

CHAPTER III

REINTEGRATION POLICY AND CASE STUDIES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of Thai reintegration policy and reviews the literature on provision of reintegration assistance and services in Thailand. It also presents an overview of the place of origin and description of the personal background of the nine returnees selected as case studies in this research: Lumyai, Salee, Somjai, Fah, Suai, Yen, Meena, Duang, and Koy¹. Finally, it describes the life histories of these returnees during the stages of pre-departure abroad, life abroad, and reintegration.

3.2 Human trafficking in Thailand

During Thailand's First to Seventh National Economic and Social Development Plans (1963 – 1996), the country focused on the quantitative aspects of development such as economic growth without considering the qualitative aspects of development such as people's well-being, and socio-economic inequality. Industrialization also led to uneven development between urban areas and rural areas, causing migration of people from rural areas to big cities and overseas in order to seek better opportunities. Alongside such migration patterns emerged the problem of trafficking.

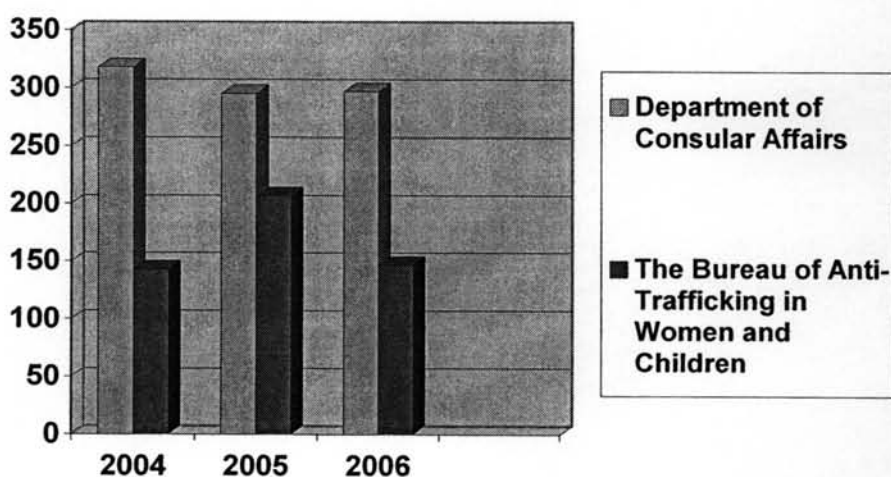
In Thailand, attention was brought to trafficking in 1984 when a brothel in Phuket caught on fire and dead bodies of women who were chained to the bed were found while some women died from jumping out of the building (GAATW, 2007: 174; Jayagupta, 2007: 107). This incident in Phuket first brought trafficking into the public debate in Thai society (FFW, 2006: 1). Although it has been twenty-four years since the Phuket incident, and the Thai government and NGOs have been working to

¹ Their names are kept confidential and aliases are used.

eliminate trafficking in Thailand, exploitation of human beings has still increased. Trafficked children from Cambodia come to beg in Thailand; Laotian, Burmese and Cambodian citizens migrate to Thailand to find themselves exploited in factories, fishing boats and housework; Thai women go to Western countries as mail-order brides and are sold by their husbands; Thai women migrate to European countries to find themselves as sex workers (UNIAP, 2005).

According to Usa Lerdsrisuntad, between 497 to 910 Thai women and children were official victims of trafficking during 2004-2006, while 574 foreign women and children were officially assisted as trafficked victims in 2006 (2007) (See Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2.).

Figure 3.1 Number of Thai women and children trafficked overseas



(Source: Lerdsrisuntad, 2007)

Figure 3.2 Number of foreign trafficked women and children
at Ban Kred Trakarn Government Welfare Home in 2006



(Source: Lerdsrisuntad, 2007)

Thailand has been considered a country that has made significant efforts in recognizing the importance of the trafficking problem and taking up anti-trafficking efforts. Based on the Trafficking in Person Report by the United States Department of State, Thailand has moved up and down between a Second Tier² country and the Second Tier Watch List. In 2003, Thailand was designated and reported as a Second Tier country according to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (United States Department of State, 2007: 12). In 2004, Thailand stepped down from the Second Tier to the Second Tier Watch List before Thailand was redesignated as a Second Tier country in 2005, and it has retained this status in 2006 and 2007 (United States Department of State, 2007: 197). Due to the sensitivity to the grading of the Thai government and this trafficking index, the Thai government and all agencies working to combat trafficking have attempted to work effectively in order to place Thailand on the First Tier. If the Thai government did not seriously take action, the United States of America would not provide humanitarian aid, trade-related assistance or funds from multilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International

² The United States Department of State has categorized tier placement based on whether the government fully complies with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2000 's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. "First Tier" refers to governments that do fully comply; "Second Tier" refers to governments that are making significant efforts to meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; "Second Tier Watch List" refers to weak second tier countries; "Third Tier" refers to governments that do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

Monetary Fund (IMF) to the Thailand (Gallagher, 2006: 140). Thailand has recently passed its first, comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation known as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act B.E. 2551³. His Majesty King Bhumipol Adulyadej signed the Act on January 31, 2008 and the Act was published in the Government Gazette on February 6, 2008 which will be formally implemented in June 2008 (The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act B.E 2551: 1). However, a lot of work needs to be done to make sure the policies and laws which have been developed are being effectively implemented by skilled individuals and organizations.

3.3 Thai trafficking and reintegration policy

3.3.1 Trafficking policy formulation and policy

In 2000, the UN Assembly adopted the Convention Against Transnational Crime, later supplemented by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Adoption of the Protocol put major pressure on the Thai government to take other steps and action against in trafficking.

Aside from global pressure, there was also local pressure from non-governmental organizations and international organizations located in Thailand working on trafficking (FFW, 1998:6). As a result, the Thai government finally started to form a group of committees to take responsibility in formulating anti-trafficking policy. According to the Office of the Permanent Prime Minister, a working group began in 2002 to harmonize policies and coordinate anti-trafficking efforts in Thailand (Office of the Permanent Prime Minister, 2004: 14). The definition of trafficking developed within the UN Protocol served as a basis for the Thai government to develop policies to prevent trafficking, protect victims and prosecute offenders. Since then, the Thai government has agreed in various meetings and conferences to coordinate further actions. These include creating a national strategic

³ 2551 B.E. is equivalent to 2008 A.D.

plan, exchanging information, granting legal protection to trafficking victims, and providing witness protection in prosecution cases.

The trafficking policy formulation process was based on pressure from different parties involved with anti-trafficking, including official and unofficial players such as the U.S. government, UN agencies, international organizations and local NGOs. According to Benner et al., in the new global environment, “states and international organizations are no longer the only players in the international realm. Non-governmental organizations and business, themselves responding to the pressures of globalization, have recognized their operations on a transitional scale and are playing a progressively more important role in international relations” (Benner et al., 2003: 18). As human trafficking is a global issue, these organizations acted as an “advocacy network” that pressured the Thai government and Thai policy-makers to formulate actual policies in prevention, protection and return and reintegration for trafficking in human beings, and their advocacy succeeded in the end.

In 2002, the Government of Thailand appointed National Coordinators for the policy-making process to form human trafficking policy. On July 1, 2003, the Thai Cabinet approved and adopted the National Policy and Plan on Prevention and Resolution of Domestic and Cross-border Trafficking in Children and Women (2003-2009) consisting of prevention, protection and prosecution (Office of the Permanent Prime Minister, 2004: 9).

In the national policy, there are five policies regarding human trafficking, as follows:

- 1) Eradicating child and women trafficking both at national and transnational levels
 - 2) Providing attention and support on protection, prevention, suppression and correction on all forms of child and women trafficking both at community and provincial, and national and international levels; also supporting budget, human resources, and knowledge
 - 3) Supporting collaboration among related agents in prevention, suppression and correction on child and woman trafficking between governmental and non-governmental units, at local, provincial, national and international levels in order to support the essence of the convention, declarations, protocols or international laws in order to eradicate traffickers or transnationally organized crime groups
 - 4) Promoting knowledge on human rights, women's rights, and child rights to Thai people, especially to families as an important unit in the society in order to decrease violence on children and women; providing capacity building to children, women, and citizens in order to provide fair access for all to public service especially on education, skill training and to understand the concept of self-reliance
 - 5) Concentrating on strict law enforcement and arresting those who are involved in child and women trafficking, either individually or as an organized criminal group
- (Jayagupta, 2007: 133; Office of the Permanent Prime Minister, 2004: 17)

The national policy is to be implemented by formulating the national strategic plan as follows:

- 1) Prevention Plan
- 2) Rescue and Protection Plan
- 3) Prosecution and Suppression Plan
- 4) Reintegration and Repatriation Plan
- 5) Setting-Up Database System and Monitoring and Evaluation System Plan
- 6) Administration and Management Mechanism Development Plan
- 7) International Coordination and Collaboration Plan

The national strategic plan comprises two phrases: short term plan (2003 - 2005) and long term plan (2003 - 2008) (Jayagupta, 2007: 133; Office of the Permanent Prime Minister, 2004: 17).

3.3.2 Reintegration policy

This section only discusses the effectiveness of plans and policy related to reintegration, specifically the Prosecution and Suppression Plan and Reintegration and Repatriation Plan.

Prosecution and Suppression Plan

Thailand's Prosecution and Suppression Plan has not been strong. One of the main critiques of the implementation of the Plan is corruption among implementers, especially police and immigration officers. According to Wijers & Lap-Chew, corruption among authorities is a significant factor in the anti-trafficking process (Wijers & Lap-Chew cited in Jayagupta, 2007: 331). Corruption and "money under table", which are widespread in the country, leads to lax law enforcement, and weak suppression of trafficking has been a big problem in Thailand for a long time. Laws are often broken to benefit migrants, Thai officials, and the entrepreneurs who make a business out of migration. There is some evidence which shows the involvement of lower-level law enforcers and customs officers in facilitating trafficking to, from and within Thailand. Furthermore, senior public officials such as police, politicians, and military officers have been acknowledged to have interests in the sex industry (Gallagher: 2006: 143). Unfortunately, the Thai Government has made minimal progress in reducing trafficking-related corruption in the police, immigration services, and judiciary. The implementation of the Prosecution and Suppression Plan will not be in full effect unless the issue of corruption among authorities is solved.

Reintegration and Repatriation Plan

According to Jayagupta, insufficient information about Thai government reintegration programs is given to returnees, which leads to lack of participation in the reintegration program organized by Ban Kred Trakarn. Furthermore, foreign trafficked returnees seem to have better opportunities to get involved in state reintegration programs than Thai trafficked returnees. Lastly, from the perspective of returnees, Thai government shelters are seen as detention centers instead of places where returnees can recover from their trafficking experiences (Jayagupta, 2007: 328).

National Agenda

At the National Conference on Human Trafficking held on August 6, 2004, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra declared the fight against trafficking as the National Agenda. According to "Thailand's Country Paper on 'Policy Mainstreaming: The Labor and Employment Perspective in Taking Action Against Human Trafficking'", Thaksin stated in his speech:

"Victims must be regarded as victims, not criminals, and they must not be subject to prosecution. Instead, rehabilitation and services must be provided to reintegrate them into society. On the contrary, traffickers must be treated as criminals and heavy penalties must be imposed on them regardless of any forms of trafficking they are involved... Human trafficking is now a national agenda, all stakeholders should cooperate in combating all aspects of the problem in a sincere and serious manner with sympathy for trafficking victims." (n.d.: 2)

In accordance with the speech, the following reintegration policies were announced and formulated:

- 1) Remedy and rehabilitation with an initial fund of 500 million baht to assist victims of trafficking and those afflicted by other social problems. A committee would be established to manage the fund, comprising representatives from Government Organizations and NGOs.
- 2) Change of discriminatory attitudes in society that stigmatize victims of human trafficking to facilitate their reintegration.

In order for the Thai government to follow through on its policy statement affirming the implementation of reintegration policy in its action strategy, it is necessary to have concrete policies and plans. According to Thailand's Country Paper, the National Agenda has established formal mechanisms for coordinating the activities of relevant organizations. These mechanisms are: 1) establish the National Committee on Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking; 2) 500 Million Baht Fund; 3) set up the National Operation Center on Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking in 3 levels: provincial, national and international; and 4) establish the Children, Juveniles and Women Division.

Challenges in implementing reintegration policy in Thailand

One of the main problems associated with Thai reintegration policy is that the policy-making process was not inclusive enough, as it did not involve any participation of returnees. Furthermore, during a UNIAP Meeting held on April 4th, 2007, representatives from GOs, NGOs and IOs discussed drafting a new Anti Trafficking in Persons Act but again there was no participation of returnees (UNIAP Meeting, field notes, April 4, 2007). This is a problem because the perspective of returnees should be taken into account in order to make the Act most effective and meet the needs of returnees. According to Skrobanek, this vertical approach of policy-making has limited success in helping returnees because of the lack of participation of affected groups and communities in designing and implementing policies, programs and assistance appropriate to their needs (2003: 4). Generally, the vertical approach

to policy-making considers affected women and children as victims rather than actors that can help shape the policy. Skrobanek points out that having trafficked returnees as active partners in creating policy and programs has proven to be effective such as in the cases of community action against trafficking in Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia (2003: 5).

It is important to look at whether the exclusion of trafficked returnees is because of the traditional way of the top-down policy-making process or because of the lack of policy communication during the process. According to Dunn, “policy analysis is initiated in the basis of requests for information or advice from stakeholders situated in the various stages of the policy making process discussed in the preceding section...to enhance prospects for the utilization of knowledge and open-ended debate among stakeholders...” (Dunn, 1994: 21-22). Dunn also mentions the importance of stakeholders’ participation in the process of policy-making. In the case of human trafficking, trafficked returnees are stakeholders who currently do not have a voice in policy-making but should be included.

Another problem with Thai reintegration policy is the exclusion of male returnees since most trafficking policies and programs focus on women and children. Most of these efforts reach out to children and women throughout the country but men are actually another group that has been trafficked and need to be assisted (UNIAP Meeting, field notes, April 4, 2007). The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) of the government of Cambodia describes in its “The Return and Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking from Cambodia to Thailand 01 July 2004 – 30 March 2005” report that almost 69 cases out of 137 trafficked returnees from Thailand were male, proving that males make up a substantial portion of returnees and deserve to be included in trafficking policies (Cambodian Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, 2005: 6). Because policy-makers neglected the problem of male trafficking during the problem structuring process, reintegration policies and services of the Thai government mainly focus on how to assist women and children (FFW, 2004:10). However, a new Anti Trafficking in

Persons Act 2551 B.E. includes protection for male returnees. But the implementation and effectiveness of the Act still needs to be examined.

Political change has somewhat affected the implementation of the National Plan and Policy and National Agenda. These policies were originally announced during the government of Thaksin Shinawatra and the cabinet approved all working tools during his government (“Thailand's Country Paper”, n.d.: 5). Thailand has gone through two administrations since Thaksin's time – the military-installed government of Surayud Chulanont and the recently elected government of Samak Sundaravej. It has been almost four years since Thaksin has proclaimed the National Agenda but according to Matthana Chetamee of the Foundation For Women, only 100 million baht has been disbursed so far but has not reached any working organizations. As for the remaining 400 baht, it will most likely not be disbursed (Personal interview, January 23, 2008).

The government has distributed responsibility for implementing reintegration policy to different government agencies based on each agency's experience with trafficking. Within the Thai government, the Bureau of Anti-Trafficking in Women and Children is the main government agency responsible for the return and reintegration of trafficking victims in Thailand. The Bureau provides welfare and direct services through shelters. The Thai government has established ninety-nine shelters, ninety-three temporary shelters and six appropriate welfare homes in every region all over the country to provide assistance and services to both Thai and foreign trafficked returnees. However, it appears that the Ban Kred Trakarn Protection and Occupational Development Center in Bangkok is the only welfare home that has been recognized by anti-trafficking organizations (“Thailand's Country Paper”, n.d.: 9). It is unclear why Ban Kred Trakarn is the only shelter that has been recognized. This brings up the question of the quality of assistance and services and human resources and capacity of other welfare homes.

3.4 Provision of reintegration assistance and services in Thailand

Reintegration assistance and services is seen as the “means, physically and mentally, to re-enter ‘society’ which could help returnees ‘recover’ from their trafficking experiences” (Derks, 1998: 14). In Thailand, assistance provided to returnees can be divided into three general categories: legal assistance, social services, and follow-up and monitoring. Legal assistance consists of protection from reprisals and police protection, in-court evidentiary protection, right to information regarding court proceedings, right to consult a lawyer, and legal redress and compensation. Social services include providing residential care, psychological support, medical care, financial assistance and employment training (UNIAP Meeting, field notes, April 4, 2007). Follow-up and monitoring involves home visits and check-ups.

3.4.1 Residential care / shelters

In general, Thai returnees receive governmental residential assistance immediately. They are sent to shelters or welfare homes where they receive training and learn skills that will make their reintegration easier. The literature does not mention any problems associated with providing residential care to Thai returnees. Foreign returnees are only offered free residential care in government shelters when they agree to provide evidence against traffickers, and they must be sent by government officials to government shelters or welfare homes.

Aside from government shelters, there are also shelters for women operated by Thai NGOs such as the Women’s Desk of the Catholic Commission on Migration. Shelters run by this NGO have been used by Thai returnees from Japan (Human Rights Watch, 2000: 204). The Foundation For Women also provides residential assistance through a “safe house” which is especially concerned with protecting the security of trafficked returnees (Matthana Chettame, personal interview, April 11, 2007).

3.4.2 Health care

Physical health care

Returnees may confront HIV/AIDS, STDs, respiratory problems, tuberculosis, and dental problems as well as problems related to physical abuse (Therese & Yuriko, 1999: 79). Those who are infected by HIV/AIDS may also have to deal with social shame.

Medical services are available for all returnees. Government shelters provide an in-house clinic with a nurse on duty twenty-four hours a day (Limpanawannakul, 2004: 40). While NGOs normally do not have medical teams within their shelters, returnees are sent to health care providers (FFW, 2006: 39). NGOs dependent on external donors may be limited in helping returnees due to funding constraints. Returnees mentioned that government shelters as well as NGOs had provided them with good health care (Limpanawannakul: 2004; Pearson, 2002: 181).

Mental health care

Aside from legal problems, psychological problems are another key concern returnees face. Psychological problems may be multi-faceted and vary between trafficked returnees. At Ban Kred Trakarn welfare home, counseling is provided by psychologists and social workers (Limpanawannakul, 2004: 40). There is one-on-one individual counseling as well as group counseling to assist the returnees in readjusting to society. Psychological recovery programs aim to improve the returnees' mental well-being and create a sense of responsibility toward themselves and others.

Shelters and welfare homes in Thailand are rather successful in providing mental assistance to returnees of trafficking. According to Limpanawannakul, returnees explain that the assistance they have obtained from Ban Kred Trakarn welfare home helped them heal their mental problems (2004). At the same time, the

assistance helped reduce the stigmatization of returnees who had been forced to work as sex workers and assisted them to understand what they have been through.

3.4.3 Economic assistance

Employment assistance

Shelters and welfare homes normally provide training activities to returnees. The aim is to help them learn skills that they will be able to use for their future careers (Gallagher, 2006: 149). Having skills to generate their own income enables returnees to stand on their own and become self-supporting.

One of the main criticisms is that the vocational training programs usually prepare returnees of trafficking for low-paying jobs (Human Rights Watch, 2000: 205). Former director of Friends of Women in Asia and Human Rights Commissioner Naiyana Supapung stated:

“The government says it provides vocational training, but this training prepares women for jobs with little income. Women don’t want this...They don’t believe these women have the potential to study. We tried to contact the Ministry of Labor to get them to change their programs and not just offer cooking and hair dressing, but also electronics and computers, subjects that can lead to good jobs...” (Human Rights Watch, 2000: 199-200)

Currently, the shelters still provide skill training programs that train women for low-income jobs such as sewing, dress-making, beauty treatment and mat weaving. It is often the case that wages are lower than the work they did in the place they were trafficked to (ILO: 21; UNIAP, 2001: 8). Although vocational training is important, low-income generating job skills do not meet returnees’ needs because they do not appropriately address the sensitive economic situation of returnees. Working in low-paid sectors after leaving the shelters could cause financial problems that might lead returnees to be re-trafficked again.

In general, reintegration assistance is limited to inadequate and ineffective vocational training that is usually short-term, not sustainable and dependent on external factors. These types of programs often do not lead to employment (Limanowska, 2005: 31). Returnees who have been in training programs provided by the shelters mentioned that even though they want to go back to their hometown and work there, they do not think what they have learned from the shelter will be useful for their future (Limpanawannakul, 2004). What is needed is an improvement in vocational training, since education and skill training programs are the foundation for returnees to become more financially independent: "Education, employment and training are crucial for ensuring financial independence, emotional stability and empowerment of individuals" (Pearson, 2002: 53).

Formal education is another tool that can help returnees improve their quality of life. There is a debate in the literature with regards to the formal educational programs available to returnees. Limpanawannakul claims that shelters provide formal educational programs (2004: 40-41). However, Gallagher as well as Ban Kred Trakarn state that shelters do not provide formal education to returnees or allow them to work during the period of temporary residency (Gallagher, 2006: 149; Ban Kred Trakarn). It is problematic if there is a lack of formal education and training because returnees' opportunities to work in their hometown may be very limited in terms of their skills and education.

Some NGOs are carrying out combined prevention and reintegration programs by mixing prevention and reintegration components and not calling the program an "anti-trafficking" program but calling it an "empowerment" program instead. They are also using a multidisciplinary approach to assist returnees. There is evidence that this type of program is successful. Returnees are included in courses designed for persons with similar levels of education, which increases their chances of employment and social inclusion (Limanowska, 2005:31).

Financial assistance

Financial issues are very important because if the financial difficulties of returnees are not addressed, then it is difficult for them to reintegrate successfully, since poverty and lack of opportunities at home are the major causes that brought them into the trafficking cycle to begin with. Returnees often confront financial difficulties due to the fact that they are still in debt for their migration expenses (ILO: 19). Sometimes remittances are also spent on new houses and consumer goods such as televisions, motorcycles and cell phones (Caouette & Saito, 1999: 71). Once returnees have financial difficulty, they may not see any other options to make money than re-migrating or going back to traffickers.

Providing financial assistance is important in order to enable returnees to pursue a job that will help them reintegrate successfully. Small funding to set up small businesses, along with business counseling, has been provided to returnees. For example, a returnee named, 'Pen', was provided some funding from the Foundation For Women to set up a small business. Because of the funds, she was able to establish a convenience store in her own community to make a living (Pearson, 2002: 181). However, this is only one example of a successful case of financial assistance. Because there is a gap in the literature on this topic, it can not be concluded whether financial assistance is effective.

3.4.4 Legal assistance

In February 2008, Thailand passed its first and comprehensive law dealing with human trafficking that includes male, female and children in all forms of exploitation (the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act B.E 2551). Despite the fact that this law on trafficking has recently been passed, legal assistance has long been provided to trafficking returnees in the form of witness protection and case monitoring and follow up (UNIAP Meeting, field notes, April 4, 2007).

Currently, Thailand has a Witness Protection Bill that was passed in 2003 and took effect in December 2003. The police have also established guidelines for protecting trafficking returnees/witnesses (Pearson, 2002: 179). It is the job of the police to provide protection of the witness, for example, by informing the head of the village about the witness and finding out if the witness' life has changed since the witness reported the trafficking.

According to the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crimes and Abuse of Power, trafficking returnees are seen as important witnesses and protection should be provided until the end of the case (Akapin and Jamsuttee, 2006: 172). However, the witness protection process in Thailand appears to be ineffective. In some cases, Thai returnees were not provided any protection by the authorities and they were exposed to reprisal. There are some cases of increased reprisal against trafficked returnees who had reported traffickers (FFW, 2006: 39; FFW retreat, field notes, July 28, 2007; Gallagher, 2006: 149; Pearson, 2002: 60;). This is a risk factor that may push many returnees back under the control of traffickers again.

Gallagher states that "Thai law grants witnesses in criminal cases the right to protection, appropriate treatment, and remuneration" (2006: 149). According to immigration law, foreign returnees of trafficking are allowed to live in Thailand if they agree to be a witness in a criminal case. However, in practice, these foreign returnees are only allowed to stay in a temporary residence until the end of the court proceeding (Gallagher, 2006: 149). This illustrates a lack of understanding and cooperation among government officials in order to make the law most effective for returnees.

3.4.5 Follow-up and monitoring

According to the ILO, the goal of reintegration is "to return the trafficking victims' physical, psychological, and social well-being back to normal or close to

normal” (2006: 29). Therefore, follow-up and monitoring are seen as important instruments of successful reintegration.

Anders Lisborg from the ILO claims that one of the main challenges in the reintegration process in Thailand is the lack of follow-up for returnees after they leave the shelters (Personal interview, April 12, 2007). Although government organizations and NGOs have set up a follow-up and monitoring program, the programs are rather ineffective. Returnees might face some problems upon their reintegration in the community. Talking, sharing and getting advice from people who understand their situation is useful for them. Therefore, home visits and regular check-ups during their reintegration period are needed. This can also prevent the risk of re-trafficking if potential threats still exist in the community. However, Derks argues that it might be hard to visit those who reintegrated in remote areas due to funds and time constraints of working organizations (1998: 15).

3.4.6 Overall challenges to reintegration assistance in Thailand

Effective reintegration services and assistance depends on many factors. First of all, cooperation and communication among organizations working on the issue of trafficking has been weak (Gallagher, 2006: 144; FFW, 2004: 13). Secondly, the effectiveness of organizations (especially governmental agencies) has also been weak (Pearson, 2002: 180-181; Chetamee, personal interview, April 4, 2007). Third of all, an effective referral system is needed (Buckley, 2007: 13). Last of all, the lack of knowledge and understanding about trafficking by police may lead them into wrong directions of dealing with reintegration (Asian Women’s Fund: 2003, 70).

Cooperation and coordination between organizations

There is a network of organizations called the “UN Thailand Inter-Agency Working Group” working on the reintegration of returnees. This network includes government agencies (Strategy and Plan Department, Ministry of Social Development

and Human Security, National Operational Center on Human Trafficking, Bureau of Child Promotion and Protection, Bureau of Anti-Trafficking in Women and Children, shelter and welfare homes network, and The Children, Juveniles and Women Division), non-governmental agencies (Foundation For Women, The Mirror Foundation), and international organizations (UNIAP, ILO, UNESCAP) (UNIAP Meeting, field notes, April 4, 2007). Their role is to help implement anti-trafficking policy -- which encompasses reintegration assistance and services -- and put it into action.

Although there is a network of organizations working on reintegration, cooperation and coordination between organizations continues to be a problem (Gallagher, 2006: 144). In some cases, returnees did not receive any support because organizations involved believed another organization was taking care of the returnee (Buckley, 2007: 13). Communication and cooperation among stakeholders including returnees, government officials, shelters and welfare homes, psycho-social support providers, health providers, families, counselors, police, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations needs to be improved in order to more efficiently help returnees (FFW, 2004: 13). Therefore, roles and responsibilities must be clearly identified and the Thai government may have to consider improving its cooperation and coordination with NGOs in order to achieve its goal of reintegration for returnees (Buckley, 2007: 13; Pearson 2002: 183).

Ineffectiveness of organizations

The effectiveness of governmental organizations and NGOs in reaching and assisting returnees needs to be considered. According to Dias and Jayasundere:

“The concept of reintegration as a process where the returnee can assert some degree of control over their lives through their earnings is unimaginable to both male and female returnees. They express the view that the Government has failed to extend any kind of support to change the circumstances that drove them to work abroad and, therefore, they do not expect the

Government to help them on their return. For many of them, the return process is traumatic, subject to harassment by officials at immigration and customs and by extortionists freely roaming around the airport premises.” (Cited in ILO, 2002: 14)

Although the government plays a large role in the provision of assistance to returnees, non-government organizations are also providing assistance and services. Some NGOs working on reintegration assistance include FFW, Mirror Foundation and Self Empowerment Program of Migrant Women (SEPOM). In comparison with the government, NGOs can work more closely with returnees (Pearson, 2000: 180) and they are more available and accessible than the government (FFW, 2004: 13).

In some cases, returnees preferred to be met by NGO officials instead of government officials because they trusted NGOs more than the government. As Pearson points out, “NGOs play a significant role in providing support to returned victims of trafficking and in empowering them” (2002: 180). NGOs such as the FFW have been involved in the process of helping returnees by accompanying them during police investigations, providing information about their legal rights, and organizing activities to help them recover. The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women remarked, “The woman needs someone who she can trust and explain to her the conditions of the shelters and what will happen to her if she stays there. After that, she needs shelter where she can make a decision on what she wants to do next” (Pearson, 2002: 180).

Government officials are not always available when they are needed. Matthana Chetamee of FFW explained that some returnees do not receive any assistance and services from the government because they arrive back to Thailand during the weekend when the government offices are closed (Matthana Chetamee, personal interview, April 11, 2007). Therefore, the fact that government services are not always available might significantly limit the government’s effectiveness in providing assistance to returnees. However, this criticism is not mentioned elsewhere in the literature, so this is an issue that can be explored in further research.

Lack of referral system

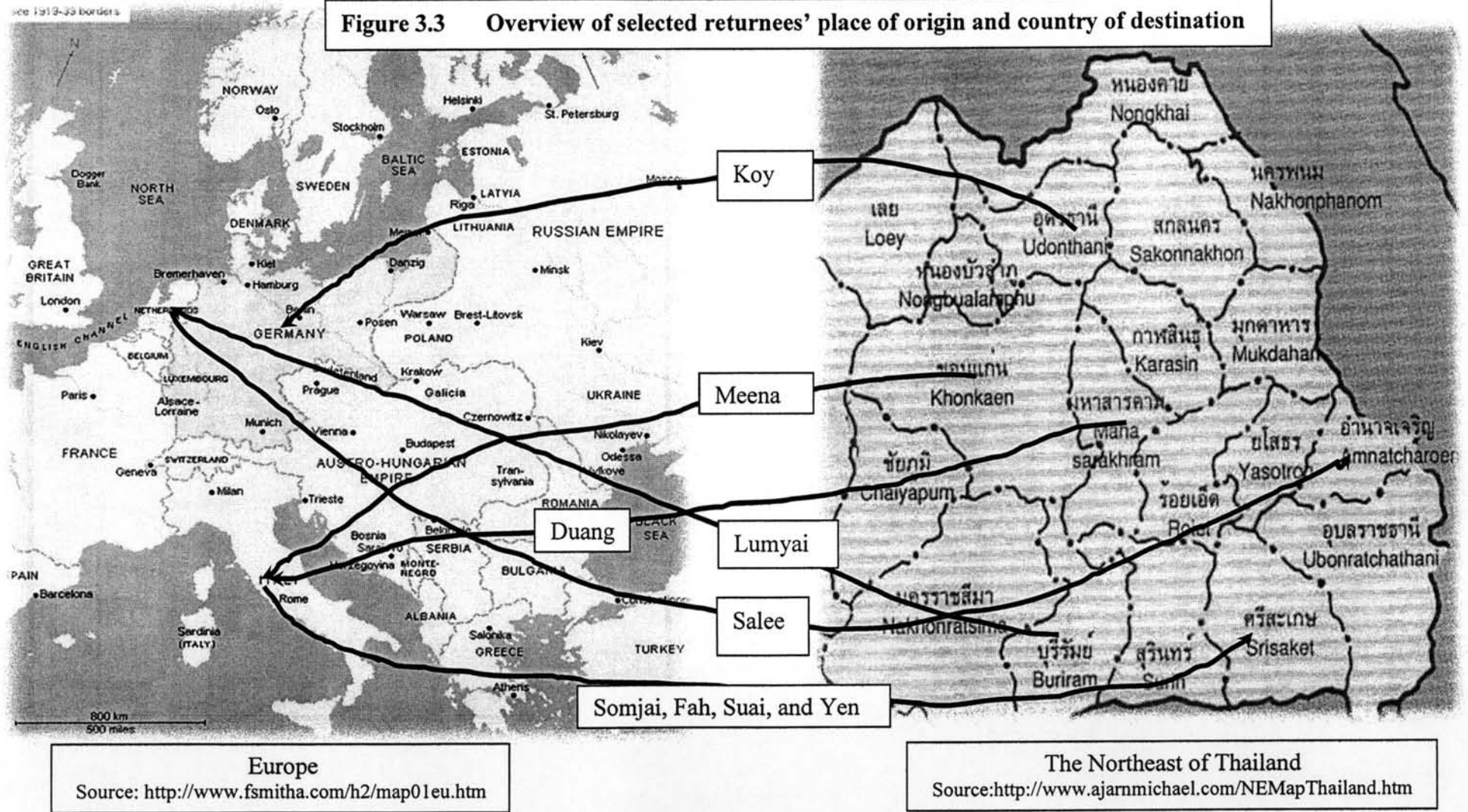
One of the main problems in assisting returnees is the lack of a referral system. Thai government records show that 97 to 910 Thai women and children were official returnees during 2004-2006 (See Figure 3.1), while Buckley argues that the number of returnees is uncertain. A database on returnees within the country is a priority. This system will help track each returnee's case toward their reintegration and also reflect ongoing trends. As Buckley points out, "The difficulties of a database system include the importance of protecting confidential information of the victims and agreement about the fields of information required" (2007: 13). Therefore, Thailand has to establish such a system in order to work effectively on the reintegration of returnees.

Lack of knowledge and understanding

Despite the need for responsible treatment of trafficking victims, a study by Popruan (2005) showed that non-commissioned police officers in Thailand had never been trained or informed in the details of human trafficking. Therefore, they may lack an understanding of the root cause of the problem and may be influenced by the thought that, for example, sex service providers are bad women. This conception definitely influences their law enforcement because if the police officers think that trafficking victims are sex workers, they may mistakenly arrest the victims (Asian Women's Fund: 2003, 70). To avoid this mistake, Popruan suggested that they undergo training on human trafficking to increase their problem solving skills, knowledge, and adjustment (Popruan: 2005). However, Jayagupta's study showed that there were several trainings provided, but those who participated were the same people who were always present at the trainings (Jayagupta, 2007: 327). Therefore, not enough people are trained and as a result, there is a lack of professional capacity.

3.5 Overview of selected returnees' place of origin

Figure 3.3 Overview of selected returnees' place of origin and country of destination



Northeastern Thailand, or the "Isaan" region, is located on the Korat Plateau and bordered by the Mekong River to the north and east (along the border with Laos), by Cambodia to the southeast, and the Prachinburi Mountains south of Nakhon Ratchasima. To the west it is separated from northern and central Thailand by the Phetchabun mountain range. Northeastern Thailand has nineteen provinces: Amnat Charoen, Buriram, Chaiyaphum, Kalasin, Khon Kaen, Loei, Maha Sarakham, Mukdahan, Nakhon Phanom, Nakhon Ratchasima, Nongbua Lamphu, Nong Khai, Roi Et, Sakon Nakhon, Sisaket, Surin, Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani and Yasothon. The region represents 34 percent of the total area of Thailand, or about 168,000 square kilometers, while the overall population is about 21 million. Although the weather and soil quality are not suitable for agriculture, the main occupation is farming. The Northeast of Thailand is also recognized as the poorest region of Thailand.

3.6 Personal background of selected returnees

Nine returnees are featured in this study. They are aged from 23 to 48, and eight out of nine are married. In terms of educational attainment, five returnees finished primary school, one finished high school, one received a diploma from vocational college, and one is pursuing a bachelor's degree.

All nine returnees decided to migrate based on the desire to improve the economic status of their families. Six returnees were trafficked to Italy, two to the Netherlands, and one to Germany. All returnees from Italy and the Netherlands were under the impression that they were going to work as gardeners and in restaurants. At the destination countries, eight returnees were forced to work as sex workers, while the other became a mail order bride before she was sexually exploited. Seven returnees from Italy and Germany were rescued in arrests by police while two from the Netherlands informed the police to arrest them and their friends in order to escape from their traffickers. After being in jail or shelters in the destination countries for a

few months, all returnees were sent back to Thailand. The duration of trafficking ranged from one week to eleven years.

Table 3.1 List of returnees and their personal background⁴

NO.	Name	Age	Education	Marital Status	Numbers of Children	Place of Origin
1	Lumyai	29	Grade 4	Married	1	Buriram
2	Salee	27	Pursuing B.A.	Married	1	Amnat Charoen
3	Somjai	45	Grade 4	Married	2	Sisaket
4	Fah	34	Grade 6	Married	2	Sisaket
5	Suai	42	Grade 6	Divorced	4	Sisaket
6	Yen	23	Grade 12	Married (got married after returned to Thailand)	0	Sisaket
7	Meena	26	Diploma from Vocational College	Single	-	Khon Kaen
8	Duang	33	Grade 6	Married (unofficially separated)	2	Maha Sarakham
9	Koy	48	Grade 7	Divorced	4	Udon Thani

Among the returnees interviewed for this study, age and level of education appears to have a positive impact on reintegration. This is because the younger the age and the higher education, the better the reintegration. Furthermore, the duration of trafficking does not significantly affect the reintegration process.

According to returnees, the level of educational attainment does not prevent them from falling into the trafficking cycle. Higher educational attainment does not necessarily mean increased awareness of the dangers of trafficking. There are other significant factors that increase the likelihood to be trafficked. Eight returnees decided to migrate based on their close relationship with traffickers, such as their mother-in-

⁴Their names are kept confidential and aliases are used.

law, their sister-in-law, aunt-in-law, and their best friend. The family's encouragement was also a great push factor that influenced returnees to migrate.

3.7 Life histories of returnees

3.7.1 "Lumyai"

Pre-departure abroad

Lumyai is from Buriram province. She was married with one child. She worked as a daily laborer in the shipping industry and earned 165 baht a day, so when a trafficking agent approached her about better economic opportunities abroad, Lumyai seriously considered it. This agent was Lumyai's own aunt-in-law, who told her that she was going to work in a restaurant in Amsterdam and that she could visit home whenever she wanted. The trafficker took care of all passport and visa arrangements for Lumyai but she had to sign a loan contract for 50,000 to cover all expenses related to her migration, including travel expenses. She was told that her debt would be paid off by the work she would do in the Netherlands. Her relatives warned her that she might get trafficked, which led her to change her mind about going abroad. However, the agent told her that she was not tricking Lumyai, and that because she signed the loan contract, Lumyai was obligated to go abroad or pay 50,000 baht back. She was trafficked at the age of 24.

Life abroad

Lumyai was forced to work as a sex worker. She worked from 5pm to 2am and she made 50 Euros per 15 minutes of service, but this money went to the traffickers. Lumyai was not under house arrest but had to travel to meet customers with the accompaniment of her traffickers or someone hired by her traffickers to monitor her movements.

During her time abroad, she was very stressed and had frequent headaches. She felt ashamed that she had to do sex work. She had reproductive health problems

as a result of the work. She was also forced to do plastic breast surgery. After she cleared her debt of 50,000 baht, she tried to return home but the traffickers would not let her. She then began using the drug Ecstasy in order to relieve her distress.

Lumyai notified the police about her trafficking situation with the help of another woman who was trafficked, Salee⁵, leading to the arrest of their traffickers. The process to prosecute Lumyai's traffickers also began around this time. Lumyai stayed in a shelter for two months before returning to Thailand. Lumyai was trafficked for 1 year and 9 months.

Reintegration

Upon returning to Thailand, Lumyai separated from her husband and her children are being taken care of by her husband. Her husband and mother could not accept that she worked as a sex worker. She then migrated to Bangkok to work as a daily laborer in a factory in Samut Sakorn province making 170 baht a day. She is worried that she will have breast cancer due to her plastic breast surgery. Other than that, she has serious mental health problems. She could not sleep very well, so FFW put her in contact with a psychologist. She has made improvements since speaking to a psychologist but she still feels shame and stigma about the sex work she was forced to do. The legal prosecution of her traffickers has not yet ended.

After four years of trying to reintegrate, Lumyai still struggles with difficulties in her reintegration process, including physical health, mental health, economic situation, and family relationship. At the moment she continues to deal with individual and social stigmatization due to being forced to do sex work. Lumyai also confronts economic difficulties as well as family acceptance regarding her sex trafficking. In general, Lumyai faces many problems in her reintegration process.

⁵ A life history of Salee is also done in this research.

3.7.2 “Salee”

Pre-departure abroad

Salee grew up in the small town of Amnat Charoen, Thailand. Before migrating, the highest level of education Salee finished was high school. She was married with one child at the time. She worked as a bus hostess with a big bus company and earned 6,000 baht a month before she quit the job.

While looking for a new job, a trafficking agent who happened to be Salee’s husband’s stepmother told her about a job opportunity in the Netherlands. This is the same agent who lured Lumyai abroad. The trafficking agent told Salee that she would work as a waitress. She decided to take the job to earn more money and because she trusted her husband’s stepmother. Salee was 22 years old when she was trafficked to the Netherlands.

Life abroad

Salee was forced by the same traffickers as Lumyai to work in the Amsterdam sex industry. She worked from 5pm to 2am at the rate of 50 Euros per 15 minutes of service, but like Lumyai, the earnings went to her traffickers. Like Lumyai, Salee could only travel places if she was accompanied by her traffickers or someone hired by her traffickers.

After she found out she would have to do sex work, Salee was very stressed and cried every day so she took a lot of painkillers. She felt so stupid that she was lured by a relative. During the first three months, Salee developed a uterine infection. The traffickers refused to let her see a doctor until the infection got worse and prevented her from working. Eventually she and Lumyai notified the police about their traffickers. She stayed in a shelter for two months before she returned to Thailand. In the mean time, the prosecution process started. Salee was trafficked for a total of one year.

Reintegration

Four years with the reintegration process, Salee has recovered all of her difficulties. Now, Salee does not have any physical health problems. She also does not have any mental health problems, but at first she had to deal with stigmatization and shame associated with sex work. She felt that her reputation was ruined. Her relationship with her family is the same as before. Her mother and husband support her and helped her overcome stigmatization associated with sexual trafficking. Her community gossiped about her but she told them that she can not change the fact that she was lured into trafficking. After that, the community began to understand and support her. Salee does not have any economic nor legal difficulties. Salee is currently pursuing her Bachelor's degree and teaching kindergarten for 4,000 baht a month. Overall, Salee does not have any problems or difficulties regarding her reintegration.

3.7.3 “Somjai”

Pre-departure abroad

Somjai comes from Sisaket province in Northeastern Thailand and has a fourth grade education. She is originally from a farming family and worked as a farmer after getting married and having two children.

At the age of 43, Somjai was approached by her sister-in-law, who ended up being her trafficker, to go to Italy to work in a vineyard. She decided to go because she wanted to improve her family's economic status as well as to save money for her children's education.

Life abroad

As soon as she arrived in Italy, Somjai's trafficker told her that she was in debt 500,000 baht for travel and related expenses for going abroad. She was then told that she had to work as a sex worker in order to pay off this debt. She worked in the evenings and earned 100 Euros per job, all of which went to her trafficker.

Somjai felt very sad because she already had a husband and children but found herself being forced into sex work with other men. She was also embarrassed to do such things as be taped in an online pornographic video. Somjai could not escape because she was not allowed to leave her house. The trafficker also threatened her by saying that if she escaped, she would have to pay her debt off, otherwise her family back in Thailand would be in danger.

After a year and a half, Somjai was rescued in a brothel raid by Italian police. Along with other Thai women rescued from brothels in Italy⁶, she stayed at an IOM shelter for two months and then was sent back to Thailand.

Reintegration

Somjai returned to being a farmer and decided never to leave Thailand to work abroad again. Somjai's family warmly welcomed her back home and provided a great deal of support. Her family helped her cope with stigmatization, and most importantly, helped her sue her trafficker. However, the legal prosecution process has caused her much stress and anxiety. Somjai's community may not have accepted her in the beginning, but after she raised awareness about the dangers of trafficking, her community began to accept her more.

Somjai has been trying to reintegrate for a year and a half. She faces physical and mental health, economic and legal problems. In terms of physical health, Somjai has a uterine infection from her trafficking experience. Unlike other returnees, her mental health problem is not due to stigmatization from being forced to do sex work, but developed from stress related to her legal problems instead. Beside health and legal problems, Somjai also has to deal with economic difficulties. Overall, Somjai faces many problems in her reintegration process.

⁶ Fah, Suai, Yen, Meena, and Duang were all rescued in this same raid by the Italian police during 2006.

3.7.4 “Fah”

Pre-departure abroad

Fah’s hometown is Sisaket. She was a farmer and the highest level of education she completed was sixth grade. She was age 32, and married with two children at the time of trafficking. A community member approached her and asked if she wanted to go abroad to work in a vineyard. Fah decided to go abroad so that she could earn more money to pay for her children’s education. She had to mortgage her family’s land for 270,000 baht in order to pay for the arrangements to go abroad.

Life abroad

When Fah arrived in Italy, she was sexually exploited and found out that she was in debt to her trafficker. She earned 100 Euro per job, all of which went to her trafficker. She felt ashamed and did not want to do the sex work. She also felt like she was wronging her family and that she was committing sins due to the sex work. Fah was trafficked for 27 days before she was rescued by the Italian police in a brother raid. After that, she stayed in an IOM shelter for 2 months and was then sent home to Thailand.

Reintegration

Fah faced difficulties because her family did not accept her. She stayed married with her husband and told him she was trafficked, but her husband did not want to hear about her trafficking experiences. Fah felt even more depressed and thought that her life would not get better due to the sins she thought she committed. She left Sisaket because her mother and community did not accept her as well as for economic reasons. Fah left home to work as a daily laborer in Chonburi making 150-160 baht a day, and later became a domestic worker in Bangkok making around 6,000-8,000 baht per month.

Fah’s reintegration process has been going on for a year and a half. Fah confronts mental health problems including emotional pain and shame associated with

stigmatization. She faces economic problems due to a low-paying job. Her family also does not accept her. Generally, Fah faces many problems in reintegration.

3.7.5 “Suai”

Pre-departure abroad

Suai, from Sisaket, was a farmer who completed sixth grade as her highest level of education. She was age 40 and divorced with four children before she went abroad. Her neighbor, a trafficking agent, invited her to work in a vineyard in Italy. She decided to go abroad in order to earn more money for her family. Before she left for Italy, she sold her buffalo to pay for new clothes, although her traffickers paid for her travel expenses.

Life abroad

When she arrived in Italy, Suai was told she was in debt one million baht to her traffickers. After two days, Suai was forced into sex work, which earned 100 Euros per job that went to the trafficker. She did not use condoms because she did not know about proper safe sex techniques. As a result, Suai got pregnant and was forced by her traffickers to have an abortion.

Her traffickers told Suai that she had to work because she was in debt, so she developed the attitude that she did not own her own body. When she was abroad, either she or her sister notified the Pavena Foundation to help Suai escape from her trafficker, but she did not receive any help. She tried to escape all the time but was never successful. Finally, she was rescued in a brothel raid by the Italian police, placed in an IOM shelter for a few months, and then sent back to Thailand.

Reintegration

Suai used alcohol to solve her problems, including her feelings of guilt and stigma associated with sex work. Also, she could not accept that at her relatively old age, she was lured into trafficking. She told her community members about what

happened to her because a community member was about to get lured abroad into trafficking. After she shared her story, her community members looked down on her. So she thought she was “crazy” to tell them about what happened to her abroad. Suai’s family understood her and tried to help her recover, but her husband and she separated and her husband would not let her raise their children because he thought that she was a “bad woman” for doing sex work in Italy. As for making a living, she returned to farming and raising cattle, and she decided not to go abroad to work again. She tried to prosecute her traffickers because she was angry that she was lured into trafficking.

Suai has been trying to reintegrate for a year and a half. There are mental health, economic, legal, and community relationship concerns involved in her process of reintegration. Suai faces stigmatization from her sex trafficking experience, and this is the root cause of other mental problems. On the whole, Suai has many reintegration problems.

3.7.6 “Yen”

Pre-departure abroad

Yen is originally from Sisaket province. At the age of 23, she was engaged, had just finished high school, and helped her family with farming before she was lured into trafficking. A trafficking agent approached her about going abroad. The agent then put her into contact with a Bangkok tour agency that doubled as a trafficking agency. She decided to work abroad to earn more money to help her mother pay off her debt to the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC).

Life abroad

Yen was forced to work as a sex worker earning 100 Euro per job. She worked from the afternoon to night and could not leave the brothel at all. She felt that this was the worst experience of her life. She also felt like she was wronging her family and

boyfriend by doing sex work. She was trafficked for only a week before she was rescued by the Italian police in a brothel raid. She then stayed in an IOM shelter for two months before returning to Thailand.

Reintegration

After Yen returned to Thailand she did not tell her family what she had been through. Six months after her return, Yen got married. Even when her husband asked her what she did abroad, she denied that she was forced into any sex work because she knew her husband would not be able to accept that she was involved in sex trafficking. Yen sometimes felt isolated and that she could not talk to anyone, especially her husband. Yen's community did not know about her trafficking experience at first, but after rumors spread about the sex work she did abroad, she faced difficulties with community acceptance. Yen did not receive enough income from farming so she started up a noodle business. However, her business was not successful. Due to her economic difficulties, Yen may decide to internally migrate to find a better job.

Yen's reintegration process has been going on for a year and a half. She faces problems in some areas of reintegration but not others. Her reintegration difficulties involve problems with her economic situation and relationship with her community, while she has no health, legal, or family relationship problems.

3.7.7 "Meena"

Pre-departure abroad

Meena was born in Khon Kaen, Thailand but grew up in Bangkok, Thailand. She was single and had no children. At the time of trafficking, Meena had recently received a diploma from a vocational college and was employed by a company.

Meena's best friend, who was working abroad in Italy, told her about an opportunity to work as a waitress at a bar. She decided to go abroad because she had

just broken up with her boyfriend so she wanted to be in a new environment, and she also needed money to help her brother solve his personal problems. Her friend suggested she contact a tour agency in Bangkok. This tour agency doubled as a trafficking agency and they told her to pay 200,000 baht for the arrangement of her travel to Italy. Meena loaned the money from her aunt. She was age 23 at the time of trafficking.

Life abroad

Meena was forced into sexual exploitation in Italy and was not allowed to leave the brothel without being accompanied. She cried because she did not think she would have to do sex work. In the beginning, she had low self-esteem because she thought that despite having a relatively high level of education, she was still lured into trafficking. Meena refused to work during the first week, but after that, she was forced to work. She earned 100 Euros for each job, but unlike the other case study returnees she was able to keep some of the money. She used this money to pay off her 200,000 baht debt and sent some back as remittances to her family. Meena was trafficked for 10 months before the Italian police raided the brothel where she was working and rescued her. She was sent to an IOM shelter for two months and then sent back to Thailand.

Reintegration

Upon returning to Thailand, Meena stayed with her family in Khon Kaen but she did not tell them she was trafficked. Because neither her family or her community knew she was trafficked, she did not face any social stigmatization or discrimination. Meena was very stressed, confused about what happened to her, and felt lost and ashamed. She thought she could not blame anyone for what happened because she was the one who decided to go abroad, so she blamed herself instead.

Meena worried about contracting HIV/AIDS so she had a physical exam which fortunately came up negative. She faced financial difficulties because she did not have a job or any money. After that, she thought that since she was single and had

a relatively high level of education, she would be able to start anew without being held back by her past experiences. Therefore she moved to Bangkok to find a job as a direct salesperson for a well-known company earning around 10,000 baht a month.

Meena has been trying to reintegrate for a year and a half. She does not have any reintegration difficulties even though she faced stigmatization upon her return to Thailand, Meena overcame stigmatization by making herself emotionally strong.

3.7.8 “Duang”

Pre-departure abroad

Duang is from Maha Sarakham and has a sixth grade education level. Before being trafficked abroad, she made a living as a farmer and later migrated to Bangkok to become a daily laborer. At the time of trafficking, she was 31 and married with two children. Her trafficker, who is her sister-in-law, told her about good economic opportunities to work in Italy in a vineyard. She decided to go abroad because her sister-in-law told her about the opportunity, and because she thought that she would make more money working in a vineyard than being a farmer.

Life abroad

When Duang arrived in Italy, her traffickers told her that she had a debt of 500,000 baht and that she would have to do sex work in order to pay off this debt. If she did not want to do the sex work, she would have to pay back the debt. Duang cried and told her traffickers she did not want to do the sex work, but her traffickers told her that she had to work; otherwise she could not go home. She felt ashamed about the sex work and did not respect herself.

Duang was allowed to call her husband, and she wanted to tell him she was lured into trafficking by his sister but she could not because her call was being monitored. After being trafficked for six months, the Italian police rescued her in a brothel raid. She stayed at an IOM shelter before returning home.

Reintegration

Once she returned to Thailand, Duang found that her husband was angry at his own sister for tricking her, but he could not accept that she was involved in sex work abroad even though she was forced to do it. They are unofficially separated. Duang's community did not know what Duang did abroad. Duang feared that her community would find out about her experiences. At the same time she had to deal with individual stigmatization associated with sex work. Although her community did not know, she still felt personally scarred by her experiences. She thought that no matter what, she was not the same as before because she was trafficked. Duang returned to being a farmer and raising cattle. Farming does not make a much money and she is also in debt.

Duang's reintegration process has been going on for a year and a half. She confronts problems in most areas of reintegration, particularly mental health (due to stigmatization), economic, legal situation and family relationship. Duang can not accept the fact that she once was forced to work as a sex worker. Her sex trafficking experience caused stigmatization, which is the root cause of her depression and feeling dirty and sinful. In general, Duang confronts problems in many areas of reintegration.

3.7.9 "Koy"

Pre-departure abroad

Koy is from Udon Thani and completed seventh grade as her highest level of education. Koy was divorced with four children. She did not face any economic difficulties, but wanted to go abroad to start a new life due to her failed marriage. She contacted a matchmaking agent in Khon Kaen and paid for their services. She was told that she would pretend to go as a mail order bride in order to obtain a visa to Germany and work in a restaurant.

Life abroad

In Germany, Koy married a German man and worked there for ten years. Instead of working in a restaurant, her husband forced her to do sex work. He threatened that if she did not do the sex work, he would report her as a fake mail order bride, which is illegal in Germany. Her husband also took Koy's passport. If she did not work, Koy's husband would physically abuse her. Koy did not ask for help from German police because she was told that she would put in jail if the police found out that she was a fake mail order bride and worked as a sex worker, thought it was involuntary work. Koy lived with fears from both her German husband and the German authorities for ten years. After Koy's visa expired in year tenth, her husband refused to extend her visa for her because she was old and did not make a good business for him anymore. If Koy were arrested and sent back to Thailand, her husband can re-marry with another foreign woman who is younger and be able to make more money than Koy. Furthermore, Koy's husband did not want her to obtain a German citizen since she was going to be officially accepted as a citizen after ten years of living there. The police arrested Koy as an illegal migrant and put her in jail for one month before she was deported back to Thailand.

Reintegration

After Koy returned to Thailand, her family did not accept and support her. Due to the fact that she did not bring back much money, her family made her feel bad that she could not help them out financially. She felt depressed and sad about what she was forced to do in Germany and considered it her bad destiny. She was upset that she did not have anything, not even a home. In order to make a living, Koy works as laborer in a bottle-making factory for very little money.

Koy's reintegration process has been going on for two years. She faces mental health, economic and family relationship problems. Stigmatization from being forced to do sex work led to her depression and feelings of isolation and self-devaluation. She has economic difficulties due to her low income. On the whole, Koy deals with many difficulties in her reintegration process.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of human trafficking, reintegration, and the situation of reintegration in Thailand both at the policy and programmatic levels. The number of Thai returnees is increasing and reintegration is more important than ever. In Thailand, state agencies and NGOs have given attention to reintegration and have developed assistance and services for returnees, however, the effectiveness of such assistance needs to be improved.

Based on the life histories of selected returnees, most returnees come from rural farming backgrounds in Northeastern Thailand and were married or divorced before they were trafficked. Most of them wanted to go abroad in order to improve their economic conditions. Almost all were lured into sexual trafficking due to their close personal relationships with their trafficking agent and/or trafficker.

Most returnees were in debt to their traffickers, and all returnees except one could not keep the money they earned from doing sex work. While being trafficked abroad, all returnees felt guilty or ashamed about the sex work they were forced to do. Eight returnees were rescued from trafficking by police and sent home, while one was arrested and deported back to Thailand as an illegal migrant.

Stigmatization associated with sex work continued to impact all returnees after they returned home to Thailand. Some returnees still have problems with family and community acceptance of their trafficking experiences, sometimes forcing them to leave their hometowns and resettle in Bangkok or surrounding provinces. Those returnees who have resettled have found themselves working in low-paying jobs as daily laborers. Most returnees face problems in many areas of reintegration while only a few have some or no problems.

Figure 3.4 Overview of returnees' trafficking and reintegration situation

Name	Destination Country	Trafficking Duration	Date of Return	Reintegration Period	Place of Reintegration	Occupation		
					Place of Origin (Rural)	Place of Resettlement (Urban)	Before migrated	After Returned
Lumyai	The Netherlands	1 Year 9 Months	November 2003	4 Years 2 Months		Samut Sakorn	Daily laborer	Daily laborer
Salee	The Netherlands	1 Year	November 2003	4 Years 2 Months	Amnat Charoen		Farmer	Teacher
Somjai	Italy	18 Months	August 2006	1 Year 5 Months	Sisaket		Farmer, Raised cattle	Farmer, Raises cattle
Fah	Italy	1 Month	August 2006	1 Year 5 Months		Chonburi, Bangkok	Farmer, Raised cattle	Daily laborer, domestic worker
Suai	Italy	4 Months	August 2006	1 Year 5 Months	Sisaket		Farmer, Raised cattle	Farmer, Raises cattle
Yen	Italy	1 Week	August 2006	1 Year 5 Months	Sisaket		Just finished school, helped family with farming	Opened noodle shop but was not successful, farming
Meena	Italy	10 Months	July 2006	1 Year 6 Months		Bangkok (has lived there before migrated)	Employee	Direct salesperson for well-known company
Duang	Italy	6 Months	August 2006	1 Year 5 Months	Maha Sara kham		Farmer, Raised cattle	Farmer, Raises cattle
Koy	Germany	11 Years	January 2006	2 Years		Udon Thani	Restaurant owner	Daily laborer, (bottle-making factory)