



PSYCHOMETRIC MEASURES OF EMPOWERMENT AND DISEMPOWERMENT OF SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

DEVELOPING AND PILOTING TOOLS TO ASSESS THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF
POST-TRAFFICKING INTERVENTIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS ON TRAFFICKED PERSONS



EMPOWERMENT INCUBATOR | SERIES PAPER 1

October 2018

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**Developing and piloting tools to assess the positive and
negative impacts of post-trafficking interventions and
environments on trafficked persons**

Issara Institute

2018

FULL CITATION

Dasgupta, Sanjeev and Ana Maria Soto (2018). Psychometric Measures of Empowerment and Disempowerment of Survivors of Human Trafficking: Developing and Piloting Tools to Assess the Positive and Negative Impacts of Post-Trafficking Interventions and Environments on Trafficked Persons. Bangkok: Issara Institute.

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ISSARA INSTITUTE

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Printed in Thailand

ISBN: 978-616-93096-8-0

Issara Institute is an independent U.S. not-for-profit corporation based in Thailand, Myanmar, and the United States tackling issues of trafficking and forced labour through data, technology, partnership, and innovation. People—including worker voice and feedback—are at the center of Issara’s data and intelligence work, and at Issara Labs we conduct a wide range of research, analytics, and technology development related to human trafficking in global supply chains—the people, the policies, the impact, and how to eliminate it.

Informed consent: The respondents featured in this report have all provided fully informed consent for their stories and photos to be shared.

Front cover: Trafficking survivor after participating in an interview conducted by Issara Institute Myanmar staff using the psychometric tool.

Back cover: Staff from Good Shepherd Myanmar Foundation (GSMF) conducting an interview with a trafficking survivor.

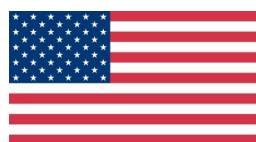


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was possible due to the valuable contributions of a number of people. First and foremost, we would like to thank the 76 survivors who took out their valuable time and energy to share their stories with our interviewers. Without their powerful testimonies and deep insights into their experiences, this report would not exist. We would also like to thank the 11 CSO-NET members who actively participated in this pilot study and took on the responsibility of reaching out to and interviewing survivors. Their unique perspective – as both service providers and eyes and ears on the ground – gave us invaluable insights into challenges that survivors face once they escaped from their trafficking situation.

We also owe a special thanks to the team at the Issara Institute who made this possible. Dr. Lisa Rende Taylor and Ohnmar Ei Ei Chaw conceptualized Issara's Empowerment Incubator and designed the pilot that led to this report. Their constant guidance and insight played a critical role in shaping the final analysis. Hoa Nguyen Adam provided important support in her role as a technical consultant on the project, helping design the psychometric tool in partnership with Dr. Rende Taylor, and training all CSO-NET members to conduct the interviews. Finally, we would like to thank Myint Maung Maung (Eric), Saw Hay Thar (Leon), Win Min Thu (Pont Pont), Naw Praising and Khaing May Oo—our incredible Burmese program staff—who played a crucial role in holding the project together, coordinating with the CSO-NET members, helping organize interviews with survivors, translating interviews, and, in some cases, conducting interviews themselves.

Funding for Issara's Empowerment Incubator in Myanmar has been provided by the Walmart Foundation, and support for survivor empowerment work in Thailand was provided by the United States Government (U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons). Many thanks to these donors for their support! The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State or Walmart Foundation.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the 2017 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery¹, there are about 40 million people living in modern slavery situations worldwide. The Asia-Pacific region has the highest prevalence of labour exploitation worldwide, which is estimated to affect four out of every 1,000 people.² While these estimates and the methodologies behind them are debatable³, it is clear that most cases go unreported and unidentified because many survivors do not receive any official government-provided support or protection before or after returning to their countries of origin. Fortunately, community-based actors such as women's organizations, youth groups, and faith-based organizations, often step up to fill this gap.

This is the case in Myanmar, which is home to a significant population of trafficking survivors. Over the past two years, the Issara Institute has worked with many local organizations in the country to support and develop their capacities to respond to the needs of trafficking survivors. Central to Issara's engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs) in Myanmar is its focus on empowerment of trafficking survivors, which Issara feels should be the primary goal of any response strategy. Based on this understanding, Issara and a network of partner CSOs in Myanmar developed and implemented a novel psychometric tool to better deconstruct and measure empowering and disempowering factors among trafficking survivors. Throughout January to August 2018, 76 survivors were interviewed using the tool, and this paper presents findings across two main areas: (i) the specific factors that survivors experienced as empowering and disempowering; and (ii) the way interventions, from NGOs, government, and other actors, can themselves have empowering and disempowering effects on survivors. Key findings from this analysis include:

- Family and community play a critical role in shaping survivors' post-trafficking experiences. Participating survivors noted that they felt very empowered when their family and community accepted them upon return and did not blame them for their ordeal. On the other hand, lack of support—or worse, victim shaming—can add to survivor trauma and compound challenges they are already facing.
- Participating trafficking survivors generally had a positive outlook towards rescue. However, difficulties in navigating the complex legal process often followed the rescue, and the consequent feelings of injustice were extremely disempowering.
- Psychosocial support is key to addressing the impact of survivors' trauma on their mental health, which can be a source of ongoing disempowerment long after they have escaped their ordeal.
- Having the skills and ability to work, as well as being in a stable financial situation are both very empowering factors for trafficking survivors; and, as a corollary, the inability to work or being in a constant cycle of debt and poverty is very disempowering.
- Government and non-governmental post-trafficking services can be either highly empowering or highly disempowering to trafficking survivors, depending of the extent to which these service providers respect client needs and wishes.

Analysis presented through this paper adds merit to the claim that services provided to survivors post-trafficking must be designed by including survivor voice, and must focus primarily on empowering survivors. The use of Issara's psychometric tool to measure empowerment also provides useful lessons. By deconstructing the concept of empowerment and understanding how individual services can impact different aspects of a survivor's post-trafficking life both positively and negatively, Issara's approach provides an alternative to design services and understand their effectiveness after implementation. By providing a more nuanced and in-depth look into how survivors experience individual interventions, the tool goes beyond traditional "trafficking victim protection" metrics - such as merely counting how many survivors were provided with a service -to assess the overall impact made by service providers.

While only a pilot study, the trial of the Psychometric Measures of Empowerment of Trafficking Survivors tool provides valuable lessons that different actors—donors, governments, practitioners, and researchers—can put into action immediately. Overarchingly, the study recommends a shift in the focus of trafficking response from a traditional top-down approach to a survivor-centric one. Donors can play a key role by supporting initiatives that champion survivor empowerment. For practitioners and governments, it is critical that they include survivor voices when designing services for them, and that they systematize such practices for long-term sustainability. Finally, researchers should continue the initial steps taken by Issara’s Empowerment Incubator Program by digging deeper into the various factors that survivors in different contexts find empowering and disempowering, and how governments and civil society actors can best design interventions to champion the cause and outcome of empowerment.

ISSARA EMPOWERMENT INCUBATOR APPROACH TO TRAFFICKING

Individuals coerced into human trafficking and other forms of exploitation can be found among men, women and children all over the world. According to the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery (2017), almost 40 million people are trapped in situations of human trafficking and exploitation, such as forced labour, forced marriage and sexual exploitation, with the Asia-Pacific region having the highest prevalence globally of forced labour cases.⁴ The 2018 Global Slavery Index estimates that Thailand alone has 610,000 people living in “modern slavery.”⁵

While the scale of human trafficking and forced labour is in the hundreds of thousands in many Asian countries, the number of labour trafficking investigations is low compared to the scale of the problem.⁶ For example, in 2018, the Royal Thai Government reported investigating only 302 trafficking cases while the Myanmar Government reported investigating only 185 cases of trafficking.⁷ The reasons for this vast gap between officially identified and unofficially identified trafficking cases are many. In some cases, survivors prefer to go back to their country of origin without participating in official processes “due to fear of detention, an inadequate understanding of the Thai legal process, language barriers, and preferring repatriation over lengthy stays in shelters.”⁸ In other cases, the periods authorized for survivor identification are too short, which limit proactive screening, resulting in unidentified survivors except in the most obvious cases of trafficking.⁹

Many of these unidentified survivors in Thailand are from Myanmar, and they return to their country having to get on with their lives without receiving any official government-provided support or protection. Fortunately, some of them contact local women’s organizations, youth groups, or faith-based organizations among other entities that are willing to provide help. Over the past two years, Issara Institute has focused on building the capacity of these community-based organizations to support and empower survivors, because these organizations are the ones that can identify and reach the vast majority of individuals who would otherwise remain under the radar, unassisted.

Focusing on empowering survivors is imperative for a number of reasons. Exploitative employers and brokers may use a range of methods to coerce individuals such as wage withholding, threats and/or acts of violence, restrictions on freedom of movement, threats against the family, debt bondage, deception, and abuse of an individual’s vulnerabilities. Survivors of forced labour and human trafficking lose a great deal of control over basic aspects of their lives and living; they lose control over “when and what to eat, when to sleep, freedom of movement, personal finances, and the ability to be with or communicate with loved ones.”¹⁰ Thus, programs to assist survivors need to facilitate the growth and strengthening of their autonomy, self-reliance, and decision-making power.

WHAT IS EMPOWERMENT?

The working definition of empowerment used by Issara Institute is as follows:

“Increased control and mastery, meaning that people are better able to deal with the forces that affect their lives and have greater capacity to deal with the day-to-day challenges of life without being overwhelmed by them.”

However, a number of existing approaches suffer from a common problem: they provide service providers with “a sense of doing good, accountability, and social responsibility” but diminish the importance of respecting the agency of the survivors, often limiting their clients’ individual freedom, thus, proving harmful for survivors’ sense of personal growth and autonomy.¹¹ Issara Institute recognizes and respects survivors’ freedom of choice with the belief that this model is more empowering for them and better for their well-being in both the short-term and the long run.

Issara Institute’s approach to responding to supporting victims of human trafficking and exploitation is to promote empowerment in survivors, so they can recover and strengthen themselves as agents with the power to make decisions and achieve personal stability, reach higher individual goals, generate positive changes in their lives, families, and communities, and solve personal problems. Understanding the importance of promoting more empowering approaches to services for trafficked persons, Issara Institute and the Myanmar CSO Network to Eliminate Trafficking (CSO-NET)¹², within Issara’s Empowerment Incubator Program, developed a tool to better understand the specific factors and services that had empowering and disempowering impacts on trafficking survivors. The aim of the Psychometric Measures of Empowerment of Trafficking Survivors tool, collecting a range of psychometric indicators of empowerment, was not only to assess the impacts of the services received by the survivors but also to increase the capacity of local service providers by developing an instrument and methodology to help them better explore and understand the needs and desires of their clients, and their impacts on them.

**TABLE 1: LIST OF CSO-NET MEMBERS PILOTING ISSARA’S
PSYCHOMETRIC MEASURES OF EMPOWERMENT OF TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS TOOL**

1. Good Shepherd Myanmar Foundation (GSMF)
2. Yangon Karen Baptist Women Association (YKBWA)
3. Karen Baptist Convention (KBC)
4. Friendly Child (FC)
5. Ratana Mahal Education Care Group
6. Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar (CTUM)
7. Association for labour and Development (ALD)
8. Action for Dignity and Development (ADD)
9. Paei Kine Shin (PKS)
10. Genuine People’s Servant (GPS)
11. Hlaing Thar Yar Youth Network (HYN)

METHODOLOGY

In order to collect information from trafficking survivors about the various internal and external factors that they experienced as empowering or disempowering, 11 of Issara's CSO-NET civil society partners administered the Psychometric Measures of Empowerment of Trafficking Survivors instrument through in-depth interviews with 71 survivors across Myanmar between May 2018 and August 2018. Issara staff also conducted 5 interviews with Burmese survivors in Thailand during this period. The CSOs conducted the interviews based on an empowerment assessment tool developed by Issara, which was inspired by a tool and methodological approach used to study empowerment levels among aboriginal populations in Australia, developed by the Empowerment Research Program (ERP), Collaborative Research on Empowerment and Well-Being (CREW) of the North Queensland Health Equalities Promotion Unit in Cairns, Australia.¹³ The CSOs were trained to use the tool over two workshops, in April and June 2018. After the 76 assessments were conducted, Issara organized a validation workshop with the partner organizations in late August 2018 to receive more in-depth reactions and feedback on the assessment tool, as well as to confirm results obtained from the analysis.

FIGURE 1. THE FOUR AXES OF THE PSYCHOMETRIC MEASURES OF EMPOWERMENT OF TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS TOOL



The Psychometric Measures of Empowerment of Trafficking Survivors instrument was initially designed to test a number of psychometric scales of trauma and emotional empowerment; however, during a mid-term assessment with participating CSOs in June 2018, Issara realized that this version of the instrument was being used too much as a clinical diagnostic tool, which was not consistent with the intended goals of the project. Instead of the clinical diagnostic focus, the study was intended to concentrate more around internal and external factors contributing to

empowerment and disempowerment, which were becoming a present but peripheral focus of the interviews. Based on this assessment, Issara redesigned the tool to focus more on understanding empowering and disempowering factors. The new tool structured the interview by breaking down empowerment across four different axes: (i) healing, growth, personal relationships; (ii) meaning and purpose in the family, workplace, and community; (iii) inner peace; and (iv) self-capacity, as illustrated in Figure 1. The interview then explored how different community, familial, programmatic, and other factors influenced outcomes across those axes.

Among the 76 survivors interviewed for the study, 46 were interviewed using the first version of the tool, while 30 were interviewed using the second version of the tool. All the survivors interviewed through the tool were identified by the participating CSOs through their own networks, aiming to maintain a balance between survivors of different kinds of trafficking situations (i.e., labour vs. marriage vs. sex), as well as those from different regions of Myanmar. Each interview took between 60 and 90 minutes. Interviewers conducted all interviews in Burmese, in private settings and in person, and obtained written informed consent from each respondent at the beginning of the interview.

SAMPLE AT-A-GLANCE

Locations and participants.

The empowerment assessment tool engaged 76 participants, 75 of whom came from among ten divisions in Myanmar, with one individual not specifying her division of origin (Figure 2). 45 participants were female and 31 were male. The participants were between the ages of 15 and 49 with an average age of 25.83, as shown in Figure 3. All were Burmese.

Status of respondents.

65 of the participants (85.52%) were interviewed after they had returned back to Myanmar after their trafficking ordeal. 6 of the participants (7.89%) were interviewed immediately after they had escaped from their trafficking situation, while the remaining 5 (6.57%) were interviewed after they had settled in new jobs in Thailand.

Type and location of trafficking or exploitation.

Figure 4 lists the type of trafficking or exploitation that respondents had experienced. The majority of the participants were survivors of labour trafficking, followed by forced marriage, exploited workers, sex trafficking, and cheated jobseekers respectively. 24 of the participants were trafficked or exploited in China, 15 in Myanmar, 28 in Thailand, and 4 in Singapore, while five survivors did not provide the location they were trafficked or exploited (Figure 5).

FIGURE 2. REGION OF ORIGIN: MYANMAR

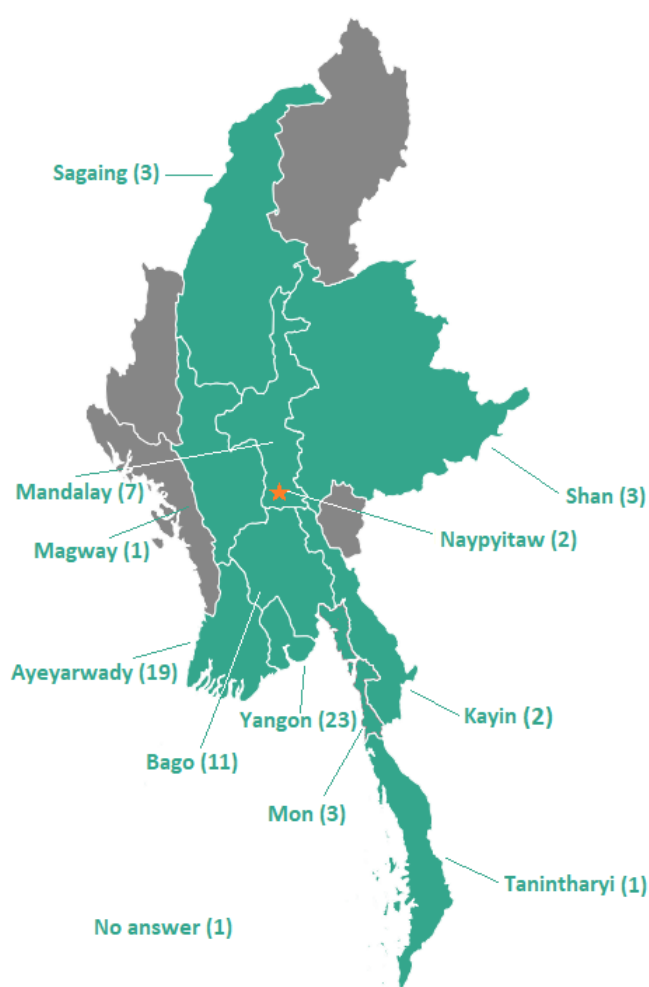


FIGURE 3. AGE OF RESPONDENTS

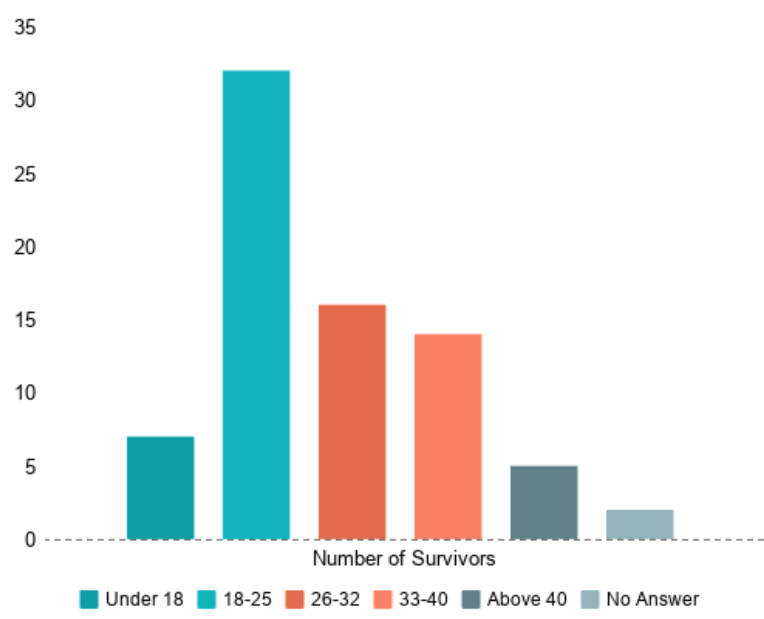


FIGURE 4. TYPE OF EXPLOITATION

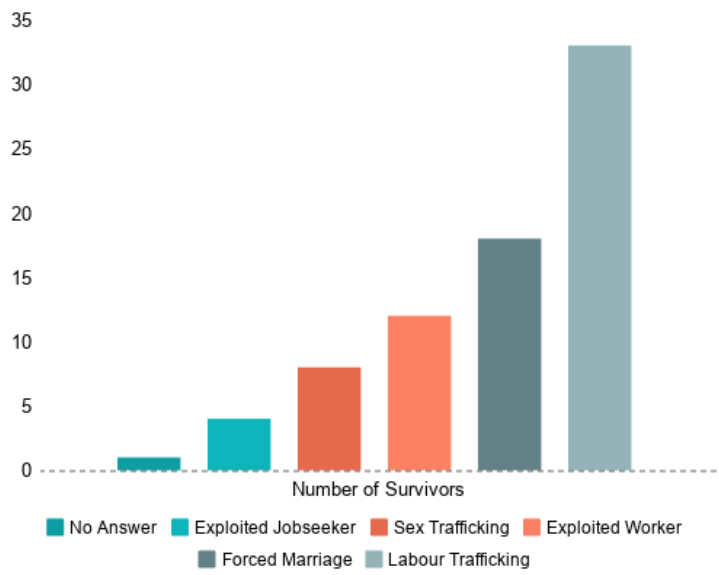
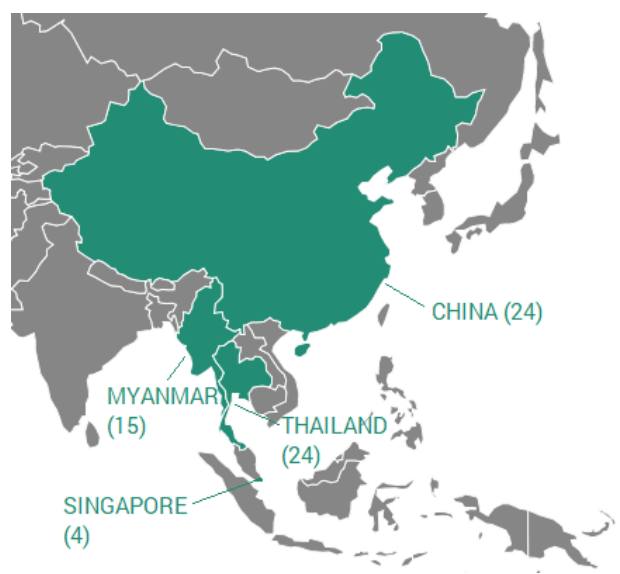


FIGURE 5. DESTINATION COUNTRY OF EXPLOITATION



KEY FINDINGS

The findings from the pilot are outlined across two sub-sections. The first section looks at four key factors—family and community; interactions with legal processes; trauma and mental health; and work and finances—that were considered empowering and/or disempowering by survivors interviewed for the study. The second presents a reflection on the services provided by civil society actors and government to understand the conditions under which these services were empowering and/or disempowering for survivors. In each case, findings are first presented based on an aggregate qualitative analysis of the 76 interviews. However, since 30 interviews were conducted with the second version of the instrument, which further broke down the understanding of empowerment across four axes, some deeper analysis is also presented separately in each section, as available, to underscore some of the themes that emerged in those final interviews.

EMPOWERING AND DISEMPOWERING FACTORS

Finding 1: Family and community played a critical role in shaping survivors' post-trafficking experiences.

Participating survivors were very empowered when their families accepted them after their return and did not blame them for being victims. Such support and acceptance is crucial because when family members stand up for survivors, this increases their self-belief and confidence—without which it is very difficult to integrate back into society and get on with life. As one of the female survivors interviewed by a CSO partner noted, when she escaped from a forced marriage in China and returned to her village in Myanmar, she was in a very tough emotional state because of her traumatic experience. This made her very reserved and reluctant to engage with anyone. But over time, she regained her confidence and opened up to the CSO partner who had reached out to her. This was only possible because her husband accepted her unconditionally when she returned and continuously supported her. When she came back to Myanmar, she was pregnant with a child from her former Chinese husband, but her Burmese husband accepted the baby and decided to raise it as his own. Her husband's love and support empowered her enough to engage with the CSO, a partnership that allowed her and her husband to open and operate a duck farm that has now become the primary source of income for her family. Other survivors similarly noted the positive impact that family support had on them. As one male survivor who escaped from a situation of exploitation involving debt bondage noted:

“I had great family support to overcome a difficult situation. My family - my parents, brothers and sister - supported me emotionally and financially during the time I was struggling to get into the right workplace [after escaping from the situation of exploitation]... Family support has been a very empowering factor for me through the entire process.”

Survivor being interviewed by staff from Good Shepherd Myanmar Foundation (GSMF) in Bago, Myanmar (August 2018).



BOX 1. FAMILY SUPPORT CAN BE AMONG THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OF EMPOWERING FACTORS

Interviews with participating survivors found family to be one of the most influential factors for their recovery, influencing empowerment across all four of the axes. The majority of the 30 survivors interviewed through the second tool indicated that having good relationships with their family members and counting on their support had positive effects on their healing and personal relationships (Axis 1). Survivors said that family relationships were a source of emotional support, and that home was a place where individuals seek love to deal with painful feelings, safety and shelter to become stable. In addition, survivors indicated that having the support, understanding, and acceptance of their family members helped them to make changes in their lives and feel strong, happy, and hopeful for a better life, which was reflected in their levels of inner peace (Axis 3), meaning and purpose in life (Axis 2), and self-capacity (Axis 4).

Community support and acceptance similarly had a very positive impact on survivors. Social acceptance helped survivors integrate into their everyday environment, which helped bring a sense of normalcy to survivors after a period of sustained trauma. Community support also helped survivors regain their ability to trust other people and develop important interpersonal relationships. One CSO partner noted their interaction with one male trafficking survivor and the impact community support had on him:

“When we first met him [the survivor], he was very scared and timid. But the second time when we met him, we were very surprised to see how empowered he felt. We realized that this had happened because of support from his community. Village leaders and other people in the community had told him that they would protect him if the person who exploited him ever came back to the village. People had also actively asked him to join them in group activities in the community. No organization had supported him in the meantime but with the help of his village, he was able to come out of his scared state.”

However, even as family and community support can have a huge positive impact on survivors, lack of support—or worse, victim shaming—can add to existing trauma and compound challenges that survivors face. Being shunned by people they cared about dramatically decreased survivors’ feelings of self-worth and forced them into the margins of society, where they felt incredibly disempowered and unable to help themselves. Such cases of victim shaming were particularly common for, although are not limited to, survivors who escaped from situations of sex trafficking and forced marriage. As one female survivor of a forced marriage recounted, when she escaped from her forced marriage in China and returned home to Myanmar, her husband did not accept her, saying: “I have no tears for a woman like you!” Such direct attacks only make it harder for survivors to process their trauma and rebuild their lives. As another female survivor of forced marriage described:

“I feel depressed to live here, but I have no choice because my family is totally dependent on me. So I must stay even though I feel terrible [because of the community’s comments].”

She felt helpless about her situation because she could not leave her family behind and leave the community. But staying was a huge challenge for her; ever since she returned from her forced marriage situation in China, people in the community continuously gossiped about her. Whenever she would go out of her home, people would barrage her with terrible comments such as, “Hey look, here comes the ripped fruit!” At times, the attacks became so hard for her to deal with that she contemplated committing suicide to escape from her ordeal.

BOX 2. THE IMPACTS OF COMMUNITY ON SURVIVORS' EMPOWERMENT CAN BE STRONGLY POSITIVE OR STRONGLY NEGATIVE IN MYANMAR

Similar to their experiences with family, survivors that had good experiences with their community expressed that they felt safe and secure, and that encouragement from community members were a tremendous source of emotional support and energy that gave them the confidence to seek help and reach out to other members of the community. These positive experiences contributed significantly to survivors' healing and personal relationships (Axis 1). However, many survivors also reported experiencing discrimination, humiliation and victim-shaming from community members, and these had severely negative effects on self-capacity (Axis 4), healing and personal relationships (Axis 1), and meaning and purpose (Axis 2).

Finding 2: Participating trafficking survivors generally had a positive outlook towards rescue. However, difficulties in navigating complex legal processes often followed the rescue, and the consequent feelings of injustice were extremely disempowering.

Participating survivors expressed happiness and delight when asked about their experience being rescued from their trafficking situation. For many, the act of being rescued was a turning point in their lives which brought them hope and a sense of freedom. As one male survivor who was rescued from a situation of debt bondage by a CSO described:

“[When I was rescued] I felt very happy, excited and hopeful about the possible consequences and for my future!”

Many described having good interactions with the organizations or individuals that had rescued them, which in most (but not all) instances involved government actors such as the police. For example, a trafficked fisherman coming back from Thailand noted:

“I felt very empowered when the anti-trafficking police officer in Myawaddy welcomed me warmly... He shared food with us and listened to our experiences, and provided us with good advice.”

However, this experience became more complicated for survivors who got involved in the complex legal processes which often follow rescue. Many survivors expressed a strong desire for justice, either to make sure that the offender paid for his/her crimes (i.e., criminal justice) or to recoup any money that the offender owed them (i.e., civil remedies). Survivors became more interested in pursuing legal remedies once they interacted with CSOs and received information about their rights and how they had been violated. Increased awareness led to many survivors willingly getting involved in such legal processes, often with the guidance of the police or CSOs themselves. However, the process often proved to be more challenging than many expected and did not always give them desired results.

Many survivors who were engaged with such legal processes described that they felt frustrated and disempowered because they had a tough time understanding how the legal process worked. This knowledge gap was bridged to an extent when CSOs explained the process to survivors. For example, a few survivors interviewed for the pilot were given information on criminal and/or civil legal remedies by the Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar (CTUM) in Myanmar and the Issara Institute in Thailand (who were not necessarily the organizations involved in the rescue and legal processes). However, some survivors still expressed their frustrations because even though they were grateful for support, now they felt entirely dependent on third party organizations and did not have much control over how the legal process progressed themselves.

Survivors also had to navigate a range of other issues. Many received threats from brokers, who wanted to stop them from pursuing legal remedies. Other people often discouraged survivors from continuing through with the legal process by telling them that they would never succeed in getting justice. Many expressed anger at having to go to court multiple times and being made to repeat their stories again and again.

Length of the legal process was another disempowering factor. Several survivors expressed their frustration and sense of disempowerment at the fact that the legal process was long and slow. As one female survivor who escaped exploitation in Thailand's seafood industry expressed:

"It is very frustrating to have such a long legal process. Sometimes I feel tired of everything about the lawsuit and do not even want to think about it anymore."

A male survivor who escaped a similar labour trafficking situation in Thailand's seafood industry expressed similar feelings:

"I was informed that the lawsuit would take time but I never thought it would take such a long time [3 years and counting] to get it done. Although I do not regret going through with a lawsuit, I admit that it really affects my life, the decisions I make, my future plans for my life and my family and so on. Win or lose, I just want to finish everything and move on."

These experiences often leave survivors with a feeling of injustice, which in their opinion is one of the most disempowering outcomes possible. Not getting justice also means that they have to live under the constant fear that the person who exploited or abused them, having escaped justice with impunity, will come back and threaten them again.

BOX 3. SURVIVOR INTERACTION WITH LEGAL PROCESSES

Survivors noted that receiving legal information and support gave them strength and made them feel capable of making changes in their lives, solving problems and making decisions. In addition, learning when their traffickers were put in jail contributed to the recovery of the inner peace (Axis 3) of some survivors. However, for the majority, having to wait for long legal processes to recover their wages (if ever) and the uncertainty about the length of time their trafficker will spend in prison (if any) resulted in feelings of injustice, disappointment, and anxiety. All of these factors had negative effects on healing and personal relationships (Axis 1), on survivors' inner peace (Axis 3), and on their self-capacity (Axis 4).

Finding 3: Psychosocial support was key to addressing the impact of survivors' trauma on their mental health, which can be a source of ongoing disempowerment long after they have escaped their ordeal.

A significant number of trafficking survivors expressed how they continued to suffer from the impact of their trauma, which has everyday consequences in terms of confidence and self-belief. As many survivors noted, mental health issues manifested themselves in a number of different ways. The case of one male survivor respondent provides a case in point. Originally from Ayeyarwaddy Region in Myanmar, he worked odd jobs in his village before he left to work in Thailand. One of his close friends persuaded him to work in Thailand, and he was sent to a fishing boat directly by a broker. After three months working on the boat, he was rescued and came back home. During those three months on the boat, he was subjected to physical abuse at the hands of the helmsman. He had to wake up at 3 AM every day and then work for up to 18 hours each day. He would get exhausted but the boat owner would not provide sufficient food and water, and would also not help fishing crew get proper medical care when needed.

“I wake up at 3 AM every day now, automatically, even though I am at home. I get scared when dawn approaches every time. I am scared because do not want to go back to that kind of life. It is my biggest nightmare.”

Other survivors described difficulties in trusting people and in building relationships, because they cannot help but think back to the moments when they were abused. Many are reluctant to leave the safety of their homes and go to more public areas. Others mentioned that trauma manifests itself in more explicit behavioral changes, such as through severe anger management issues. Many also suffer from depression and low morale. All of these negative impacts hinder survivors from reestablishing a sense of stability and control over their post-trafficking lives.

What is also telling is that the small minority of survivors who had received psychosocial support expressed just how beneficial the services had been for them to deal with their trauma and move on with their lives.

As one male survivor noted:

“I am motivated and have more confidence after I received psychosocial support from a CSO. I am not afraid anymore because I have confidence in my ability to seek and cross-check information now, to prepare myself, and to prevent myself from becoming a victim of such a situation again.”

Another female survivor echoed similar thoughts after she received psychosocial support:

“I was feeling very overwhelmed about what had happened to me. But people from some organizations visited me and supported me. I was very happy and hopeful because I could express myself and talk about everything, including my concerns about my life going forward, my family and my job.”

A number of people who received psychosocial support also expressed their need—and desire—to receive further support, having experienced real time benefits in their lives. All of this suggests that effective psychosocial services can prove to be a very useful intervention to help clients process their trauma and feel empowered.

BOX 4. TRAUMA IMPACTS MENTAL HEALTH AND EMPOWERMENT ACROSS ALL 4 AXES

The trauma experiences that many survivors have to endure during their trafficking experience can have lasting impacts and continue to affect their mental health far beyond their rescue or escape. Having good relationships with family and community members (Axes 1 and 2), as well as interventions by CSOs, can improve the healing process. Yet, for many survivors, the impacts of the traumatic experiences linger for long periods of time, across several axes. These, coupled with related negative experiences with their families and communities, can cause sadness, anxiety, and depression, negatively affecting their healing and personal relationships (Axis 1, their inner peace (Axis 3), and their hopes to ever feel valued in their community (Axis 4).

Finding 4: Having the skills and ability to work, as well as being in a stable financial situation, were both very empowering factors for trafficking survivors; and, as a corollary, the inability to work or being in a constant cycle of debt and poverty was very disempowering.

The vast majority of survivors involved in the study identified their ability to work, as well as their financial situation, as critical determinants of “success” in their post-trafficking lives. Survivors considered having the skills and ability to work very empowering. When survivors felt that they had the necessary skills to do a job well, they felt self-reliant and confident. Some survivors noted how receiving skills training—and doing well in the training—came as an important boost:

“I feel happy and satisfied with myself as I have been praised by the vocational trainers and staff. I feel proud when they say: ‘Oh you can do very well and it looks very nice!’”

A number of survivors noted that having the skills and ability to work gave them hope for a bright future, as they felt that they had the agency to pursue specific work opportunities that they wanted. As one male survivor from forced labour in Thailand’s seafood industry noted:

“I am hopeful about my future and I have a clear plan. I want to start my own business in my village after saving some money [from my current job]. I feel confident that I will make my dream come true.”

On the other hand, when survivors feel that they do not have basic skills to help themselves, they feel inferior and helpless:

“[After I escaped] I thought I knew nothing much because I was uneducated.”

Not being able to work often exposed survivors to criticism from their family and community, which they found very disempowering, as noted earlier. Community members not only criticized survivors for not being able to find work after their escape from their trafficking situation, but often also blamed them for not being able to cope with work requirements during their trafficking ordeal. For example, one male survivor of labour trafficking expressed his difficulties in navigating these dynamics:

“I hate to be told, how much did you earn and save? Why did you come back to the village? Why don’t you want to work? Why can’t you work such an easy job?”

Not being able to work also added to an already precarious financial situation that many survivors found themselves in, post-trafficking. Most individuals—especially those who were survivors of labour trafficking or labour-related exploitation—were coerced into those situations because they were attempting to find a way to help themselves and their families financially.

Most were already struggling with cycles of poverty, and many had to go into further debt to finance their migration to other countries. When they escaped and returned home, they found themselves returning to the same precarious financial situation, except now also having to deal with the added challenges of their post-trafficking lives. Not being able to work, then, added to their feeling of disempowerment; survivors felt constrained and burdened by financial concerns, especially when they had to worry about paying off debts that were accruing high interest. They often had to depend on third parties for help, which many survivors did not like:

“I feel very disempowered with how some CSOs are treating me. I am treated as this poor person who was rescued by them and is now being helped for litigation and healthcare. I have become more dependent on them and feel very disempowered and inferior.”

BOX 5. WORK AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

Survivors interviewed through the second tool noted that having the skills and ability to work and finding financial stability helped them find meaning and purpose in life (Axis 2). It also contributed to their inner peace (Axis 3) and self-capacity (Axis 4); having a stable job and being able to earn money gave them the belief that they could handle problems and deal better with everyday life.

ASSESSMENT OF POST-TRAFFICKING SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS

Post-trafficking services can prove to be highly effective in empowering trafficking survivors, but only as long as organizations respect client needs and wishes. When service providers acknowledged the needs of the survivors and provided services aligned with those needs, the impact on clients' lives was positive. As highlighted by most of the clients in this study that received services, when service providers responded to elements that survivors considered empowering, the interventions were seen as empowering. The main services that survivors found empowering were: (i) support to set up marketable employment or business for which there is real market demand; (ii) psychosocial support as well as encouragement and acceptance; and (iii) help in navigating legal processes, particularly civil remedies to get money back from brokers and/or employers. Survivors also noted that it was imperative from their perspective that service providers approached them in a respectful and dignified manner. However, interactions between service providers and survivors were also recognized as disempowering under certain circumstances, such as when there was undue pressure from excessive oversight, or when service providers did not spend time building up trusting relationships with survivors. Several of these factors follow from the general findings about empowering and disempowering factors mentioned in the previous section. What is important to note, however, is that interventions from service providers can themselves be empowering and disempowering factors based on how appropriate and survivor-centric they are.

One such example is support to set up businesses by providing materials and funds. Many clients identified such support to have been effective to address their needs, and they felt empowered by the success of their projects. One female survivor, who escaped from a forced marriage in China, recounted one such experience. When she returned to Myanmar, different organizations provided her with a motorbike and materials for selling textiles. After four months, due to the success and profits of the textile business, she was able to buy another motorbike and increase her assets. This survivor was grateful about receiving the support that she needed and felt more stable financially than in the past. She said:

“I really [want to] thank organizations who have supported me since I arrived home. They took care of me all the time and provided good recommendations....That is why I can survive now with a better situation than in the past. I am deeply grateful.”

However, other narratives also tell us that providing materials or support to start businesses may not be the most appropriate approach to empower survivors in every case. It can have adverse outcomes, such as increased stress and discomfort for the survivor, especially if there is not high demand for the product or service in the locality, or, if the market is already saturated. Survivors may also outrightly reject the service if it does not respond to their needs, if it is given with conditions, or if the wishes of the survivors to access certain services are not respected. For instance, if an organization provides a service to a survivor to help them to set up a business for which there is little to no market demand, or that is not accepted by the community, the survivor will likely struggle and may lose faith in his/her own abilities, believing that the failure was entirely his/her fault.

Similarly, receiving materials and not being able to keep them can create pressure on the survivor. This was the experience of a male survivor coming back from Thailand. When he came back to his hometown, one service provider gave him a motorbike with the intention of help him find work. At the beginning he felt happy, proud, and enthusiastic about the possibility of getting a steady income with the motorbike. However, due to excessive pressure from the service provider, strict conditions imposed by the them, and constant oversight to ensure he was meeting their standards of upkeep, the survivor regretted accepting the motorbike:

“I am not happy to get that kind of support, because I always need to properly manage the motorbike, be careful to avoid accidents and I pay attention to other motorbikes all the time too, so I feel like [it is] a burden for my life. I think I made a mistake to accept that kind of support. I don't want it anymore.”

The nature of interactions between service providers and survivors also brings to light the double-edged nature of such interventions. On one hand, many survivors mentioned feeling empowered when they had conversations with civil society actors because it allowed them to tell their stories from their own point of view, as well as to express their opinions and feelings. Many noted that the psychometric measures of empowerment interview itself was empowering for them because they were given the agency to shape their story, and received validation, acknowledgement and encouragement in return from the CSOs. As one survivor of labour trafficking who returned from China noted:

“Words of encouragement from NGO staff really inspired and motivated me, and I gained a lot of strength.”

However, if NGOs and other actors do not spend time and effort to build up trust with the survivor, do not acknowledge their needs and comfort level, and do not respect their individual rights and strengths, interactions can be very disempowering. Survivors feel disempowered when service providers visit them frequently and ask them to repeat their stories again and again, taking photos and videos and recording their voices without their explicit consent. As one survivor of sexual exploitation expressed when talking about such interactions:

“I feel annoyed and disgusted as I have to talk about my case many times.”

Many survivors feel this way because they do not trust or feel comfortable talking about their experiences with staff from organizations they barely know. When they are asked to tell their stories again and again it brings back painful memories and they feel that their rights are being violated all over again. Finally, lack of respect, and an acknowledgement of their agency during interactions

with service providers is also very disempowering. This can happen if organizations adopt a paternalistic view towards their interactions with survivors, making it seem like survivors are entirely dependent on them.

Empowerment and disempowerment from government services and treatment by government officials.

Of the seven cases in which survivors mentioned having received government services, their experiences were shaped by the nature of the interactions between them and the government officials, especially after the rescue process. Survivors appreciated receiving support from the Anti-Trafficking Task Force and the Department of Social Welfare in Myanmar, as well as the police in the country of exploitation. They felt encouraged when government officials put in time and effort to cultivate good relationships with them, particularly when they received direct services, such as financial assistance or legal documentation. However, some survivors noted that they felt stressed and under pressure about making the “best” use of financial assistance they received from the government, under fear that officials would hold them responsible if they lost the investment. One survivor who had a negative experiences with law enforcement officials also noted that she developed a permanent fear of the police after her interaction with them.



Survivor being interviewed by staff from Karen Baptist Convention (KBC) in Yangon, Myanmar (August 2018).

**BOX 6. SERVICE PROVIDERS HAVE POTENTIAL TO HIGHLY EMPOWERING—OR
HIGHLY DISEMPOWERING**

The majority of survivors interviewed through the second tool had positive experiences with their interactions with service providers, and these interactions had positive benefits across all four axes. For instance, receiving encouragement and support from civil society actors helped strengthen their personal relationships (Axis 1) and their meaning and purpose in life (Axis 2); getting legal support from service providers to file cases, recover lost wages, and/or mediate with brokers had positive impacts on survivors' inner peace (Axis 3), personal relationships (Axis 1) and meaning and purpose in life (Axis 2); and, receiving encouragement from service providers and maintaining good relationships with them had positive outcomes on survivors' healing process and improved their personal relationships (Axis 1), their inner peace (Axis 3) and gave them confidence in their self-capacity (Axis 4). However, scores across all these axes were lower when service providers were paternalistic, overbearing, and/or generally not respecting survivors and their strengths.

BOX 7. PARTICIPATING CSOs' PERSPECTIVE ON THE PSYCHOMETRIC MEASURES OF EMPOWERMENT OF TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS PILOT

While the primary focus of this pilot was to understand the various factors that trafficking survivors find empowering and disempowering, a secondary goal of the project was to build the capacity of local CSOs in Myanmar to identify and respond to the needs of trafficking survivors in a more empowering manner. As noted earlier, due to the large number of unidentified survivors, the responsibility of responding to their needs often falls on local actors. During the final validation workshop, participating CSOs noted a number of positive outcomes from the exercise:

- CSOs embraced the empowerment-oriented approach to service provision. They better understood the importance of allowing survivors to make their own choices and letting them guide the directions of any interventions that external actors make to support them in their post-trafficking lives.*
- CSOs reported realizing the importance of conducting needs assessments to tailor their services to the wishes of the survivors. Many noted that they had never carried out an exercise like this one before and could already see areas where they could improve based on just the few conversations they had during the study.*
- CSOs expressed satisfaction with developing and being held to metrics based on their clients' growing empowerment over time, rather than the more program output-oriented metrics which they felt did not satisfactorily reflect the 'wins' and progress being made by their clients and themselves.*
- CSOs reported gaining a better understanding of how they should interact with survivors. They realized that the words they use are important to think through, and that it is crucial to make the survivor feel at ease, supported and in control during any interaction.*
- CSOs reported gaining a lot of knowledge on the factors that individual survivors considered empowering and disempowering. After the exercise, they felt better prepared and more confident in their ability to respond to the needs of trafficking survivors.*

Participating CSOs did face a number of challenges. Parts of the instrument, especially from the first tool which was more clinical and diagnostic in nature, were harder for them to implement as they did not fully understand the scales and questions. They sometimes had a hard time dealing with the traumatic experiences shared by survivors. They also faced challenges from a logistical point of view, for example getting in touch with survivors and dealing with government officials on the ground who were not sympathetic to their motives.

However, participating CSOs noted that they generally had a very positive experience with the pilot study. Training provided by Issara staff as well as lessons learned from successive interviews allowed them to deal with many of the challenges they faced, and the overall experience significantly helped increase their capacity and effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

The need for such a study to understand survivor experiences and perspectives on empowering and disempowering factors arose from the understanding that traditional top-down responses to trafficking can echo some elements of the trafficking experience itself, namely paternalism and denial of agency. When this is the case, post-trafficking responses not only fail to support survivor needs but may in turn further disenfranchise survivors and prevent them from rebuilding their lives in mainstream society. Findings from this study strongly support that initial assumption. Each time that survivors felt that their voices were not included in the decision-making process to determine what service they would receive from a specific actor, they felt disempowered. In many cases, these services entirely failed to help them. In others, they either prolonged survivors' trauma or alienated them from other members in their community.

On the other hand, when survivors' voices were central to determining what service they received—in other words, when they were asked and/or consulted in the design of responses—civil society actors proved to be much more impactful in empowering survivors and helping them find their feet after their trafficking experience. These findings strongly suggest that traditional systems of the so-called “trafficking victim protection” response need to not only be challenged but entirely reconceptualized. Survivor voice needs to be central in designing responses—and survivor empowerment needs to be the ultimate goal.

Using a tool such as the one developed and piloted by Issara and the Myanmar CSO-NET can make significant inroads towards driving this change. Breaking down how different factors empower and disempower survivors in detail can provide much better insights into how effective certain services are in responding to survivor needs rather than traditional metrics, such as counting the total number of beneficiaries receiving particular kinds of services, how much, and for how long. Understanding empowerment in this way can also help create better interventions in the first place. For example, knowing that a particular intervention, say job placement, can positively affect a survivor's self-capacity is a good starting point for service providers if survivors indicate that what they need most in their post-trafficking lives is a sense of self-belief and self-sufficiency. Findings from this tool on the specific factors that survivors find empowering and disempowering, therefore, take the first step in this direction.

Some findings are not entirely surprising. For example, the empowering dimensions of being able to work and to support one's family within a relatively short timeframe post-trafficking have emerged as a key area of focus in a number of livelihood generation and skills training programs around the world over the years, especially since many of those have been widely discussed to have faced significant challenges or sometimes even failures when they have not been aligned with or responsive to local market demand—for example, training victims of sex trafficking to weave or crochet crafts, then return them to their rural villages where there was no market for the crafts they were trained to make. Or, putting victims into skills training and apprenticeship programs for very protracted time periods, earning little to no money and often not leading to a real job, in a way that



The team supplements individual interviews with a larger focus group discussion engaging former fishermen, to better understand needs and experiences of returned men. (August 2018).

is seen by some as doing harm, or at the very least not being responsive to the urgent needs of the survivor. In this sense, while some of the findings are not surprising, at the same time the anti-trafficking community still seems to have not completely learned these lessons.

Other findings, however, are particularly insightful. For example, the majority of traditional trafficking victim support programs engage with only the survivors themselves—certainly in the case of Myanmar, as attested to by the victim support community. However, findings from this study make a strong case to also engage with the families of survivors as well as their immediate community, in order to create a supportive and accepting environment upon return. There is no ‘cookie cutter’ way to do this since each client may have their unique set of circumstances, sensitivities, local and ethnic cultural mores, and potential stigma to take into consideration when determining how much of the person’s past should be disclosed to family and neighbors. This is where broad-based training and networking in the empowerment approach, with a focus on the grassroots, is key—to help support these local service providers to be able to think on their feet with regard to risk management with their clients, to cultivate empowering families and communities while minimizing harm done.

One finding is surprising because it contradicts previous findings from another Issara study—the finding that the majority of survivors placed high value on justice, while Issara’s 2017 study of pilot Unconditional Cash Transfer recipients, the majority of whom were Burmese survivors who had gone on with their lives in Thailand, found that less than 1% of survivors placed any value on the criminal justice process, though many valued having legal support to go after lost wages¹⁴. This seeming discrepancy could be hypothesized to be due to two main factors, which should be further explored through more structured research: first, the 2017 study defined and explored the different service options much more clearly because all those types of services were options in Thailand—leading to Issara being able to decouple and compare relative value of criminal justice versus civil remedies; in comparison, the 2018 empowerment pilot lacked that level of detail. It lacked this detail mostly because of the second main factor, the difference between Burmese survivors remaining in Thailand vs. Burmese survivors returned to Myanmar: the 2017 primarily Thai-based sample were clients who had received considerably more assistance and ‘success’ at moving on with their life relatively quickly through the unconditional cash transfers, job placement, and legal aid to get back lost wages, while the 2018 sample of mostly returnees in Myanmar have generally received less services and less options, which may have impacted their feeling of the relative value of a criminal justice response. That is, the 2017 primarily Thai-based respondents understood the pros and cons fairly well and did not see pursuing criminal justice at all worthwhile given everything else going on in their life, while the 2018 primarily Myanmar-based respondents may be different.

Findings on specific empowering and disempowering factors come with certain caveats. Since this was a pilot study, the sample included only 76 survivors, meaning that these findings should be taken as a starting point for further analysis and practice rather than as generalizable conclusions. Methodological challenges also present some limitations to the generalizability of the findings. As mentioned earlier, local CSOs faced a number of capacity issues using the instrument initially, which may have affected the quality of data collected in the initial rounds. Moreover, since the instrument was altered mid-way through the project, the quality and depth of data gathered from the last set of interviews was noticeably richer.

These caveats do not invalidate the findings of the study, however. Instead, they provide food for thought as to how a response focused on empowering trafficking survivors can be further improved, implemented, and monitored over time. For example, use of the second tool, which broke down empowerment along the four axes, made it clear that the process of empowerment (and disempowerment) is deeply personal. This would suggest that what survivors consider empowering and disempowering may differ based on context. One such context, for example, is culture. Family and community are very important in Burmese (and other Southeast Asian) cultures, and that might be an underlying reason why family attitudes impacted the empowerment of survivors so strongly, across all four axes. Would family attitudes impact empowerment across all four axes so strongly in a different geographical or cultural setting? How might the impact of family, community, justice, and

services on the empowerment of survivors vary across different cultures and different kinds of exploitation and trauma, and what might these differing patterns mean for the design of better programs and services for trafficking survivors? These are all important questions that the study raises as compelling for future exploration—and hopefully the empowerment framework and four axes of psychometric measures of empowerment can be further piloted and refined in other localities, and by other organizations, to explore its utility in analyzing the impacts of services and environment on survivors' well being, and in helping to reduce harm and design more effective interventions globally.

The methodological challenges in this pilot can also be seen as learning opportunities. Challenges of engaging local actors who may not have the capacity to conduct such detailed analysis emerged at different points during the project. But through this process, Issara was able to continuously adapt and improve its engagement with local actors, while enhancing their capacity significantly in the process. For example, moving to a tool that personalized empowerment by breaking it down across the four axes made it more easily understandable for not only the CSO but also the survivors themselves. This is a practice that can be tested and adapted in other contexts for similar studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Even though the project was a pilot study, reflecting on the information provided by the survivors of exploitation and human trafficking presents some clear guidance on how appropriate responses can be designed to empower those that are trying to rebuild their lives post-trafficking. The findings from the study can help various actors—donors, governments, practitioners and researchers—carry forward the important work that is required to build up a more sustainable, empowerment-focused response to supporting survivors of human trafficking around the world.

DONORS

- **Support empowerment.** Support organizations that promote and pursue programs focused on empowering trafficking survivors. Survivor-centric empowerment programs are more likely to help trafficking survivors rebuild their lives after their trauma than top-down responses which do not put the needs of the survivors at the fore. Donors can play a crucial role in shifting the paradigm by supporting programs that place the needs and desires of the survivors before other priorities.
- **Do not support unethical or harmful “protection” practices.** Be more bold about interrogating the fundamental ethics of established “victim protection” programs and approaches. Insist on properly collected client feedback regarding the quality and relevance of services provided. Client feedback is crucial to ensure that programs reflect and address the needs of trafficking survivors. Further, donors can better inform their own decision-making process and the way they use their resources by ensuring that client feedback is a crucial determinant in the process.
- **Adopt empowerment metrics.** Transition from over-reliance on traditional metrics such as “number of victims assisted” to metrics that track empowerment of clients over time. This can be another important way to promote empowerment-based anti-trafficking programming, and shift the “protection” paradigm globally.

GOVERNMENTS

- Be responsive to client feedback. Ensure any government-provided services are designed primarily to respond to the needs of trafficking survivors. Governments should create avenues to receive feedback from trafficking survivors and incorporate that feedback to improve services that they themselves provide survivors. This may include, but is not limited to, services such as rescue, shelter, criminal and civil remedies, material aid provision, and management and regulation of labour recruitment channels.
- Combat stigma and discrimination. Lead awareness campaigns to sensitize the general population about challenges and sensitivities faced by trafficking survivors. Many governments have played crucial roles in leading national-level awareness campaigns to prevent human trafficking and exploitation. Such campaigns should also be extended to sensitize everyday citizens about the realities of human trafficking so that they can create a welcoming and supporting atmosphere for returning survivors.

PRACTITIONERS

- Proper needs assessments. Conduct proper needs assessments during intake to ensure client-led interventions. Practitioners should institute proper needs assessments as part of their everyday practice when interacting with survivors, taking a strengths-based and survivor-led approach. Systematizing such change is the best way to ensure that services provided are regularly and accurately addressing client needs, and are client-led. Modify and update needs assessment forms and supervisory processes, and seek out training for case managers if needed.
- Family and community engagement. Develop protocols for engaging stakeholders such as family and community members to create a welcoming and accepting environment for trafficking survivors. Include robust risk assessment. Practitioners, especially those who work on the ground with trafficking survivors, should expand their outreach to family and community members in order to prepare them to support trafficking survivors once they return home. Such engagement can take on a number of different forms, and should include survivors in the planning and risk assessment processes.
- Psychosocial care. Increase the emphasis on provision of (or referral to organizations providing) psychosocial support to survivors as they attempt to overcome their trauma. Provision of psychosocial support needs to be mainstreamed as many survivors continue to struggle with their trauma. This means that organizations must have well-trained and equipped case workers or should have an established list of organizations and/or individuals they can refer survivors to if they express a need for receiving psychosocial support.
- Legal aid. Assist survivors in navigating complex legal processes, ensuring that survivor needs are the guiding principles behind any choices made to engage civil or criminal processes. While many legal processes rely on government institutions, practitioners can play a crucial role in bridging the knowledge gap that many survivors struggle with. They can provide basic information, such as all the different legal aid options available, whom survivors should approach, what kind of documents they might need, the detailed steps of the process, and how long the process is expected to be—with regular updates being provided on an ongoing basis. Practitioners need to ensure that survivors feel that they are the ones making the decisions and have ownership of the process instead of being entirely dependent on third party individuals or organizations. Survivors should also be supported to participate in court processes or not, according to their own best interests, which may change over time.

- Job placement. Help survivors build their skills and cultivate real job placements so that survivors can become stable and autonomous financially. Since survivors place great value on acquiring stable jobs, practitioners should focus on providing practical, viable, marketable vocational and life skills training, and also link survivors to safe and fair job opportunities, so that survivors can achieve financial stability.

RESEARCHERS

- Undertake further research on empowering and disempowering factors for trafficking survivors in different geographic and cultural environments. Expanding on the findings from this study can help inform global actors to significantly improve their response strategies, and potentially change the paradigm from a service provider-enforced one to a more survivor-sourced one.
- Design studies to better understand the value placed by trafficking survivors on justice. A comparison between findings from this study and a previous Issara study suggests that different populations of trafficking survivors may approach the question of justice with different priorities. Undertaking further analysis can help shed more light on what characteristics or circumstances may define when survivors place/do not place value on acquiring justice.
- Use tools that are not only effective in gathering the required data but also easy to understand for local actors and survivors. This will allow local actors and survivors to participate more equitably in the study and to also take more ownership of the findings. Crucial to this process is conducting regular training exercises for local participants as well as maintaining clear lines of communication so that all participants are duly informed about the entire process.

ENDNOTES

1. ILO (2017). Global estimates of modern slavery: forced labour and forced marriage. Geneva: International Labour Organization, Walk Free Foundation and International Organization for Migration.
2. Ibid 1.
3. Gallagher, AT (2017). "What's Wrong with the Global Slavery Index?" Anti-Trafficking Review 8: 90-112; and Mügge, D. (2017). "40.3 million slaves? Four reasons to question the new Global Estimates of Modern Slavery." BTS Policy Brief No. 1, openDemocracy.
4. Ibid 1.
5. Modern slavery is a contested term, with no legal definition, which in the Global Slavery Index report covers a set of crimes such as slavery, forced labour, debt bondage and forced marriage.
6. United States Department of State (2018). Trafficking in Persons Report. Washington, DC: US Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.
7. Ibid 6.
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9. Ibid 6.
10. Issara Institute & Lisborg, A (2017). Towards Demand-Driven, Empowering Assistance for Trafficked Persons. Bangkok: Issara Institute, May 2017.
11. Anupa Rijal, T. B (2016, August 16). Ethical perspectives on combating sex trafficking in Nepal. (D. B. Spielman, Ed.) Dovepress, 2016:6, 3-7. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2147/MB.S111877>.
12. CSO-NET consists of approximately 25 Myanmar NGOs in total, working together to support jobseekers and returned exploited migrants from Thailand, and is supported by Walmart Foundation's support to the Issara Empowerment Incubator.
13. Empowerment Research Program (ERP), Collaborative Research on Empowerment and Wellbeing (CREW), North Queensland Health Equalities Promotion Unit, Cairns, available at: [http://www.nss.gov.au/nss/home.nsf/0/3fb3bc20ff6cb2ffca257618000e8dbf/\\$FILE/day%20%20-%201130%20-%20Yvonne%20Cadet-James%20-%20Empowerment%20tool.pdf](http://www.nss.gov.au/nss/home.nsf/0/3fb3bc20ff6cb2ffca257618000e8dbf/$FILE/day%20%20-%201130%20-%20Yvonne%20Cadet-James%20-%20Empowerment%20tool.pdf); Kinchin, I., Jacobs, S., Tsey, K. & Lines, K., 2015, An empowerment intervention for Indigenous communities: an outcome assessment, BMC Psychology, 3:29.
14. Ibid 10.



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