



Matthew Friedman

Regional Technical Advisor

The Mekong Club

Liberty Asia

Matthew Friedman is an international human trafficking expert with more than 22 years of experience as an activist, program designer, evaluator, and manager. He currently supports the new counter-trafficking initiatives of three organisations: Freeland Foundation, based in Thailand; Liberty Asia, based in Hong Kong; and the Mekong Club, an organisation of Hong Kong-based private sector business people who have joined forces to fight human trafficking in Asia, which he also founded. These new initiatives include providing training and technical assistance to corporations wishing to become compliant with the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act; adapting smartphone technology for use as translation units by law enforcement officers; developing a regional hotline in the Greater Mekong Sub-region to assist migrants in human trafficking situations; and developing a school-based curriculum for educating students about human trafficking and modern slavery.

From 2006 to 2012, Friedman was the Regional Project Manager of the United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) in Thailand, an inter-agency coordinating body that links the United Nations system with governments and civil society groups in China, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Under his leadership, UNIAP refined and expanded a world-renown six-country alliance (COMMIT) that has helped to advance a full range of government initiatives aimed at improving the overall counter-trafficking foundation across Southeast Asia. From 1991-2006, Friedman worked for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Thailand, Bangladesh and Nepal. During this period, he designed and managed both country and regional human trafficking programs, helped to establish a counter-trafficking regional training center, and

participated in resource mobilisation and production of two award-winning international films about sex trafficking in Nepal and India.

Friedman is frequently cited in the news media on issues related to human trafficking (CNN, SCMP, Economist, New York Times, Herald Tribune, BBC, etc) and slavery in Southeast Asia and invited to speak at conferences around the world. He is the author of nine books, on subjects ranging from human trafficking to the ancient art of Bangladesh metal casting.