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Bangladesh Counter Trafficking-In-Persons Program

Trafficking-in-persons (TIP) is the fastest growing criminal activity worldwide and takes several forms, including exploitation of men, women and children into bonded or abusive labor or the commercial sex trade. TIP is one of the largest sources of illegal income globally. Trafficking violates basic human rights, damages lives, feeds corruption, exerts an economic toll on governments and citizens, and harms society at all levels.

Bangladesh has some of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. Some of the same societal and economic drivers that are at play that result in people becoming the victims of trafficking, in combination with complex power structures, entrenched social norms, and deeply embedded cultural and religious beliefs, are factors that help explain the high prevalence of child marriage in Bangladesh. Problems exist globally with children being trafficked under the guise of marriage and some children fall into the hands of traffickers stemming from problems that arise as consequences of child marriage: marriage break downs, abandoned partners, and runaways. Trafficking and child marriage can be inextricably interconnected.

The seven-year Bangladesh Counter Trafficking-In-Persons (BC/TIP) Program, funded by USAID and implemented by Winrock International, has been working since 2014 in 20 trafficking-prone districts to address human trafficking and child marriage. BC/TIP has robust interventions in all four of USAID's areas of emphasis: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership.

BC/TIP connects local and national government representatives, non-governmental organizations, and citizens and community leaders to prevent trafficking-in-persons and child marriage, reverses damage done to survivors by providing comprehensive protection services, prosecute crimes of perpetrators, and engage all levels of society as change agents in curbing trafficking and child marriage.

BC/TIP

- The USAID's BC/TIP Program works collaboratively to reduce the prevalence of human trafficking and child marriage in Bangladesh by:
- strengthening the capacity of communities to identify people at-risk and victims of trafficking and child marriage and take action.
- ensuring trafficking and child marriage victims' access to assistance.
- Increasing the responsiveness and capacity of criminal justice actors to ensure justice for trafficking and child marriage victims;
- Facilitating effective and coordinated partnerships among stakeholders to combat trafficking and child marriage.

In addition, BC/TIP works in Cox's Bazar to support both host communities and Rohingya populations to save them from trafficking, child marriage and gender-based violence.

In the COVID-19 pandemic situation, BC/TIP redirects a part of its program to provide support to vulnerable families of people at-risk, victims and survivors of trafficking.



Country:
Bangladesh; 20 Districts

Program Dates:
2014 – 2021

Program Division:
Human Rights, Education and Empowerment (HREE)

Prevention activities focus on increasing the capacity of select communities to identify TIP victims and people at-risk of trafficking and child marriage. BC/TIP works to equip students, migrants, and local leaders with tools, support, and innovative methods to inform and mobilize communities to identify TIP incidents/traffickers, promote safe migration, connect survivors to services, and address root causes of TIP. BC/TIP trains migrants on safe and informed migration, monitors recruitment agencies, activates counter-trafficking committees and improves the capacity of government officials and other stakeholders to address trafficking and with these adopts a community based approach to address the issue of Child Marriage.

Protection activities offer a survivor-centered approach to ensure quality support services offered to survivors of trafficking and child marriage. To ensure improved access to assistance, protection activities build comprehensive referral mechanisms, integrated assistance, survivor leadership, and community-based reintegration support. BC/TIP trains local partners in service standards, case management, and psychosocial support to ensure consistent, high-quality services that meet survivors' needs.

Prosecution activities focus on increasing the responsiveness and capacity of criminal justice actors to ensure justice for trafficking and child marriage victims. BC/TIP employs multi-disciplinary trainings, networking and capacity-building on rules and laws governing TIP, child marriage, migration and witness protection. These efforts increase understanding of justice sector actors' roles and responsibilities in prosecuting traffickers and providing support to TIP and child marriage survivors. BC/TIP also carries out coordinated advocacy to expand government oversight and improved monitoring of labor recruitment processes/agencies that help increase arrests and prosecution of the crime.

Partnership activities build on established relationships to effectively combat human trafficking and child marriage through collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), the Ministry of Social Welfare (MOSW) the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA), the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS), the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE), partnerships with the private sector and civil society, and coordination with other international

organizations. BC/TIP fosters partnerships at the national, regional, district, upazila and union level. Partnerships enable community and local authorities prevent TIP and child marriage; monitor migration; strengthen protection of and services for survivors; improve criminal justice actors' understanding of how to enforce laws; and contribute to effectively address TIP and child marriage in Bangladesh.

Cox's Bazar response activities provide support to both host communities and Rohingya populations living in camps to save them from trafficking, child marriage and gender-based violence. The program mobilizes youth groups, elected bodies, religious leaders, members of CTC and coordinates with government offices including district administration and camp authorities to address TIP, CM and GBV in Ukha and Teknaf under Cox's Bazar district.

COVID-19 redirection activities provide support to vulnerable families of people at-risk, victims and survivors of trafficking. The program provides livelihood support to at least 500 families, create awareness among members of CTC, volunteer groups on how to prevent the spread of infection in the community.

