

# International Justice Mission

## Cebu, the Philippines

### *Project Lantern Results Summary*



Since March 2007, under Project Lantern (PL), International Justice Mission (IJM) has partnered with local and regional government agencies and non-government organizations to reduce the availability of trafficked women and children for sexual exploitation in commercial sex establishments and street-based prostitution in Metro Cebu. **After the major increase in anti-trafficking law enforcement during PL, a team of independent criminologists found a 79% reduction in the availability of minors for sex, indicating that the publicly available market in minors trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation decreased dramatically.**

This document contains a high level summary of PL activities and results from 2007 to 2010 in each of the following sectors: (1) law enforcement, (2) prosecution and the court system, (3) victim aftercare, (4) labor regulation, (5) local government unit (LGU) oversight, and (6) civil society engagement.

### WORKING PARTNERSHIPS



On August 10, 2010, IJM received its first conviction under R.A. 9208, the Philippines' anti-trafficking law, during Project Lantern - only the fourth such conviction to ever be handed down in the Central Visayas region. This case began in May 2008 when IJM helped the Cebu City Police Office conduct a sting operation which led to the arrest of a pimp who had been selling minors for sex and the rescue of a 17-year-old girl named Charlyn<sup>1</sup> and one adult victim. After a two year legal battle, in which Charlyn herself bravely testified in court and pointed out the pimp who had sold her, justice was served as the accused was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

In 2007, Charlyn moved to the city to work as a housemaid so that she could send money home to her father, a farmer in Negros, and six siblings. But in March 2008, Charlyn was offered a 'job' which ultimately led to her being prostituted by a pimp in Kamagayan, Cebu's oldest red light district. Night after night, Charlyn was sold to customers for only around P400. But one night in May 2008, a night that was just like any other, everything changed. After Charlyn was brought to a hotel room and paid for, Charlyn's "customer" revealed that he was actually an undercover police officer and arrested Charlyn's pimp. Charlyn was rescued; she would no longer have to sell her body for money nightly.

Since Charlyn's rescue, she has experienced rehabilitation through the care and services offered by DSWD, private shelter and IJM social workers. Charlyn is currently serving vulnerable street children along with a ministry associated with the aftercare home where she was most recently living (pictured below).

This story demonstrates that close collaboration between DSWD, private aftercare providers, law enforcers, and public and private prosecutors can lead to successful rescue and restoration for victims, and prosecution of traffickers, securing justice for girls like Charlyn who are being exploited and preventing others vulnerable girls from ever being trafficked.

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<sup>1</sup> In order to protect this client, a pseudonym has been used, though the account is real.

## **Project Lantern Background and Design**

In November 2005, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded International Justice Mission (IJM) a \$5 million grant to support a five-year anti-sex trafficking project, which intended to demonstrate the effectiveness of a law enforcement-based strategy to reduce the prevalence of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. In 2006, IJM staff researched 14 potential locations before identifying Cebu, Philippines as the strongest candidate for the project location. IJM staff visited Cebu and spoke with local government, law enforcement, aftercare, and NGO stakeholders to confirm the suitability of Cebu, specifically the Metro Cebu area, as the project site. The project was entitled “Project Lantern” because a lantern was a symbol of hope and freedom during the period of the Underground Railroad. Slaves looked for illuminated lanterns, strategically placed by a network of supporters in front of “safe houses,” along the road to freedom. Similarly, Project Lantern strives to light a safe path towards freedom for victims of modern-day slavery.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Project Lantern’s primary goal was to mobilize counter-trafficking stakeholders to support effectively enforcing anti-human trafficking law as a critical component of a comprehensive counter-trafficking strategy.

IJM intended to achieve its goal by accomplishing the following two objectives:

- (1) Reduce the number of sex-trafficking victims in the target area and make the reduction sustainable by increasing the capacity of counter-trafficking stakeholders.
- (2) Increase the level of understanding among key stakeholders of the benefits and challenges of adopting a law enforcement model of anti-human trafficking action through the dissemination of project results and active dialogue.

### **Strategies**

In order to accomplish the objectives listed above and produce a replicable model for mobilizing the criminal justice system to combat sex trafficking, IJM would pursue the following activities: provide information concerning suspected sex traffickers; support suspected sex trafficker arrest and prosecution; and ensure proper care of rescued victims.

IJM would also build the capacity of local counter-trafficking stakeholders in Cebu through training and professional support. As the capacity of local law enforcement and the local justice system improved, IJM believed local authorities would arrest more suspected sex traffickers and there would be an increase in the number of successful prosecutions of sex traffickers. IJM believed that the increase in arrests and prosecutions of suspected traffickers in Cebu would result in an increased expectation of criminal sanction for individuals engaged in sex trafficking, deterring existing and potential sex traffickers. The deterrent impact of effective law enforcement would cause a significant reduction in the number of individuals engaged in trafficking in Cebu and a corresponding reduction in the number of women and girls victimized by sex traffickers.

### **Evaluation and Dissemination of Results**

To assess the impact of the above described interventions, IJM would retain independent evaluators to conduct separate quantitative and qualitative studies. The quantitative study was to use a simple pre-post evaluation design. An initial study would be conducted prior to the implementation of any training activities or other interventions by IJM in Cebu in order to establish a baseline measure of the availability of trafficking victims. A second study would be conducted at the project mid-point, and a final study would be conducted at the end of the project in order to measure any changes in the availability of minor victims. The qualitative evaluation would assess the capacity of justice system stakeholders over the life of the project by gathering

and analyzing additional relevant data and stakeholder feedback to assess whether changes occurred as a result of Project Lantern.

IJM would organize stakeholder conferences at the end of the project to discuss the project and plan future action steps. IJM staff would produce and distribute a package of materials detailing Project Lantern results, findings regarding impact, and lessons learned from project implementation. IJM would host a series of stakeholder conferences at the end of the project to serve as brainstorming sessions on how to best incorporate a focus on enforcing anti-trafficking law into a comprehensive counter-trafficking strategy and how to replicate the model, or aspects of the model, in other locations. IJM staff would also be available for additional consultations with interested stakeholders to discuss replication of the project model in further depth, including sharing information about project costs.

## Law Enforcement

### Supported Law Enforcement Operations that Resulted in Increased Rescues and Arrests

Police in the target area rescued 259 sex trafficking victims from January 1, 2007 to September 30, 2010 as compared to only 27 victims that were rescued during the three years prior to PL's activities. Of those 259 rescued victims, PL initiated operations resulted in the rescue of 114 victims. Of the remaining 145 rescued victims, PL-trained police initiated the majority of the victim rescues. Law enforcement partners requested, and IJM provided, legal and aftercare assistance prior to or immediately after the vast majority of victim rescues. The continued increase in rescues conducted by law enforcement apart from PL initiated operations throughout the project indicates that (1) PL training was providing the knowledge and skills to equip police to more effectively intervene on behalf of victims, and (2) the local public justice system was taking increased ownership of its role in fighting sex trafficking.

IJM assisted law enforcement in the target area on 36 anti-trafficking operations, which resulted in the arrests of 77 suspected traffickers. As discussed in more detail in the next section, there were 107 perpetrators charged with violations of the Philippines Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (R.A. 9208) as a result of the law enforcer's ability to build compelling cases against the suspected traffickers.

	2007	2008	2009	2010 <sup>2</sup>	Total
Total Victims Rescued	54	81	89	35	259
IJM-Assisted Law Enforcement Operations	8	10	12	6	36
Perpetrators Arrested in IJM-Assisted Operations	15	15	41	6	77

### Law Enforcement Capacity Building

As described in this section, IJM recognized the foundational role of law enforcement in building successful prosecution, and therefore focused significant resources on enhancing law enforcement capacity to investigate trafficking in persons crimes and rescue victims. The primary strategy was to provide intensive, professional training to law enforcement, particularly Philippine National Police (PNP), personnel who would then be able to work together with IJM staff in building up actual cases of trafficking. The PNP readily agreed to partner with IJM on police training, and sessions began on schedule in March 2007. After several months, IJM staff identified several challenges to maximizing the effectiveness of the training sessions. First was the PNP policy of transferring officers between units and jurisdictions on a regular basis, and second was the lack of a dedicated group of police assigned to handle investigations of trafficking cases. These circumstances were limiting the potential impact of PL capacity building efforts because IJM was focusing its training on a larger group of officers, some of whom were being transferred shortly after being trained to units or jurisdictions and in which they did not have opportunities to work on trafficking cases.

<sup>2</sup> 2010 data throughout the report is through September 30, 2010 unless otherwise indicated.

## **PNP Regional Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force**

After consultation with its stakeholders, IJM determined that the most promising strategy to overcome these obstacles would be to advocate for the establishment of a dedicated police task force composed of personnel who would not be eligible for transfer to another unit for a significant period of time after receiving specialized anti-trafficking training. In September 2008, IJM and the PNP, Region 7 (PNP-7) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing to establish and support a Regional Special Investigations Unit (RSIU) dedicated to enforcing anti-trafficking laws. The PNP-7 staffed and deployed a seven-member RSIU and IJM provided extensive training, logistical support for operations, and separate office space for the unit. Over the next several months, the RSIU completed several successful anti-trafficking operations. However, by April 2009, the RSIU was not actively or regularly pursuing anti-trafficking investigations and IJM learned that all members of the RSIU had received transfer orders to another region for a different assignment. IJM staff worked with the PNP to prevent the transfer of four of the seven RSIU team members. However, overall, the RSIU was less successful than hoped during its first nine months in enforcing RA 9208 and related laws.

In June 2009, IJM met with the newly installed PNP-7 Regional Director to review the structure and effectiveness of the RSIU. The new Regional Director agreed to create a new, stronger anti-trafficking unit to replace the RSIU. In July 2009, the Police Regional Office, Region VII (PRO-7) signed a new MOU with IJM to form and support a stronger police task force named the Regional Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force (RATTF). The RATTF was conferred with authority to conduct surveillance, investigate, conduct rescue operations, and pursue the prosecution of persons engaged in human trafficking. It was created to be more independent from its mother unit than the RSIU had been, and received intensive training from IJM. When the RATTF MOU expired in July 2010, PRO-7 and IJM renewed the agreement. The new MOU will be in effect until July 2012.

The RATTF has proven to be an effective tool in the fight against human trafficking in Metro Cebu. They have conducted 17 rescue operations against various types and levels of commercial sex establishments involved in human trafficking as well as against street-based pimps who were exploiting trafficked women and girls. They have rescued 85 trafficked victims from exploitative situations, arrested 32 suspected human traffickers, and filed 28 trafficking in persons cases with the prosecutors' offices.

## **Law Enforcement Training**

From 2007 to September 2010, IJM staff conducted 39 week-long training sessions for a total of 730 law enforcement personnel from in and around the target area. Training topics were selected together with PRO-7 Training Department staff and designed to address gaps in existing police training that were creating barriers to successful prosecution of trafficking cases. Training topics included Anti-human Trafficking Investigations, Law Enforcement Ethics, Crime Scene Investigation, Evidence Collection, Witness Interviewing, Victim Sensitivity, Affidavit Taking and Writing, Operative Buildup, and Instructor Training. IJM trainings were conducted by professional police trainers, and local instructors as needed and available, using curriculum reviewed and approved by the PRO-7 Training Department. Trainings included relevant Philippines laws and procedures, international best practices, and practical exercises.

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Total</b>
Week-Long Law Enforcement Training Sessions <sup>3</sup>	7	10	12	10	<b>39</b>
Training Participants <sup>4</sup>	185	203	198	144	<b>730</b>

<sup>3</sup> Only includes week long training sessions. IJM also conducted numerous shorter trainings on relevant laws and procedures to units particularly active in anti-trafficking investigations.

<sup>4</sup> Includes some double-counting of training participants as each was counted each time he/she attended a session. A majority of participants attended only one training session; but, some attended multiple, the highest being four sessions for one individual.

To formalize their relationship with regards to the described training, the PNP and IJM entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in February 2009. In the MOA the PNP agreed to work with IJM to develop PNP Instructors and adopt IJM training materials for use by the PNP in their own training programs. The MOA also called for the creation of an oversight committee and quarterly update reports provided by IJM to the PNP.

Throughout the project, IJM police training staff worked with PNP officials to increase the number of repeat training participants and increase the proportion of training participants who regularly had the opportunity to conduct trafficking investigations. With the formation of the Regional Special Investigations Unit (RSIU) in the third quarter of 2008, and later the formation of the Regional Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force (RATTF) in the third quarter of 2009, IJM was able to focus more of its training on a small group of police assigned specifically to investigate trafficking cases. Simultaneously, IJM continued to conduct trainings for other police units. Units that received more PL training, including the RSIU and RATTF, conducted more successful anti-trafficking operations. The number of victims rescued by IJM-trained law enforcement since 2007 indicates that PL police trainings enhanced anti-trafficking casework in the Metro Cebu area.

## Prosecution and Court System

### Supported Anti-Trafficking Prosecutions

IJM-assisted law enforcement investigations resulted in 107 perpetrators being charged in court with violations of the Philippines' Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (RA 9208). In August 2010, the first of these cases, a case that began in May 2008 against a pimp who was accused of selling a minor for sex, reached verdict and the accused trafficker was convicted for Qualified Trafficking. This was only the fourth such conviction to be handed down in the Central Visayan region. On October 29, 2010, the first case IJM had provided legal assistance to in 2007, reached verdict and resulted in a conviction of a woman who had trafficked five women to Malaysia for sexual exploitation. As of the end of October 2010, two more IJM cases in Cebu were awaiting promulgation of judgment and several others were expected to be submitted for decision in the final months of 2010.<sup>5</sup> As of the end of October 2010, IJM attorneys were assisting in 62 active prosecutions and anticipate having many more convictions in the next several years.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Number of Perpetrators Charged	17	23	48	19	107

### Prosecution and Court System Capacity Building

#### Women and Children's Waiting Area in Cebu City/Province Courthouse

In 2008, IJM identified that one obstacle to successful prosecutions was the insecurity of victim witnesses during inquest proceedings<sup>6</sup> and trial. During inquest, victim witnesses and the accused had to wait in the same room while the prosecutor interviewed them and reviewed the evidence. During trial, victim witnesses were often harassed and intimidated by defendants and their supporters while waiting to testify. To maintain security, IJM and the Regional State Prosecutor agreed to work together with the Cebu City Prosecutor's Office to designate and renovate a holding area for vulnerable victim witnesses in all types of cases, including human trafficking cases. IJM renovated the designated space, which was ready for use in early 2009. Prosecutors are now able to conduct inquest proceeding in the new waiting room, which has separate areas for suspects and victims to stay, and victims can wait in this room before testifying anywhere in the courthouse.

<sup>5</sup> One case has been waiting for promulgation since early 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Inquest is a part of Philippines criminal procedure following warrantless arrests wherein a prosecutor conducts a hearing to review evidence against an arrested person in order to decide whether or not to charge the arrested person.

### Anti-Trafficking in Persons Prosecution Guidebook

In 2007 and 2008, IJM legal staff researched and drafted 18 legal briefs addressing common legal issues encountered in the prosecution of charges filed under RA 9208. IJM compiled these briefs, along with an overview of the law and practice tips, for publication in a reference book to be used by public and private prosecutors and judges. IJM provided copies of the book to local prosecutors, judges, and law enforcement officials, many of whom have reported using it regularly in preparing for trial and giving seminars.

### Legal Trainings

IJM either hosted or co-hosted six trainings for judges and prosecutors in the Metro Cebu area to deepen understanding of the provisions of RA 9208 and promote more successful prosecutions. Legal trainings resulted in improved compliance with the law on several trafficking prosecutions. Of the six trainings, IJM conducted four of its own trainings for prosecutors and judges on technical legal aspects of prosecution of cases under RA 9208. In July 2009, the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA), in partnership with IJM, conducted a Competency Enhancement Training (CET) on Child Abuse and Trafficking cases for judges and court personnel from Metro Cebu. In September 2010, PL co-hosted with US Embassy and US DOJ a three-day law enforcement and prosecutors training entitled “Achieving More Prosperous Prosecutions in Human Trafficking Cases” where participants received training on advanced investigation techniques, evidence collection, witness interviewing, and affidavit drafting.

IJM also developed a pool of legal interns and volunteers available to assist prosecutors and law enforcement, and potentially act as private prosecutors, in the future. In partnership with the University of San Carlos Law School in Cebu City, IJM provided training in anti-trafficking legal aid for law students. IJM also conducted several trainings for legal volunteers and regularly hosted local legal interns and volunteers during the project.

## **Victim Aftercare**

### **Supported and Provided Aftercare Services to Survivors and Impacted Non-Victims**

After each successful anti-trafficking operation, IJM social workers worked closely with Department of Social Welfare and Development, Region VII (DSWD-7) social workers and other care providers to ensure that each rescued victim received adequate support while recovering from the abuses committed against her. IJM social workers, lawyers, and other staff assisted DSWD-7 staff with security and other logistics needed immediately post-rescue, conducting initial interviews with all suspected victims to gather information, and compiling affidavits to support prosecutions. After initial processing, IJM social workers coordinated with DSWD-7 and other NGO social workers to provide medical care, counseling, and case management services to all clients, including regular client meetings to discuss client progress towards goals as articulated on each client’s treatment plan.

From 2007 to September 30, 2010, IJM aftercare staff provided assistance to 228 victims who were either rescued in Metro Cebu or were originally trafficked from Metro Cebu. IJM aftercare staff also provided assistance to 38 additional individuals directly involved in trafficking cases. In total, under PL, IJM aftercare staff assisted 276 clients, 194 of whom are currently receiving services and assistance. Most are involved in treatment programs and are progressing positively towards goals set by the clients themselves. IJM assisted in the reintegration of 65 clients to safe living situations in the community, and social workers have continued to work with these clients.

Every quarter, IJM social workers review the status of victims rescued by law enforcement during that same quarter two years prior and provided aftercare assistance by IJM and its partners in order to assess whether rescued victims are being re-trafficked. As seen in the table below, of 94 victims rescued by law enforcement in the first year and a half of PL, social workers were able to confirm that 58 (62% of total rescues) had not been re-trafficked two years after rescue. Of the remaining 36, 15 had been re-trafficked and social workers

were unable to confirm the status of the other 21. Most of the clients whose status IJM social workers could not confirm came from households without a home phone number, and were known to change their mobile phone numbers regularly without informing their contacts, including social workers.

	Q3 2009	Q4 2009	Q1 2010	Q2 2010	Q3 2010	Total
Rescued Two Years Prior and Provided IJM Aftercare Services	5	35	20	21	13	94
Confirmed Not Re-Trafficked	5	21	14	11	7	58
Confirmed Re-Trafficked	0	4	1	6	4	15
Unable to Confirm Status	0	10	5	4	2	21

### Partnership with DSWD-7

In June 2007, IJM entered into an MOU with DSWD-7, and a supplemental MOU in January 2009. In the MOUs, IJM agreed to coordinate with DSWD during and after rescue operations to provide aftercare and legal assistance to rescued victims, and provide trainings and other capacity building assistance. DSWD agreed to coordinate with IJM during rescue operations, inquest proceedings, and trial (when necessary), coordinate with other government agencies, and participate in roundtable discussions to develop minimum standards of care for victims of trafficking. IJM and DSWD-7 renewed the provisions of both MOUs for an additional three years in December 2009.

### Aftercare Capacity Building

In 2007, IJM, DSWD-7, and other aftercare stakeholders met three times to assess the needs of and services available to victims of trafficking rescued in the Metro Cebu area. Participants identified several gaps in aftercare facilities and services provided in five categories: personal security, physical health, psychosocial recovery, economic self-sufficiency and reintegration. Based on this consultative process, IJM invested capacity building funds to increase the security and capacity of shelter facilities, improve the programs offered at shelters, provide training to aftercare provider staff, and develop a program for increased economic self-sufficiency for clients upon re-integration. IJM hosted three subsequent aftercare stakeholder meetings to further analyze priority gaps in aftercare services and discuss possible solutions.

### Shelter Facility and Program Enhancements

IJM worked closely with DSWD-7 and other aftercare providers to address the need for more secure facilities and more effective rehabilitative programming through the following four projects.

#### HerSpace Processing Center

To address the lack of victim security immediately following law enforcement operations, IJM worked together with DSWD-7 in late 2007 to renovate some unused office space at the DSWD-7's Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU), creating a processing center called "HerSpace" primarily for newly rescued victims. Prior to the creation of HerSpace, immediately following a law enforcement operation, victims and suspects were typically kept in close proximity to one another at a police station, where it was possible for the perpetrator(s) to intimidate or threaten the victim(s) and where victims often felt as if they were arrested themselves. The new processing center enabled law enforcement and DSWD to keep victims separate from suspects immediately after they were removed from the crime scene, which protected rescued victims and removed non-victims from potentially intimidating police station environments following rescue, enhanced the effectiveness of aftercare assessments prior to shelter placement, and provided police investigators with the best opportunity to gain critical evidence and intelligence from women and girls removed in rescue operations. HerSpace includes several dorm rooms, where rescued victims are sheltered for approximately two weeks following an operation. This initial period post-rescue allows newly rescued victims to adjust, minimizing disruptions to shelters that is sometimes created when attempting to integrate recently rescued victims with existing shelter residents.

### DSWD-7 Regional Haven

Since late 2007, IJM has been working with DSWD-7 to develop and execute a capacity building plan to increase the quality and quantity of aftercare services offered at the DSWD-7 Haven, the primary facility for placing recently rescued trafficking victims in Metro Cebu. As part of that plan, IJM made significant investments in structural improvements to the facility that were necessary for victims of trafficking, including major renovations to its perimeter fence to provide additional security, and renovations to two existing rooms in order to create a counseling room, a mediation room, and a storage area. PL has also supplemented security guards for most of the last several years.

IJM staff also worked with DSWD-7 to identify and implement at the Haven best practices in various types of care services necessary for holistic rehabilitation of former victims of trafficking. In March 2008, IJM aftercare staff hosted several DSWD-7 staff on an educational trip to Cambodia to learn about successful programming, demonstrated by various aftercare providers specializing in caring for rescued trafficking victims. IJM staff also researched and provided DSWD-7 with copies of best practice materials regarding shelter development and operation compiled from successful aftercare projects around the world. Based on the Haven capacity building plan, IJM conducted several trainings specifically for the social workers and house parents of the Haven aimed to better equip them to provide a therapeutic environment, and prepare clients for economic self-sufficiency and job readiness. In 2009, the Haven was the site of IJM's first Job Readiness Training Course provided to victims of trafficking in Metro Cebu, and has since graduated two classes with a total of 12 graduates.

### DSWD-7 Home for Girls

To further improve DSWD-7's existing shelter capacity and to accommodate the increasing number of victims being rescued by law enforcement in the Metro Cebu area, IJM sponsored a renovation project in late 2009 to improve the DSWD-7's Home for Girls shelter. The renovations, which were completed in early 2010, included expanding dormitory and restroom facilities, adding therapy facilities, repairing existing dormitory facilities, repairing the shelter roof to add the new rooms, and supplying furniture to fill the new rooms.

### My Refuge House

Throughout 2009, IJM worked closely with My Refuge House (MRH), a shelter developed by a US-based organization in 2008 to care for recently rescued trafficking victims, to enhance its security and programs, and to assist in staff development. IJM aftercare staff assisted MRH staff in developing program protocols and conducted eight training sessions for the house parents and social workers on issues that were covered by the new protocols. Training topics included child protection, client reintegration, conflict resolution and others. IJM staff also provided additional trainings on best practices for facilitating a healing environment for the clients, including discipline, anger management and listening skills.

### Technical Aftercare Trainings

In order to better equip DSWD-7 and other aftercare partners to care for rescued victims and improve the quality of the psychological counseling victims received, IJM hosted 17 major trainings in 2008 through 2010 for aftercare personnel from DSWD, community psychologists, and the aftercare shelters most likely to receive victims rescued in law enforcement operations. Trainings provided instruction on the following topics: Psychological Foundation of Self-identity and Relationships; Crisis Intervention for and with Victims of Human Trafficking; Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; Skills for Life & Work; Understanding and Restoring Child Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking; Appropriate Case Management for Social Workers; Effective Parenting for House Parents of DSWD Shelters; Effective Ways of Handling Trafficking Victims; Skills Enhancement Training of Service Providers in the Care and Management of Victims of Trafficking; and Career Counseling for Victims.



### Economic Self-Sufficiency and Re-integration (ESSR) Project

To address the need for former victims of trafficking to be economically self-sufficient upon reintegration to the community, IJM launched an initiative in 2008 called the Economic Self-Sufficiency and Re-Integration (ESSR) project to increase realistic and sustainable opportunities for economic self-sufficiency for trafficking survivors and to enhance holistic re-integration support. In 2008, IJM completed an assessment of local community services being provided that were related to economic self-sufficiency and re-integration, identified target industries most likely to provide safe and sustainable employment for former trafficking victims, and funded expansion of job skills training provided by a local aftercare partner. Also in 2008, IJM developed a seven-stage Job Readiness Training Course that focuses on developing attitude, work ethic, task completion, motivation, time management, professional communication, teamwork, initiative, conflict prevention and problem solving skills.

In 2009, IJM trained aftercare providers in job readiness preparation for their clients, recruited businesses to open job placements and provide vocational training, and started the Job Readiness Training Program for aftercare clients through three different aftercare shelter partners, including the DSWD-7 Haven. Also in 2009, IJM entered into agreements with vocational training and business partners outlining protocols for student placement upon completion of the Job Readiness Training Program. IJM also upgraded the cosmetology training program at DSWD-7's Area Vocational Training Center (AVRC) by donating standard cosmetology equipment and renovating training space. The improved program, which simulates a real salon, benefits former trafficking victims and other survivors of abuse as they are trained in the use of advance cosmetology equipment at AVRC.

In 2009-2010, IJM's ESSR project had 42 survivors of trafficking graduate from its Job Readiness Training Course, and successfully placed 16 of those graduates in sustainable full-time employment with local business partners paying livable wages. Many of the remaining graduates are studying in formal education or vocational training programs.

In January 2010, a US-based group interested in starting a new NGO that would take over the goals and responsibilities of IJM's ESSR program traveled to Cebu to meet with IJM staff and assess the project. This group subsequently incorporated a new NGO in both the US and in the Philippines. That NGO is now a stand-alone, non-profit NGO that works with local business and church partners to bring economic, social, and spiritual reconciliation to abused, exploited and vulnerable people in the Metro Cebu area.

## **Labor Regulation**

IJM staff advocated with the Department of Labor and Employment Region VII (DOLE-7) to enforce Philippines' child labor laws against business establishments selling minors for prostitution in the target area. In 2007, IJM provided a training for DOLE-7 inspectors on evidence collection and crime scene investigation, and throughout the project participated in meetings with DOLE-7 staff regarding technical and legal issues that arose during inspections and administrative proceedings. IJM worked with law enforcement agencies to coordinate with DOLE-7 on several anti-trafficking law enforcement operations. DOLE-7 ordered the immediate and permanent closure of three establishments in Metro Cebu during the project, including two in 2008 in Cebu City and Lapu-Lapu City, and one in 2010 in Cebu City.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, the establishment that DOLE issued a closure of establishment order against in 2010 is still open. The Cebu City Government may take additional appropriate action in accordance with the Cebu City Anti-Trafficking Ordinance.

## Local Government Unit Oversight

### **Anti-Trafficking in Persons Ordinances and Resolution**

In 2008 and 2009, Cebu City, Mandaue City, and Lapu-Lapu City all passed Anti-Trafficking in Persons Ordinances with assistance from PL, and Cebu Province passed an Anti-Trafficking in Persons Resolution. The City Ordinances included penalties for businesses found to be participating in trafficking, a directive for the respective city to mobilize barangay governments in anti-trafficking activities, and a budget for city level anti-trafficking activities. The Provincial Resolution enhanced local level regulation of recruiters to prevent trafficking in persons. IJM staff have assisted in forming or supporting the creation of each city's Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking (IACAT), and have been an active member of the Provincial Women's Commission's anti-trafficking in persons working group. IJM has continued to provide support as each LGU has implemented anti-trafficking reforms and programs, including trainings, awareness raising events, assessments, and casework support.

### **Establishment Closures**

In Cebu City, the City Government of Cebu through the Office of the City Attorney issued a closure order against an establishment in 2009 based on the result of a PNP anti-trafficking investigation and operation. In Mandaue City, the Mayor issued a closure order for one bar in 2009 and the Mandaue City Legal Office ordered another bar closed in 2010, both of which had been the subject of PNP investigations. In Lapu-Lapu City, the City Legal Department recommended a Closure Order and Revocation of Permit against a KTV bar for prostitution of minors, but the City Government confirmed that the bar had ceased operations following a PNP anti-trafficking investigation and operation in 2009.

### **Cebu City Rapid Assessment**

Researchers retained by the Cebu City IACAT held data gathering workshops throughout November 2009 for a Rapid Assessment research project to determine the barangay level understanding and knowledge of the problem of trafficking in persons. IJM staff participated in research design workshops and assisted in the data gathering workshops. The study surveyed over 250 representatives from almost all of the barangays in Cebu City, provided them with an orientation on anti-trafficking laws and the Cebu City Ordinance, and asked them to describe their knowledge of trafficking activities in their own barangays. IJM lawyers provided lectures on the national and local anti-trafficking laws during two of the five data gathering sessions. The researchers published the findings of their rapid assessment of the trafficking in persons situation in early 2010.

### **Highlighting the LGU Role against Human Trafficking**

In June 2010, IJM, in partnership with the US Embassy in Manila, hosted a forum to highlight the important role of LGUs in combating trafficking in persons. US Ambassador Harry Thomas delivered a keynote address emphasizing the urgency of human trafficking issues in the Philippines. Approximately 82 participants representing the LGUs, government agencies, NGOs, law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and media personnel attended. Participants discussed the trafficking in persons situation in each area, recent achievements/interventions, problems/challenges, and the priority agenda for the coming year.

## Civil Society Engagement

### **War Against Trafficking**

In 2008, IJM joined other anti-trafficking stakeholders in the Metro Cebu area in planning and launching a "War Against Trafficking" (WAT), an anti-trafficking in persons civil society movement initiated by the Visayan Forum, a key anti-trafficking NGO in the Philippines. The purposes of the WAT are to increase community awareness, share resources, and organize advocacy projects to mobilize public anti-trafficking

action. As an active WAT convener, IJM joined other anti-trafficking stakeholders in the Metro Cebu area in planning and participating in major awareness raising events, including annual events as part of International Anti-Trafficking Day, celebrated each year on December 12.

### **Grassroots Community Trainings**

In 2009, IJM began working with civil society groups, law students, other NGOs and local governments to conduct trainings for grassroots community members, particularly in communities more at risk for human trafficking activity. IJM staff conducted seven community legal trainings in 2009 for a total of 351 individuals. In 2010, through September, IJM staff hosted and/or helped facilitate eight anti-trafficking awareness raising seminars, including an orientation to anti-trafficking law, the realities of the human trafficking situation, and its impacts on individuals and communities. Participants included barangay officials, Gender and Development focal persons, Barangay Council for the Protection of Children personnel, and members of various peoples' organizations in Cebu City.

In September 2010, IJM conducted a training the trainers workshop for partner NGO staff and other community educators to equip participants to conduct trainings/seminars in their own communities on the realities of trafficking in persons, efforts to combat trafficking in persons, and how to gather data.

### **Mobilizing Local Church and Student Groups**

In 2009, IJM began mobilizing church and student leaders and groups to engage in anti-trafficking advocacy and to offer beneficial services to rescued victims. IJM made presentations, conducted training seminars, developed training curriculum, and recruited church and student groups to engage in advocacy and provide direct services for former victims as appropriate. Over the last 18 months, these groups have made many contributions against trafficking in persons in Metro Cebu, including the following significant achievements.

In May 2009, IJM worked closely with DSWD-7 and one local church group to set up a temporary placement facility for removed women and girls following a large law enforcement operation as the DSWD's HerSpace shelter did not have sufficient space to house and secure the 57 women and girls removed during that particular operation.

The passing of the Lapu-Lapu City Anti-Trafficking in Persons Ordinance discussed above was strongly supported by the local Catholic parishes. Father Jesus Dumual, representing the Virgen sa Regla congregation, which oversees many of the Lapu-Lapu parishes, spoke publicly at the hearing in support of the proposed ordinance and mobilized members of his congregation to advocate for its passage. Later, in February 2010, IJM staff conducted a half-day training on "Data Gathering and Documentation of Trafficking in Persons Cases in the Community" to 67 participants at the Virgen de Regla Parish in Lapu-Lapu City.

In 2010, IJM staff began to develop a select group of student leaders, who call themselves Justice Advocates, at the University of the Philippines Cebu Campus. The Justice Advocates are very passionate about human trafficking issues and are committed to raising awareness and building a justice advocacy movement within their campus and surrounding communities. IJM staff provided trainings to increase their understanding of trafficking and human rights issues and laws and to build their capacity and will to become passionate advocates. In October 2010, the Justice Advocates organized and conducted their first awareness raising event for 54 participants in one community in Cebu City.

### **Media Coordination**

During the project, IJM has actively pursued media coverage of effective anti-trafficking law enforcement to increase public awareness of the issue of trafficking, stimulate public demand for counter-trafficking action, and maximize the deterrent impact of law enforcement activity. In 2008, IJM assisted with the publication of several stories about successful law enforcement operations that resulted in rescued victims and arrested perpetrators. In February 2009, the Cebu Sun Star began running a series of weekly editorials about the

problem of human trafficking and the local anti-trafficking response. In May 2009, IJM and other anti-trafficking partners received substantial media coverage regarding the launch of the Women and Children's Waiting Area at the Cebu City Courthouse and IJM's Economic Self-Sufficiency and Reintegration Program. Also in May 2009, the Probe Team, a national investigative journalism program that airs weekly on ABS-CBN, featured IJM and its government partners conducting a law enforcement operation in Metro Cebu. The Probe Team program provided positive coverage of the operation, protected the identities of those involved and included editorial comments encouraging a stronger government response to the trafficking issue. During 2009, IJM and DYHP, a local radio station, worked together to produce and air a series of radio dramas and legal discussions featured on one of DYHP's weekly shows.

In November 2008 and November 2009, IJM hosted media forums for media practitioners in the Metro Cebu area, in partnership with the Broadcasters Association of the Philippines (KBP) Cebu Chapter. The 2008 media forum focused on PL and IJM's role in anti-trafficking work, and the 2009 forum focused on multi-organization/agency collaboration, including presentations from the PNP and DSWD. In September 2010, IJM hosted a media training entitled "Reporting Human Trafficking" for a total of 28 media practitioners, including representatives from most of the leading television, radio and print media outlets in the target area. The training was designed to build the capacity of media representatives to cover human trafficking related stories and consisted of lectures and exercises designed to develop participant's journalism skills as applied to the sensitivities and realities of human trafficking victims and stories.

### **Monitoring Impacts of Law Enforcement**

To further monitor any impact that law enforcement operations may have had on prostituted women and girls, IJM solicited feedback from local organizations that regularly provide services to prostituted women and girls on the following topics: 1) access to health services; 2) condom availability; 3) outreach workers access to prostituted women and girls in establishments; and 4) prostituted women and girls' experience with law enforcement. On the whole, service providers did not report any negative trends in the four areas of inquiry. There were a few exceptions, listed below, which IJM worked to address.

- On several occasions, non-IJM trained police conducted raids unrelated to anti-trafficking operations that resulted in the arrest of freelance sex workers who were later charged with vagrancy.
- In 2008 and 2009, service providers reported that funding for condoms and medication were the primary barriers to quality health care for prostituted women and girls. In 2009, a major funding agency temporarily suspended its programs in the Philippines and it was therefore more difficult for prostituted women and girls to receive free condoms and the medicines and treatments that had been available to them in the past. However, in February 2010, the National Health Secretary began a new free condom distribution campaign which has solved the lack of condoms experienced the previous year.

## MORE WORK TO DO

In February 2007, IJM began assisting five women in Cebu who were promised work by one of their neighbors as singers in a band in Miri, Malaysia. Eager to earn money for their families, they quit their jobs and spent a month practicing their singing routines. In November 2006, the women flew to Malaysia only to find that the ‘band’ did not exist and they had been trafficked to two Malaysian bars for sexual exploitation with many other Filipinas. Incredibly, these five were able to escape, despite threats from the manager and lack of assistance from local officials. They met some sympathetic Filipinos who helped them find assistance from the Philippine Embassy and Cebu City Government. Once repatriated, the PNP and IJM assisted them in filing a complaint.

Finally, nearly four years later, these women have been able to see justice done in their case. On October 29, 2010, the women appeared in court as the accused was declared guilty on two counts of trafficking, one carrying a 20-year sentence, the other life in prison.

After the decision was read, Judge Soliver Peras, who issued the decision, delivered an effective exhortation to the courtroom audience: “There are thousands out there still waiting to be rescued. Let’s go.”

There are a growing number of government agencies and NGOs willing to take on the challenges of combating human trafficking in the Philippines. Through concerted and coordinated efforts of LGUs, law enforcement, prosecutors, other agencies and NGOs, and Philippines Embassies abroad, the former victims can know freedom and justice.



*One of the former victims and the IJM Attorney who assisted the public prosecutor wait for the decision.*

## Conclusion

Project Lantern greatly enhanced anti-trafficking casework in the Metro Cebu area, and built the capacity of various sectors of the public justice system through trainings and other initiatives. After this sudden spike in anti-trafficking activity in the target area, a team of researchers found a 79% reduction in the availability of minors for sex during the project, indicating that the publicly available market in sexually trafficked or commercially exploited minors decreased dramatically. Another research team concluded that “at an overall level, Project Lantern’s law enforcement-based approach to combating sex trafficking in Metro Cebu has demonstrated its merit by contributing to significantly enhanced police operations, services to rescued victims, and prosecution of criminals as well as to a public justice system that is increasingly capable and mobilized to crack down on and deter sex traffickers.”

Through Project Lantern, IJM has succeeded in demonstrating that enforcement of Philippines anti-trafficking in persons law is possible and effective in deterring traffickers, thereby reducing the availability of children for exploitation.