



2001-2016



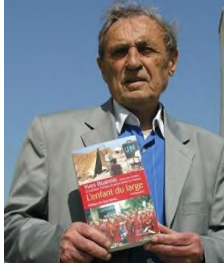
**15 years of action against  
human trafficking and  
sexual exploitation**

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Compilation of the 4 retrospective-letters released for the 15th anniversary of AAT Vietnam in 2016.

## First period: *AAT, a NGO with a history in Vietnam - the origin from 1992 to 2003.*

In 1992 Georges Blanchard (GB), social worker specialized as street educator in France came to Vietnam to visit friends. When GB witnessed children sleeping in the streets and not going to school, GB decided to stay and help the situation.



GB went back to France for one month and returned in Vietnam as country director of the NGO EMDH (Children of the World and Human Rights), a French

organization founded by interested French people who have a connection with Vietnam: Father Yves Buannic, Madeleine Rifaud, Joe Nordman, Regine Deforge and Dr. Henri Carpentier (Founder of the Pasteur Institute of HCMC). At this time, the Vietnamese collaborators of GB are Father Huynh Cong Minh (bishop and Deputy), Ms Ho Thi Minh (prominent journalist) and Mr. Ambassador Vo Anh Tuan (First Vietnamese ambassador to the United Nations). GB cooperated with them and with the Vietnamese Union of Friendship Organization, The Committee for Peace and The Vietnam Association for Promoting



Picnic organized by EMDH for HCMC street children. (1994)

Education. GB opened schools for thousands children and special schools for hundreds street children and children from leprosy.

In 1995, GB designed and ran the very first project against sexual exploitation of children, and in 1998 GB opened the first rehabilitation centre for women victims of sexual exploitation in Vung Tau. At that time the Vietnamese authorities did not agree to recognize the existence of human trafficking and of sexual exploitation of minors, and the projects ran with fake names and objectives with fake names and objectives.

In 2001, GB left EMDH to open the NGO AFESIP Vietnam, an independent entity under the consortium of AFESIP Cambodia.

At end of 2001, in Ho Chi Minh City, GB

opened the first center in Vietnam for the rehabilitation of women victims of human trafficking of sexual exploitation and built the outreach team of peer educators to regularly meet women involved in prostitution.

In 2002, the HCMC Women Union agreed to become the partner of AAT and to formalize the project.



Mr. Ambassador Vo Anh Tuan

After a difficult beginning the project began to provide results and the **first major success recorded was in 2003 when the government agreed to recognize the existence of Human Trafficking and to consider victims as victims and no more as criminals.**

## The first step of impacting changes 2003 to 2005.

### 2003:

The AAT Thailand office and the AAT rehabilitation center in Vietnam was officially open. Before the recognition by the Vietnamese government of the existence of trafficking in 2003, the authorities had criticized the AAT project, which supported a rehabilitation center and employed social workers, as a waste of money because according to them, human trafficking did not exist in Vietnam .

AAT needed to develop a strategy to facilitate exposure visits by the relevant authorities to other countries and counterpart organizations, to discover the full extent of the situation for Vietnamese victims of trafficking. At this time, NGOs in Vietnam working in this field were only authorized to develop prevention programs connected to poverty reduction with the message about the risk of trafficking. But the government did not allow NGOs to have direct access to victims



until 2010. Due to these restrictions, AAT met victims of trafficking in the country where they had been trafficked and before they returned home.

### 2004:

The COMMIT (Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking) was about to come into existence. Official relations between countries impacted by trafficking did not exist before and AAT identified the need to develop rescue and repatriation mechanisms as well as unifying different state agencies



in the neighboring countries.

AAT organized the first delegation of Vietnamese, Cambodian and Thai authorities to Cambodia for a four day field visit travelling between Siem-Reap and Phnom Penh. The first objective was to convince the Vietnamese authorities about the reality of human trafficking and to introduce them to





their counterparts in the neighboring countries. The Thai government was more advanced in relation to the problem of trafficking and sex exploitation and was able to share their experiences and the results of their studies with the group

2004 was a year when initiatives to provide increased services were further developed:

\*In July, AAT opened the social enterprise “Fair Fashion”, to provide training and job opportunities for victims.

\*AAT also commenced the first counseling service in Ho Chi Minh City about sex related issues and human trafficking. During the first 3 years of the service, 2,373 people contacted AAT from all provinces in Vietnam.

\*AAT was the first NGO to successfully rescue and repatriate victims trafficked to Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. In response to the identified needs AAT placed three social workers in three International Detention Centers in Thailand, organized a Vietnamese delegation to meet counterparts in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, and officially cooperated with local organizations, “Tenaganita” and “Think Center”. In addition, we developed watchdog groups in Thailand and created the first regional taskforce group with local and international NGOs.

The base of AAT’s work was then recognized and enabled AAT to be granted permission by the authorities to have direct access to victims of human trafficking which we had previously been denied.



1st regional taskforce meeting, 29/11/2005

**2005-2006:**

The Vietnamese National Assembly seriously followed our project and introduced the work of AAT and IOM to ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and invited ASEAN parliamentarians to visit our projects. This process facilitated the inscription of Vietnam on the

World Trade Organization and the AIPEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation). The joint work of AAT and IOM was the first existing solution against human trafficking and illegal migration that Vietnam was able to show in such international forums.

In August 2005, AAT opened another rehabilitation center in Can Tho city, and in Hanoi, the Women’s Union began to develop plans for the opening of the Peace House center based on the AAT model.

The work of AAT has largely contributed to the supply of examples and models for the work and discussion on the COMMIT, between UNIAP (United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking) and the 6 sub-Mekong concerned countries.



Vietnamese delegation and local partners in Malaysia

**2006 to 2010: On the way, but still uncertain.**

**2006:**

The Vietnamese Women Union publicly recognized that the AAT centers have demonstrated its efficient rehabilitation program inside the facilities. This is taking into account the 72% of victims reintegrated and stabilized after returning home. Conversely during the same period, around 60% of victims that re-turned home without any rehabilitation were re-trafficked.

2006 was the year that Vietnam and Cambodia signed the anti trafficking MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) together.

**AIPO meeting:**



The AIPO (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization) meeting on legal cooperation to combat human trafficking in women and minors, held in July 2006, was one of the most important events about human trafficking in the region. The parliamentarians came to Vietnam to ensure that the country would start implementing programs and structures tackling human trafficking and migration issues in order to be able to enter the WTO (World Trade Organization) and the AIPEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation). The parliamentarians visited the only two structures existing at that time: The Alliance Anti Traffic and the IOM projects. Until this workshop, AAT was closely followed by the Vietnamese National Assembly.

**2007:**

In September 2007, Georges Blanchard, AAT CEO and founder, was recognized by the Minister of the Population, Family and Children Committee, Mr. Lê Thị Thu, with a medal for his participation on the development of the



protection and the education of Vietnamese children. Later, Georges received two more medals for his participation for the development and the protection of women, and for the peace and diplomacy between countries.

2007 was the year that AAT developed new programs to prevent human trafficking, sexual exploitation and child abuse. The Sex Education on sex related risks and Reproductive health program started in 2008.



First sexual education training at school in 2008

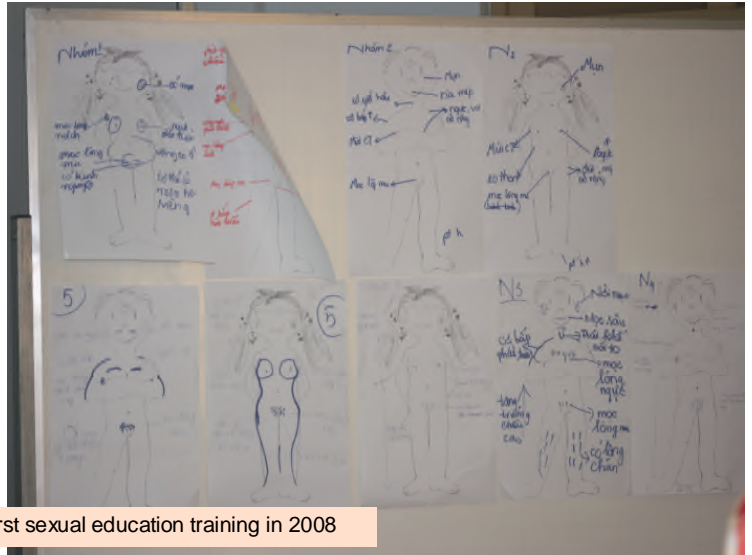
By 2015, the program has reached more than 20 000 children in public schools. The schools applying the program have noticed that the records of early pregnancies among students dropped to zero compared to an average of 15 cases per year previously.

The program was considered a success and was recognized by the Vietnamese government as one of the most effective programs existing in Vietnam for the children's self-protection.

Despite all the good results achieved by the program, AAT struggled continuously to collect enough funds for this project. AAT senses that prevention actions in Vietnam are not the favorite topic that foundations want to support.

By the end of 2009, AAT signed with the JTIP (Trafficking in Person office of the USA) for a half million dollars cooperation project. It was a great opportunity for the organization to demonstrate its capacity to work in Vietnam. The results of the work performed were very important and efficient to the objectives of the partnership. (Results on the next retrospective letter)

At the same time, AAT set up the rehabilitation and reintegration processes in Vietnam and in Thailand, AAT increased significantly the number of rescues of Vietnamese young women from brothels abroad. In order to provide better services to the rescued women, AAT was allowed to have two social workers working on three state detention centers in Thailand.



First sexual education training in 2008

## 2011-2016: From top to bottom

### 2011-2013

The period between 2011 and 2013 was the most active on action against human trafficking in Vietnam. The same period marks cooperation funding with the United State Office against Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP).

Since 2002, AAT has spent the majority of the time demonstrating to the authorities that human trafficking exists in Vietnam and advising and assisting to help them to develop systems and mechanisms.

In January 2012, the new law on Prevention, Suppression against Human Trafficking was implemented.

The Vietnamese Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) recognized and highlighted AAT's contribution in a number of areas, some of which predated the current program. Particular emphasis was placed on the contribution that AAT had made to the new Law on Prevention, Suppression against Human Trafficking.

Down the years, the Vietnamese police have been cooperative and active. At that time, the Vietnamese police effectively defined trafficking victims as: "Any Vietnamese in a foreign country who cannot be back to Vietnam for any other reasons than economic can be considered as a victim".

As result, AAT work was facilitated and in Thailand, AAT continued to increase the number of rescuing operations of Vietnamese trafficked to that country. Cases like the fifteen women trafficked served as surrogated mothers\* in Thailand by a Taiwanese on February 2011. *\*Women used to generate a child in the womb and prostituted during pregnancy time. Soon after the birth the baby is delivered to the one who "ordered it"*



In Vietnam, AAT, in cooperation with the Vietnamese police, participated to the first rescue of boys and girls from Dien Bien province (North-West of Vietnam), trafficked to work at factories in Ho Chi Minh City.

In September 2011, 23 children were rescued and accommodated at the AAT center before referred to another NGO in the North, Blue Dragon, to continue the reintegration and protection work after their return home.



In 2012, AAT started to organize the training for 366 MOLISA officers on raising awareness and developing skills to prevent human trafficking in all provinces of Vietnam. Other program of community rehabilitation in Bach Giang Province, north of Vietnam, close to the Chinese border, was provided to 100 women previously trafficked to China.

In these 3 years, AAT supported 368 victims, including 88 children. 93 of these cases were referred by the Anti-Crime Police.

About the cooperation with the United States department against human trafficking, AAT mentioned into the 2013 report: "The US J/TIP was the first AAT partner to be aware of what is development through action against trafficking, and some specialists who visited us were full of expertise and knowledge of the region and of the problematic, to an extent only





a few people have". Furthermore, because AAT's project expects to influence politics, the US Embassy and the Consulate, through their political officers, were very supportive and beside us along the process. Yes, anti-trafficking is also a political problem and that can be strongly reduced if a state agrees

to make efforts. After the conclusion of the cooperation with the with J/TIP, AAT face a drawback as ten year of all the work and efforts invested. This regression is particularly demotivating .

During the period supported by the J/TIP, the Vietnamese authorities were very active and vigilant to develop a nice image of them. At this time, Vietnam is at Tier 2 watch list aiming to reach Tier 2. AAT is fully aware that despite efforts, Vietnam did not match for Tier 2. Economic growth has increased significantly but diverging from the level of social development, which means inequality.

The constant ignorance about human trafficking at village and province levels shows that potential and existing victims are not protected and do not benefit of adequate support as mentioned on the 2012 law.

AAT gave its advice to the USA government about the risk of placing Vietnam in a higher Tier but other political issues influenced by the growing tension with China and the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement were taken as priority.



*Note by AAT (December 18, 2013): "AAT will not agree for Vietnam to be back to TIER 2 until state officers at a low level, such as villages, wards or district levels, are aware of and able to understand human trafficking, for them to provide enough support or to refer persons exposed to appropriate services allowing the protection of the citizens."*

**2014-2016**

AAT could preview the consequences when Vietnam was ranked in Tier 2. The authorities supposed to continue the work as previously during our project, but it is no longer the case. Now, corruption and fraud found its place in the rescue of the victims, letting those who cannot pay without solution.

As for the example of cases of victims rescued in Malaysia, The Malaysian court have recognized them according to their stories. For those returning with the status as victims to Vietnam, the local authorities did not recognize them as such leaving them without any supports according to the law.

There are victims claiming justice and requesting the prosecution of their traffickers living freely in Vietnam, but despite complains, the victims cannot retrieve justice as their right for support and protection.

In addition, AAT is no longer supported by foreign governments, and it is no more able to use foreign intervention for the justice for victims.



**Xuan claiming justice: [https://youtu.be/\\_IM9dJ-HmtM](https://youtu.be/_IM9dJ-HmtM)**

Human trafficking in Vietnam is not calling much attention and the collective interest in the cause has fallen, offering an open market for traffickers. AAT continue to fighting for the cause aiming social development and recognition of human rights for all.

For few organizations, the cause has become an opportunity for the charity business through media coverage and the over exploitation of the cause permit the emergence of heroes. Unfortunately, very few victims become heroes and no heroes know what victims endure.

In opposition of the situation described above, AAT reinforced his cooperation with the section of the National security police and thanks to this active cooperation, we were able to strongly reduce the racket on victims' families, and in 2016 we helped to dismantled a network of trafficking from Hanoi to Russia, and we continue to investigate on a bride agency network selling women to China.



## AAT in the coming years:

After a long time working on consequences of human trafficking, AAT do not agree to act only when women and children become victims and change its strategy for preventative actions among the population.

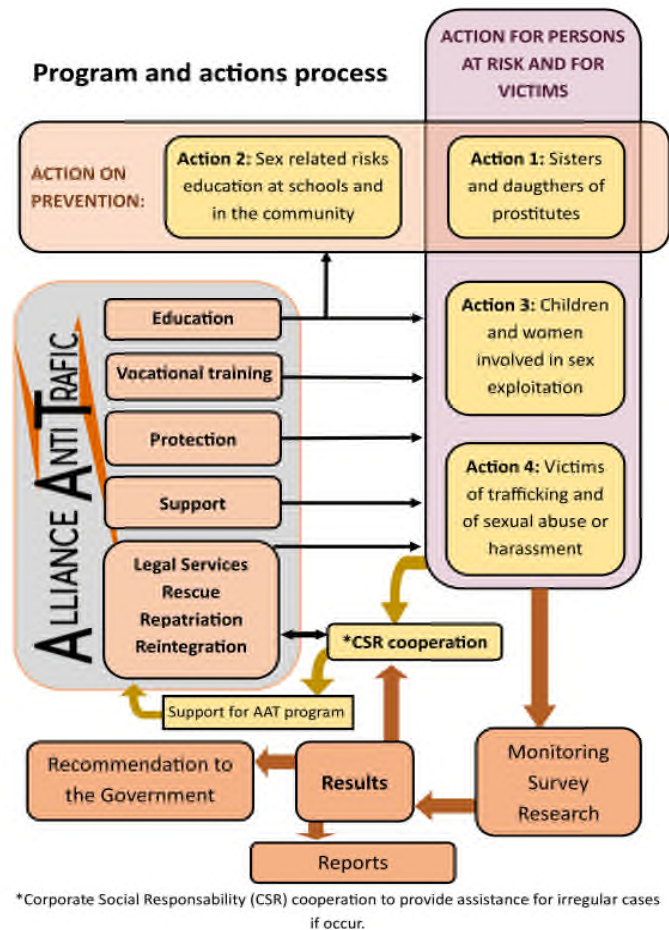
Since 2007, AAT began to implement the pilot prevention program at schools to educate children about sex related risks and risks of sex exploitation, abuse, human trafficking, domestic violence and safe migration.

Since 2002 AAT focus on activities to women and children and the consequences of trafficking. However, AAT do not act only after women and girls become victims. Since 2007, AAT also focus on preventative actions to the Vietnamese community, especially dedicated to children. This is why AAT created the project to educate children at school about sex related risks, reproductive health and self defense. The challenge for next the years is to advocate with the government, the Ministry of Education, to apply the subject in all Vietnamese schools.

The training course being well delivered and received shows that the children displayed good aptitude of what they learned reflecting on their knowledge of their self protection.

With the development of the marketing charity campaigns it is more complicated to find funding for preventive actions than for victim support, as we do not agree to expose stories and images of poor women or children in distressing circumstances.

For 2017 AAT starts to develop new solutions involving companies with supplier and/or based in Vietnam through Corporate Social Responsibility cooperation.



## Prevention is better than cure

Desiderius Erasmus

*Prevention is better than cure, even if it is less visual and emotional.*

*An integrated strategy for development would consist of promoting effective prevention.*

*Prevention actions should be the priority of all actors wishing to act for development.*

*We are now working at the start instead of just the end.*

## Total of main results reached by AAT in 15 years

### **107.680 beneficiaries**

**701** victims repatriated from Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, China, Macau, Taiwan, Laos and Cambodia.

**1.189** women and children withdraw from prostitution.

**1.094** victims in rehabilitation process, in centers or in the community.

**52.800** women and minors involved in prostitution supported in Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho.

**742** Vietnamese citizenship documents made (at legal age of 15 years old)

**42.091** Pupils trained on sexual education and reproductive health in cooperation with NGOs: Mekong Plus, Thien Chi and Anh Duong.

**686** Girls at risk, protected and maintained at school. (With scholarship)

**1.306** of Government official and social workers were trained by AAT.

**7.071** contact to AAT counseling (visit and hotline).

**350.000** condoms distributed.

**1,561,206** meals provided to beneficiaries.

**7** researches on Vietnamese migration published.

**2** Vietnamese new laws and regulations on migration and human trafficking supported through AAT field experience.

For more information about our work, please visit [www.allianceantitrafic.org](http://www.allianceantitrafic.org)

*Alliance Anti Traffic (AAT) is a French NGO and a Thai foundation created by peers and by social workers in France, Vietnam, Thailand, and a network-alliance of partners in 15 countries. AAT Vietnam is the first AAT program opened since 2001 and was formally named AFESIP Vietnam. AAT acts as a pioneering organization and its actions develop models for agreements (MoU) between countries and standards for victim support. AAT is the first organization making the firsts models for repatriation of Vietnamese rescued in Thailand, Malaysia, Laos and Singapore. AAT opened the first models of rehabilitation centers for women victims of trafficking in Vietnam, an outreach team only composed by peer educators to follow around 3000 women and teens involved in prostitution and the first program of prevention on sex related risks and reproductive health in formal schools.*