

ThaiWISE

Thai Women In Sweden Empowerment Project



THE THAI MASSAGE INDUSTRY IN MALMÖ

There are over 100 Thai massage parlors in Malmö, and they are engaging over 300 Thai women. Thai women in this industry have been isolated from Swedish society and most of these women are working in exploitative working conditions, which affect their wellbeing and status in Swedish society. These women are also at a high risk of being sexually exploited.

Noomi is based in Malmö and is part of the nationwide NGO called Hela Människan. Noomi will work in cooperation with Malmö Municipality and the Thai women's groups to 1) improve the access for Thai women, in the Thaimassage industry (business owner and workers), to government services; 2) equip women with up-to-date information regarding their rights; 3) provide an introduction to Swedish language; 4) support their integration into Swedish society; 5) improve working conditions

and provide alternative employment opportunities; and 6) promote ethical business practices.

ThaiWISE is a long-term, multi-year project that will result in permanent changes for the target group on both individual and structural level. The project is starting in September 2019. The project is done in collaboration between Noomi and the City of Malmö. The project is funded by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency. Through this partnership, the Project Steering Committee was set up to provide support, guidance and oversight of project progress. The committee members comprise of representatives from Malmö stad/ASF, represented by Sexuell Hälsa, Evonhuset, Integration och Boende and Miljöförvaltningen, as well as Reference Group (Thai women's' representatives), and Noomi.

PROJECT STRATEGIES

Key partners

The project will develop a multipronged approach to work with both the source country (Thailand) and destination country (Sweden). In collaboration with the Trafficking in Persons Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden, Noomi will seek partnership with the Swedish Embassy in Thailand to promote the safe migration of Thai women into Sweden. In Sweden, we will work with local authorities in Malmö who are providing protection services, and the Thai women's networks who play a critical role in supporting Thai women in their community.

Women's participation and empowerment

The women's participation and empowerment are core strategies of the ThaiWISE project. The project will empower the women to be their own agents of change. A reference group, consisting of five women from the community, will be formed. They will be part of the project's steering committee and will have full participation in the decision-making process. They will also participate in the outreach work to help disseminate information to Thai women at Thai massage parlors in Malmö.

Strengthening women networks

We will collaborate with existing Thai women's networks that have been providing support to Thai women. A coordination mechanism will be developed to provide a forum for discussion among network members, exchange of resources and referring cases of abuse. Network members will receive training to further enhance their ability to respond to the needs of vulnerable groups.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Project Objectives

- Increased level of awareness on safe migration practices and the risks of irregular migration among Thai women who plan to migrate to Sweden
- A social safety net for vulnerable groups that will improve living conditions and education level, and contribute to the prevention of exploitation
- Improved accesses to decent work and other employment opportunities
- Increased awareness of the issues facing Thai women in massage industry that lead to policy enforcement and changes

The ThaiWISE project will:

- Develop an online safe migration information package for dissemination to Thai women who are applying for a Swedish visa at the Swedish Embassy in Thailand;
- Set up coordination mechanisms to report and refer cases of abuse;
- Provide training for the Thai women's network members to support those who are victims of abuses or in need of emotional support;
- Conduct outreach and disseminate information concerning rights and government services to both employers and workers in Thai massage parlors in Malmö;
- Provide an introduction to Swedish by a Thai teacher;
- Promote integration into Swedish society through social gatherings between Thai women and Swedish volunteers;
- Promote safe Thai massage business from an environmental and health protection perspective through regulation run by Miljöförvaltningen;
- Establish an online job platform as an alternative to employment, and
- Conduct a series of policy reviews and evidence-based studies for policy dialogues.

CONTACTS

Panadda (Yui) Changmanee
Project Manager, Noomi
Mailing address: Poststugan 78
211 65 Malmö
Sweden

Office tel: 040 632 35 21
Email: panadda.changmanee@helamanniskan.se
Line: ThaiWISE
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ThaiWISEmalmo/>
Web site: www.thaiwise.se