

LIFT
INTERNATIONAL

**FREEDOM
THROUGH
JUSTICE**

A man is sitting on a bamboo mat on the floor of a rustic, wooden structure. He is seen from the back, looking out a large window. Outside the window, laundry, including a pink dress and a red top, is hanging on a line. The room has wooden walls and a ceiling. To the right, a wall is covered in colorful, torn paper or fabric scraps. The lighting is warm and natural, coming from the window.

**2021
IMPACT
REPORT**

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LOOKING BACK ON 2021



Hello all,

2021 was a very busy and important year for LIFT. Turning 10 years old in September, LIFT commemorated the anniversary with a video celebrating LIFT's achievements and milestones, and looking ahead to stopping human trafficking. COVID-19 continued to restrict some of LIFT's traditional work but our teams continued to adapt and found new ways to continue anti-trafficking operations. While these restrictions have contributed to a reduction of some of our direct results compared to previous years, we strengthened partnerships with law enforcement and NGOs, and continued to identify new cases and provide support to victims. We were also able to advance our contribution to systemic change in Thailand. This included our participation in high level committees to revise key laws to stop human traffickers, and connecting stakeholders to foster collaborative casework and protecting the safety and rights of victims.

We're proud of our achievements in 2021 and look forward to 2022.

VISION

FREEDOM FOR
THE EXPLOITED.
JUSTICE THAT PROTECTS.
A WORLD IN WHICH
HUMAN TRAFFICKING
IS NOT TOLERATED

MISSION

PROSECUTE AND PREVENT
HUMAN TRAFFICKING
BY STRENGTHENING
JUSTICE SYSTEMS



2021 RESULTS



78

VICTIMS SUPPORTED,
INCLUDING THOSE
REMOVED FROM HARM



NZD 121K

FINES
CHARGED



8

OFFENDERS ARRESTED



NZD 44K

COMPENSATION
ORDERED



11

OFFENDERS
CONVICTED



237

INTELLIGENCE
PRODUCTS
DISSEMINATED



326 YRS

JAIL TIME SENTENCED



MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

The team consists of five disciplines; analysis, investigation, law enforcement support, legal support and social work.

As in past years, LIFT has utilized multidisciplinary teams to ensure the best outcome of a case, both in terms of the victim's welfare and justice for the victim. The team consists of five disciplines: analysis, investigation, law enforcement support, legal support and social work.



The LIFT multidisciplinary approach has proven to be effective in fighting human trafficking and exploitation within Thailand; focusing on the different disciplines, bringing diverse and knowledgeable perspectives to prosecute and prevent human trafficking by strengthening Thailand's justice system. Working on the issue of human trafficking and exploitation, from the viewpoint of our disciplines, allows LIFT to better identify cases, protect victims/survivors and prosecute offenders.



- LIFT Operation Team Manager

The following sections of the report cover each area of LIFT's case work, however, consolidated efforts from each discipline is made for each case.



LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT, ANALYSIS AND INVESTIGATION

LIFT opened 23 human trafficking cases and closed 14. Offenders continued to utilize the web to sexually exploit vulnerable people, particularly children. 43% of cases supported by LIFT had an internet component where the offender met the victim online or offenders were selling and buying sexual exploitation materials. Most of LIFT's cases were related to sex trafficking and online exploitation, though LIFT supported cases that involved other forms of sexual violence and labour trafficking.

To facilitate case building, LIFT received information reports from a variety of sources including law enforcement and NGO partners, and public online information. As a result of these reports, and LIFT's ongoing open source work, 237 intelligence products were created which enabled law enforcement and LIFT to take the next step in a case. These products included intelligence profiles, situation reports, mappings, and meetings with partners to share findings. The high number of products reflects the persistence of LIFT's team to identify potential victims, and expansion of collection partners to take cases forward.

45 deployments also took place to support law enforcement which included surveillance, providing technical support to obtain evidence, and assist in terminations to stop the offense and ensure victims were safe. Removing victims from harm is the first step to supporting and reintegrating them into their community.

Law enforcement support resulted in 19 victims removed from harm and the arrest of 8 offenders in 2021. To illustrate LIFT's law enforcement support work, please see a story on page 7.



23

CASES OPENED



237

INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTS



45

DEPLOYMENTS



19

VICTIMS REMOVED FROM HARM



8

OFFENDERS ARRESTED

LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT, ANALYSIS AND INVESTIGATION

STORY - TURNING CHALLENGES INTO SUCCESS: PERSISTENCE AND PATIENCE PAY OFF ON A MAJOR CASE

In 2021, LIFT supported a special law enforcement unit, made up of police officers from different provinces along with anti-human trafficking NGOs. In collaboration with this unit, LIFT assisted in the apprehension of offenders for distributing child sexual abusive material (CSAM) on different social media platforms. The victims were a group of underage boys who appeared in CSAM. The field operation happened within 48 hours. Behind the smooth operation and professionalism was 2,920 hours or one year of work. The intelligence and investigations team worked hard to collect evidence and interview witnesses to identify victims and offenders. This was important to ensure the offenders would be charged with human trafficking and not the lesser offence of possession of pornography which did not match the actual offending and would not lead to ultimate justice for the victims.

The investigation was not without challenges. For example:

- **Difficulty identifying the victims:** CSAM images did not reveal the offenders' and victims' faces. All of this made the process of victim identification more difficult than usual. The team had to interview secondary witnesses and search for clues in the background of the material, and compare that with other clips for identification.
- **The offender's behaviour online:** Offenders created short-term online accounts and then closed them to cover up illegal activities. This behaviour made investigating and monitoring a challenge as evidence had to be collected before it was deleted.

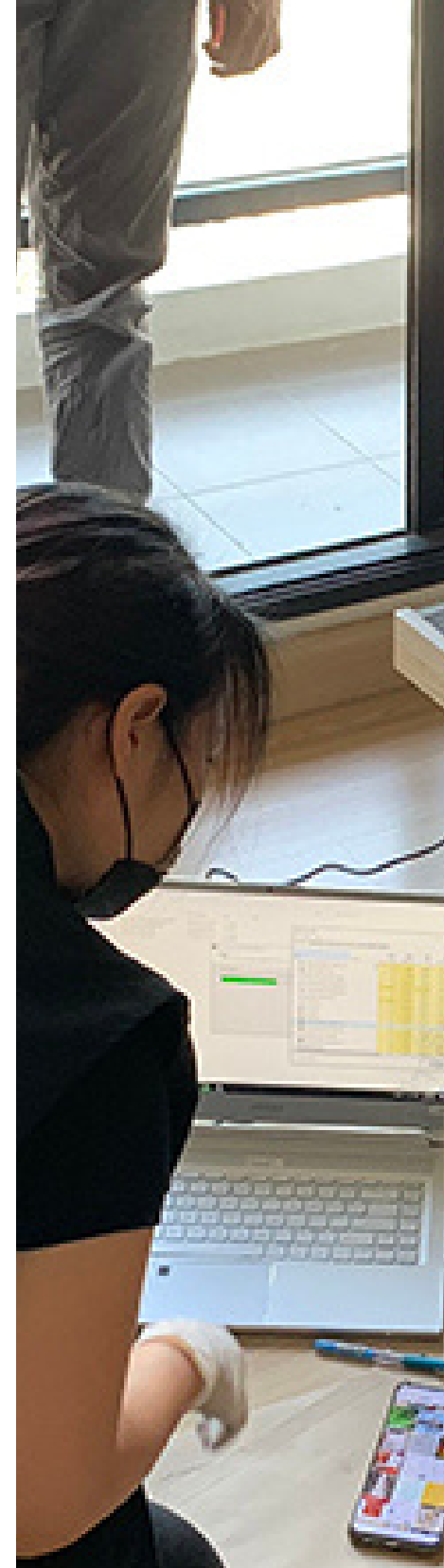


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We LIFT standards.
We LIFT justice.**

- **Collaboration among partners and law enforcement during COVID-19:** Travel restrictions and lack of vaccinations at that time delayed the collaboration process with the task force. Meanwhile, our team was under pressure, due to finding an increasing number of boys joining the offender's platform.

These challenges didn't stop LIFT from achieving its objective of finding and removing the victims from harm and bringing the offenders to justice. LIFT responded to these challenges by finding the best admissible evidence for court proceedings. LIFT also planned real-time operations to be ready when law enforcement required it. The success of getting justice was possible because of the dedication of everyone involved. As a result, two offenders were arrested, in addition to 10 victims removed from harm.

"Nothing is more valuable than bringing an end to a criminal's exploitation of victims. They made over a hundred thousand dollars by administering the secret group via online platforms. This termination will deter copycat offenders from attempting to do this in the future" — LIFT case leader



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SEEKING JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

LIFT's legal team assisted in 11 convictions against trafficking offenders, resulting in 326 years of imprisonment, and 44,000 NZD in compensation ordered by the court as a form of restitution to the victim. LIFT's legal team was involved from the beginning to the end of a case, providing legal advice to law enforcement and LIFT's investigators on evidence collection, building relationships with victims to gain their trust and build their confidence to testify, filing compensation claims for them, and assisting prosecutors during trial.



I feel better, like I have a new life. The offender got the sentence he deserved and I got justice. I feel like I can find a new life with no more nightmares.

- Male survivor who received 6,600 NZD in compensation ordered by the court as a result of LIFT's legal support.



Please see the next page for a story illustrating LIFT's legal support to a victim of online exploitation.

STORY - SEEKING LOCAL JUSTICE FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

The story relates to LIFT's support to a victim of online exploitation and the challenges of seeking justice when physical injury is not a factor. The case involves an offender who threatened to publicize video clips of a teenage victim doing sexual acts if he didn't produce and share more, also known as sextortion. The offender used a fake girl's profile to convince the victim to build an online relationship and share his private video clips before blackmailing him.

Though the offender was arrested nearly two years ago, the case remains open. A major challenge in closing the case is finding a legal remedy for the victim who did not suffer physical injuries, but was mentally scarred from this severe form of exploitation. Generally, Thai courts view psychological trauma as less damaging than physical ones even though the victim was severely depressed and suicidal due to the constant abuse and degradation he endured. Boys and men have not been generally perceived as sex trafficking victims in Thailand which exacerbated the victim's case. Hundreds of online conversations, most of which were cruel, obscene, and controlling, were collected and analysed to present in court as evidence of harm inflicted on the victim. Like in all other cases, LIFT's lawyers and social workers worked together to provide psychological support, and accompanied him from the very beginning of the case to build trust and give him the confidence to testify in court.



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"No victim will start a lawsuit and quit later because LIFT explains every detail that they have to deal with. The victim must be at the centre of decision-making during prosecution. We will tell him LIFT is always on your side."

- LIFT social worker.

As Thailand is a predominately Buddhist country, karma has a major role in everyday life and is integrated even in the judicial system. The Thai justice system reflects cultural values like karma where courts assess punishment on offenders against the pain they caused on the victim.

"We explained to our client how to measure the amount of damages as each act of abuse being equal to one unit of karma for the pain caused. He came back with a compensation amount of about 45,000 NZD which reflected how badly he was traumatized." - LIFT's legal counsel.

The litigation is ongoing for compensation settlement. Sadly, the offender has not indicated any sign of remorse and has not cooperated with the victim and LIFT's legal counsel to reach a settlement. However, with the victim showing more and more confidence each day to provide testimony in the case, LIFT expects a positive outcome and justice for him.



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SURVIVOR CARE

LIFT's social workers worked with law enforcement to prioritize the rights and safety of victims once they were identified. This included accompanying law enforcement during terminations to protect victims from further harm and re-traumatization. Upon removal from harm, LIFT's social workers continued to support victims and survivors, providing case management for them, and coordinating essential services with government and private shelter staff. To facilitate their reintegration, LIFT provided the LIFT Life Fund which are cash grants to survivors who were ready to reintegrate into their community. This included education expenses, livelihood opportunities and emergency support. Over the year, LIFT conducted 53 survivor visits, and provided 13,000 NZD of LIFT Life Funds to 11 survivors.




I wish LIFT can be a silver lining for who all persons who have a tired heart.



Female survivor who has been receiving counselling support from the LIFT team, expressing hope that LIFT will reach other victims.





SYSTEMIC CHANGE

LIFT has worked hard to see long-term, national (systemic) change in anti-human trafficking efforts in Thailand. Over 2021, LIFT has sought this change through its partnerships and capacity support to law enforcement and other anti-trafficking NGOs. LIFT's partnership work has centered on trust-building and collaboration on casework with all law enforcement agencies working on human trafficking. LIFT's success in investigating and prosecuting human trafficking cases drew the attention of high level officials within the Office of Attorney General and Thai parliament where they requested LIFT's participation in reviewing the draft law text to criminalize online grooming. Grooming, a serious precursor to sexual exploitation and abuse is where an offender establishes a relationship with a victim with the intention of abusing or exploiting them. Criminalizing grooming would prevent further harm to victims and provide further deterrence to offenders from committing the offense. Another example is LIFT's work with a UK university in identifying words commonly used by Thai offenders to search for child sexual abuse material (CSAM). The key words will facilitate law enforcement's work in potentially identifying more victims and bringing offenders to justice. These two examples are a result of the trust and relationships LIFT has built with stakeholders and are a major step forward in disrupting human trafficking in Thailand.



227

**LAW ENFORCEMENT &
NGOS STAFF TRAINED**

Capacity support (skills provision) also contributes to long-term change. 227 people were trained by LIFT covering a number of areas such as child friendly practices during investigation and online investigation techniques. The trainings were done based on consultations with partners and participation of speakers from a variety of professions which ensured comprehensiveness and brought awareness to those who were not familiar with the concepts before.

Please see the next page for a story on how LIFT's partnerships evolved in 2021.



SYSTEMIC CHANGE

" When we have a correct understanding of a victim's mental state, the police will obtain evidence in a better way."

**-PARTICIPANT AFTER
ATTENDING LIFT'S
CHILD FRIENDLY PRACTICE
TRAINING IN 2021.**

STORY - A NEW KIND OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN DSI AND LIFT TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The 2021 US State Department Trafficking in Person Report (TIP Report) downgraded Thailand to Tier 2 Watch List which highlighted issues around victim identification and the increase of online sexual exploitation towards vulnerable groups. COVID-19 has impacted anti-human trafficking agencies causing delays in physical investigation work and deployments.

“Human trafficking trends have changed where trafficking occurs across countries and through online platforms. Therefore, we cannot expect to adequately respond to human trafficking if we use the same method to respond to the new trend.

- Matthew Valentine, LIFT Modern Slavery Specialist

For these reasons, a position was established to address capacity constraints among law enforcement and enhance coordination with all stakeholders to comprehensively address this trend. With generous financial support from Cedar Fund, LIFT International started the Modern Slavery Liaison (MSL) pilot in 2021. The MSL encompasses all critical aspects to combatting online sexual exploitation of children by closely supporting the law enforcement agency’s work, leveraging existing resources to investigate, hold offenders to account and quickly connecting victims to aftercare and legal support, internal and external.

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This pilot phase has focused on collaboration with and support to the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) to increase the ability to identify offenders in online human trafficking cases and protect victims throughout the prosecution process, using a victim-centered approach.

Mr. Manop, representative of DSI, mentioned the following about the pilot: ***“the project has provided excellent support to DSI in the areas of investigation, technology, people, and agile coordination. The MSL is the key contact point for cooperating on every need: a one-stop service. At the end of the MSL pilot, we expect to see clearly the impact of this alternative partnership”***

The pilot, while still early, has seen early successes in terms of building trust and relationships with DSI. For example, the project, in collaboration with DSI, identified a case of severe sexual abuse against children, many of whom are very young. Because of the severity of the offense and after learning that it was transnational, DSI was mandated to investigate it. While LIFT has always collaborated with law enforcement agencies in identifying new cases, the MSL staff’s work in receiving reports, proactively investigating, collecting evidence quickly, and liaising with other law enforcement agencies to support, enabled DSI to quickly open and investigate the case.

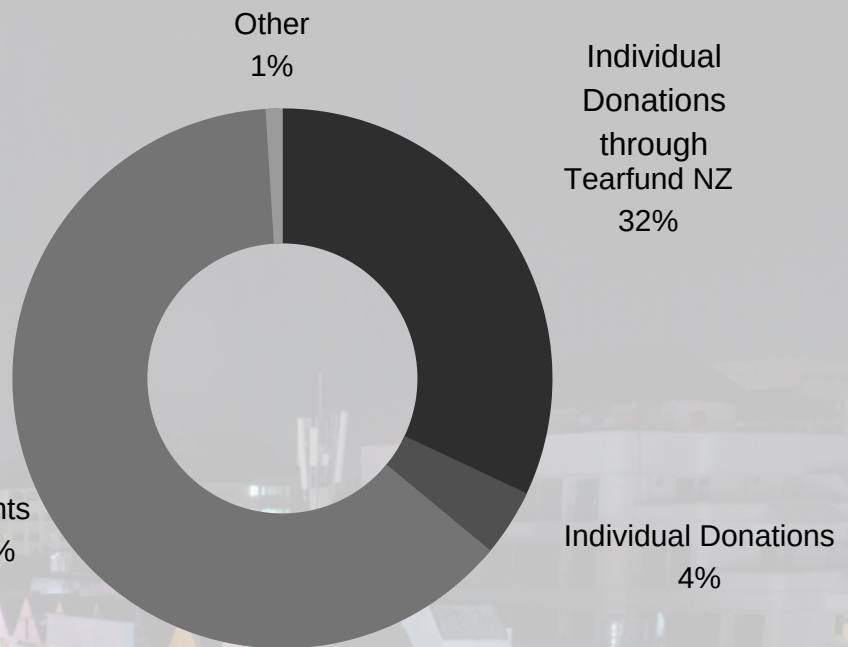


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INCOME FOR THE YEAR 2021

NZD 1,202,889

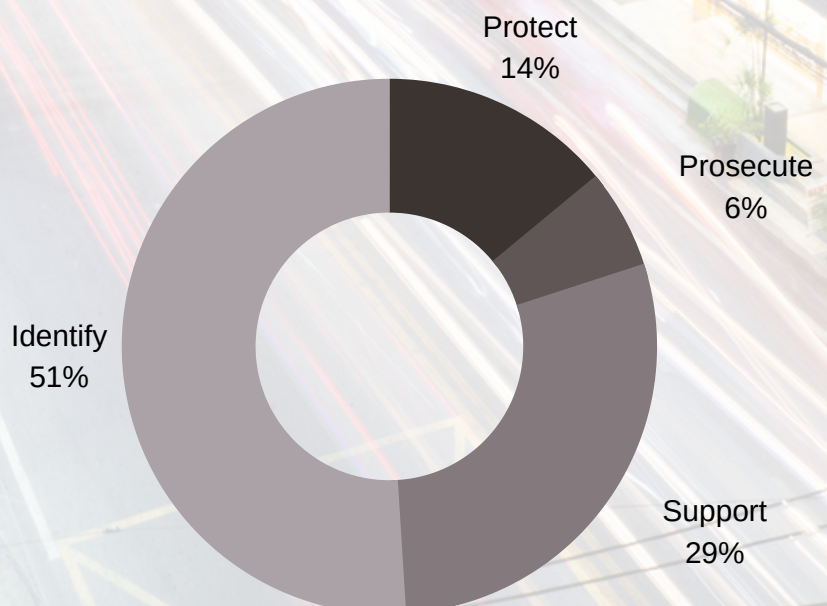
Grants
63%



Human trafficking is a global problem that demands a worldwide response. As a charitable trust, we partner with individuals and institutional funders to accomplish our work. Our fiscal partners in the UK, US and NZ ensure that donations there are tax deductible.

EXPENSES IN 2021

NZD 1,119,311







*Thank you from all of us at
LIFT International*



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