

INFORMAL WORKERS: STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTION

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This is research paper on strategies on social protection for six groups of informal workers, namely agricultural workers, home-based workers, micro-entrepreneur, workers in transportation, personal services and manual workers. These groups of workers are considered disadvantaged. The research, commissioned by the Ministry of Labour, finalised in 2007.

The conceptual framework of the research were two levels. At the international level decent work, risk management and global situation of informal work arrangement were key concepts. At local level, the national economic and social development plan, national strategy of labour and situations of specific groups of labour have been used to guide data collection from field survey and data analysis. Data were collected from 933 workers in four regions of Thailand. In-depth interview and focus group discussions with all groups of workers were also employed to complement data from field surveys. Interviews of 5 experts on labour , social protection, and national policy were conducted.

Study found that each group of workers shared common and different characteristics. This resulted in different protection strategies. Out of the most cited strategies, organization of workers seemed a viable solution to some groups of workers such as agricultural workers and home-based workers whereas other groups of workers resorted to other strategies as worker's organization seemed out of reach.

The research recommended an integrated strategy for the protection of workers in the informal economy.

Keywords: informal economy, informal workers, specific groups of labour, social protection , labour protection, decent work, and integrated strategy

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