, the posters were text-heavy. There was in fact a suggestion to post materials in spots where many people congregate. The materials should also use catchy, easy to recall messages to get people's attention and make them curious enough to continue reading.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study shows that there are available materials on human trafficking at the level of the city government and Barangays Botocan and Escopa. Information dissemination activities have also been undertaken by the local government for its frontline social workers, barangay officials and constituents. But, they have not been done on a proactive and programmatic manner. As a duty bearer, the local government must proactively address human trafficking. It should set up the necessary structure and mechanisms, and allocate resources to protect constituents, prosecute offenders and prevent human trafficking. Some of the research participants recommend that community residents should be the main target of information campaigns. Of particular importance are the mothers who are usually the family care providers, and teenagers since they are the targets of traffickers.

The available materials on human trafficking reflect a human perspective in describing the meaning and nature of human trafficking, and providing information on where to go in case one is trafficked. However, advocacy and awareness raising as functions of the local government officials and direct service workers were not mentioned in any of the materials.

The materials need improvement in terms of language and attractiveness. The research participants were one in saying that print documents must be attractive and colorful. The messages must be written in simple and concise Filipino. This is why comics and primers are the preferred forms for information dissemination.

Posters failed to deliver their message because of their obscure location. Hence, the recommendation to post them in spots where the public can easily see them.

Videos are a popular form of communicating information. Since they were not among the available materials, the participants recommend that videos on human trafficking be produced and distributed to communities. A public showing can also be arranged. This will surely draw in crowds as Filipinos enjoy watching movies.

The methods of disseminating information varied. But, in the main, among social workers and barangay officials, they took the form of trainings. At the barangay level, the local government as well as concerned people's organizations (POs) such as KAMIGMA and SAMMAKA conducted orientation seminars. The participants remembered those undertaken by the POs more than the ones sponsored by the city government. But, their understanding of human trafficking was uneven and incomplete. One factor to explain this is the absence of discussion, of ethical discourse in the conduct of information dissemination.

Despite their sporadic and input-heavy nature, the information dissemination initiatives did yield positive outcomes. The knowledge acquired by the direct service workers and the barangay officials enhanced their capability to address the needs of survivors and to coordinate with other agencies. Also, community residents now report cases of human trafficking to barangay officials.

Overall, the findings show that so much more needs to be done by the city government and community organizations to combat human trafficking. The first step is to raise public awareness about human trafficking, followed by concrete initiatives involving the collaboration of government and non-governmental actors. As duty bearers, it is the elected officials' obligation to initiate and sustain such programs, and to offer hope as well as socio-economic alternatives to communities.

Amidst all these, the local government social workers' role in advocacy and information dissemination is central. Thus, in addition to enhancing their knowledge, attitude and skills, they have to practice reflective learning. The manuals can guide them in their work. But experiences can be learning opportunities as well. It is, thus, a challenge for them to develop creative, and participatory ways of informing and engaging potential/actual source communities in addressing human trafficking.

*Leticia S. Tojos, Ph. D. is a University Extension Specialist of the Research and Extension for Development Office, College of Social Work and Community Development. She has a doctorate degree in Communication. She is a researcher, trainer and an active advocate having a wide range of interest including labor, environment, migration and other gender concerns.*



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### **Endnote**

\* The research team was composed of: Leticia Salvador-Tojos, Ph. D. as project leader; Josefina M. Rolle as researcher; Catharine E. Adaro and Mary Antonnette F. de Leon as research assistants.

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