

ISSARA STRATEGIC PARTNERS PROGRAM

Technology Solutions to Trafficking in Global Supply Chains

Working Group Conference Call 1

30 March 2016

Opening Remarks

Innovative use of satellite and mobile phone technology over the past few years has proven that technology has the capacity to radically change the way anti-trafficking is done. From use of satellite tracking devices, to use of white noise to generate Wi-Fi for fishermen at sea, to Issara's development of an App intended to tap into worker voices at scale, there are myriads of technologies which have the potential to both directly and indirectly address issues of traceability, forced labour and trafficking in global supply chains.

Issara looks forward to working with retailers, researchers, and other partners to get a better understanding of the current technology solutions being used to address trafficking in global supply chains. The Working Group is resourced to conduct research and capacity-building activities over the course of the year and will build the ideas and suggestions that come out of the initial call and follow-up engagement with participants into a proposed work plan to be shared with working group participants for review.

The purpose of the initial call, led by Working Group Leader Mark Latonero, was to better understand the specific needs and motivations of the private sector in engaging with this issue, as well as to draw on the expertise of other participants to chart out possible next steps and aspirations for the Working Group.

Participants

Amanda Flaim (Duke University)

Jeremy Crawford (Thai Union)

Joe Zhou (Red Lobster)

Josh Stride (Fisheries and Supply Chain consultant)

Mark Latonero (Working Group Leader)

Paul Mylrea (World Wise Foods)

Rachel Munns (Tesco)

Scott Sanders (Brigham Young University)

Lisa Rende Taylor (Issara Institute)

Mark Taylor (Issara Institute)

Emma van Dam (Issara Institute)

Overview of current Technology- focused initiatives at Issara

Issara development of a new mobile phone Application for workers

With funding from USAID, Issara is currently developing a 'Yelp-like' smartphone app for Burmese and Cambodian migrant workers in Thailand, which will facilitate exchange among migrant workers on migration and labour-related topics (as well as other topics of interest).

Myanmar's smartphone market share (out of total mobile phones) is over 90% and Burmese migrant workers in Thailand similarly have largely adopted smartphones. This level of technology market saturation, exceptional among the developing world, offers a unique opportunity for empowering workers whilst simultaneously tapping into 'big data' that can be mined and analysed.

The app will generate a large amount of data that can provide businesses with unique intelligence and visibility of migrant worker views on labour conditions, help NGOs and CBOs seeking to better understand migrant worker needs and priorities, and, importantly, empower migrant workers themselves. In addition to collecting worker voice-driven big data on employers, brokers, and recruiters through the app, Issara will also be able to use the app to push news and updates to migrant workers, as well as route urgent assistance needs to the Issara hotline. The user-study stage of development has now been completed and prototype mock-ups are currently being tested with workers in the field.

Businesses expressed excitement at the potential of the App to provide a new level of transparency around worker voice in global supply chains, and the unique way in which the App is aiming to gather intelligence from the ground.

Issara Prevalence Study of trafficking in the Thai seafood sector 2016

Issara is currently conducting the first ever prevalence study of trafficking in the Thai seafood industry, which will provide a baseline estimate of the prevalence of labour trafficking and exploitation in four to five targeted locations in Thailand's commercial fishing industry. The study will help create a strong understanding of the nature of labour trafficking in the upstream seafood supply chain, including the modes or methods by which trafficking takes place, patterns of trafficking by geographic location, workplace type (fishing vessels, fishmeal plants, and potentially feed mills), and individual migrant worker factors, such as nationality, sex, ethnicity, and geographic origin; as well as collecting data on worker's experiences.

Scott Sanders, Assistant Professor at Brigham Young University, spoke briefly about some of the work he has been doing as a research consultant to Issara, using GIS mapping and spatial imagery to identify key 'polygons' for research where key migrant populations are located. The integration of different applications and mobile phone technologies into the research methodology, including use of staff mobile phones, has greatly strengthened the research.

Key interests identified by participants

Following initial introductions, the business and researcher participants expressed the following interest in further exploring technological solutions to trafficking in global supply chains.

1. **Better understanding how technology can be used** to help businesses gain better visibility of their supply chains and streamline work across multiple data points. Businesses want to make sure they are sourcing from employers who respect their workers' rights, down to vessel level, and better use of data and analytics is one key way of achieving this goal.
2. **Technology solutions that enable accurate, real-time reporting** of supply chain data would be immensely helpful, as would trend analyses of businesses performance relative to labour standards. This would add another, more reliable level of validation to the data coming in from audits. Although audits have clear limitations, audits will continue to play a key part in the due diligence process for global retailers and brands.
3. **Supply chain traceability software** (e.g. VMS systems for monitoring vessels) is useful, but provides no real understanding of labour conditions in the supply chain; primary source data that captures worker voice is needed to supplement this.
4. It is **not clear whether any analysis is currently being done on all the new information being gathered through the new documentation processes which have been put in place by the Royal Thai Government** over the past couple of years. This includes MCPD, worker lists, information gathered through Port-in Port out checks (PIPO), ID cards and passports. The fact that there is now more paperwork provides people with a sense of security, or of having 'ticked the box', but there is a real need to work with suppliers to understand how all the information can be analysed to reveal issues and areas for remediation, as there are clear

risks of data biases and concerns around data being withheld or manipulated. The various new data gathering processes put in place provide interesting opportunities for collaboration and analysis.

5. **The Royal Thai Government has developed several new databases** to collect data being generated as a result of the various new documentation processes put in place. At least 3 databases have been set up, including one on illegal fishing vessels, on fishing information more broadly, and a trafficking database, among others. The Thai Government say they are funding these databases in Thailand, however the databases are likely not being used optimally. An interesting point of action for the working group could be to discuss with government how much of this information is being utilized and whether there is any potential for partnership to better use the data gathered.
6. **Issara is in a unique position to gather in-depth data from businesses and suppliers** on how data is being used over the course of the year. This could lead to the development of business trend reports and sharing of best practice to better utilise the data available.
7. A question was asked around whether the group should be concerned that, in looking at technology solutions to trafficking, **the most vulnerable populations might have their access to technology restricted** by their employers/exploiters and that accordingly, a mapping exercise to better understand potential gaps in worker access to technology may be beneficial. Issara responded that, based on evidence on work in the seafood industry and other industries so far, it is rare for phones to be confiscated, as phones are rarely perceived by employers as being a threat – since they have been able to operate with impunity for years. Phone confiscation has only been an issue with Thai government officials confiscating phones of victims and not permitting access to phones while “in protection.”

Key Decisions & Next Steps

- Issara will conduct a landscape analysis of current technology solutions and share this with group participants, along with a workplan outlining proposed research and capacity-building activities for the year in advance of the next call which will take place in early June.
- Issara will follow up with interested businesses, including those unable to attend the call, through one-on-one conversations to explore in more detail their particular technology needs and systems currently used.
- Working Group calls will take place on a quarterly basis. In the interim, Issara will reach out to participants individually to enquire about interest in subscribing to a list serve space where participants can share and explore issues raised during the call further.