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Counter Trafficking Newsletter

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**BANGLADESH COUNTER
TRAFFICKING-IN-PERSONS (BC/TIP)**

* A program covering 25 districts in Bangladesh*



**WINROCK
INTERNATIONAL**

Five Country Ambassadors Visited Ovibashi Enterprise

On 4 December 2015, five Women Ambassadors visited the USAID-supported ANIRBAN network as part of the observation of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign. US Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, Ambassador of the Republic of France - Ms. Sophie Aubert, Ambassador of Kingdom of the Netherlands – Ms. Leoni Margaretha Cuelenaere, Ambassador of Norway – Ms. Merete Lundemo and Ms. Yasoja Gunasekera the Sri Lankan High Commissioner met with ANIRBAN survivors from Jessore, Cox’s Bazar, Rajshahi, Meherpur, and Dhaka. The ANIRBAN Survivors’ Voice network was established under USAID’s Actions for Combatting Trafficking-in-Persons (ACT) program. After the close of the program in 2014, it continued and established the Ovibashi Enterprise, which is financially self-sustainable. Currently, USAID’s BC/TIP program is providing training to strengthen ANIRBAN’s organizational capacity. The survivors shared their stories, spoke about their re-integration and the challenges they have faced and are still facing; and how important it is for them to be able to work with the communities to create the necessary awareness needed for avoiding situations in which they found themselves trapped into. The meeting imbued all the Ambassadors with a better understanding of the survivors’ stories and the challenges they face.

US Ambassador Visited BC/TIP Program in Cox’s Bazar

On 21 December 2015, US Ambassador Marcia Bernicat visited BC/TIP partner YPSA’s shelter home Shanto Niloy, established and operated in Cox’s Bazaar since 2009 with the funding from USAID. During her visit, the Ambassador spoke to survivors and survivor group members (ANIRBAN), peer leaders and BC/TIP’s local partners (YPSA, Change Makers and BSEHR). BC/TIP staff and partners stressed the complexity of trafficking and irregular migration, noting that Cox’s Bazaar is unique as many people travel internally in Bangladesh to Cox’s Bazaar in order to seek paths toward illegal migration and risk finding themselves in trafficking situations. BC/TIP staff and partners identified Malaysia, the Andaman’s, Sri Lanka and Thailand as some of the destination countries and spoke about the need for a regional approach to combatting TIP and illegal migration. ANIRBAN survivors shared their stories and their work to raise awareness about the dangers of illegal migration and TIP in their communities. Peer leaders also shared how they are mobilizing communities to take action against human trafficking and local dalals. Survivors and peer leaders related that “often trafficking agents or dalals are relatives of trafficked victims and they are continuously changing their fraudulent recruitment strategies. Although the GOB has taken steps to reduce TIP and illegal migration, much remains to be done at both the local and national level.”



USAID Counselor Meet with ANIRBAN

On 6 November 2015, USAID Counselor Susan Reichle and USAID Bangladesh Mission Director Janina Jaruzelski met with Survivors' Voice ANIRBAN (hereafter ANIRBAN), an organization supported by USAID's Bangladesh Counter Trafficking-in-Persons (BC/TIP) program. It was created during the previous USAID supported Actions for Combating Trafficking-in-Persons (ACT) program and continued under BC/TIP and their self-initiated livelihood named Ovibashi Enterprise. ANIRBAN links courageous survivors of trafficking and labor migration who understand the challenges and trauma of human trafficking very personally.



Members of ANIRBAN serve as community resources, build the confidence of other survivors, advocate for survivor protection at the community level, and promote improved services for other survivors. ANIRBAN leaders shared their stories and spoke about the challenges they faced during their re-integration and how they had been empowered by the establishment of ANIRBAN, which gave them a voice and a hold into the communities they are working with. They also presented their activities at the community level and how they work towards creating an enabling environment for other survivors. ANIRBAN portrayed the challenges faced during their fight for victims' repatriation and for justice. A presentation of their livelihood initiative and how they created a linkage with other survivors through this, was also given.

Peer Leader Training: Community Volunteers Leading TIP Prevention

The BC/TIP program strengthens the capacity of communities to identify trafficking victims and take action to prevent and address it. BC/TIP uses peer education and survivor leadership as a primary mechanism to reach men, women, and children at risk of trafficking. Peer leaders are important drivers in BC/TIP's community-based interventions as they are the dynamic citizens who dare to speak up about the truths of human trafficking and labor exploitation.

Peer leaders work tirelessly through outreach in schools, courtyards, and other community venues to educate the members of their local communities about how to identify and report suspected traffickers as well as how to seek safe opportunities for labor migration. Through community actions, Peer leaders help others to identify vulnerable individuals and instances of TIP. This enables communities to report potential trafficking cases and refer the victims for services.



As part of this ongoing effort, BC/TIP has trained 158 Peer leaders through its four sub-grantees Rights Jessore, BSHER, Proyas and Change Maker. Among the trained peer leaders, 86 were male and 72 were female covering 8 Upazilla and 24 Union Parishad of Chittagong, Jamalpur, Dhaka, Jessore and Chapai Nawabganj districts.

BC/TIP Bridging Local Institutions to Combat TIP through Capacity Building of Counter Trafficking Committees

The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act (PSHTA) 2012 and the National Plan of Action (NPA) for Combating Human Trafficking recognizes that government-led Counter Trafficking Committees (CTC) as key actors to establish effective and comprehensive systems at the local level to prevent Trafficking-in-Persons (TIP), provide protection and reintegration support to survivors, and prosecute traffickers. More active CTCs lead to increased action at the local level, which results in improved information and services for vulnerable groups and survivors.

The BC/TIP program works with institutions to implement sustainable interventions focused on identifying and assisting victims and vulnerable individuals. To this effort, BC/TIP has targeted members of the Counter Trafficking Committees (CTC) of three different tiers of the local government units i.e. Union, Upazila and District. BC/TIP through its implementing partners has conducted four such trainings: three in Union level and one in Upazila level in Rajshahi and Jessore district. Through this effort altogether 86 CTC members have been trained, 63 male and 23 female, by BC/TIP's sub-grantee Rights Jessore and Proyas. The training focuses on TIP awareness and the roles and responsibilities of the CTC members to contribute to the successful implementation of the goals and objectives defined in the National Plan of Action. At the union level, BC/TIP encourage the CTCs to take local actions such as raise awareness, provide referrals, and identify traffickers. At the Upazila level, BC/TIP builds the capacity of CTCs to work with the police; and at the district level, BC/TIP support CTCs in overseeing prosecution.



MoU with NLASO approved by the National Board of Directors

BC/TIP is in the process of signing an MoU with the National Legal Aid Services Organization (NLASO). This MOU is intended to facilitate collaboration between Winrock International and NLASO, in areas related to awareness, training and efficient and effective legal aid activities to prevent human trafficking and ensure justice is delivered. Through the partnership with NLASO, the BC/TIP program will organize training for peer leaders and members of counter trafficking committees (CTCs) at Union, Upazila and District level; legal aid officers, judges and panel lawyers of district legal aid committees. NLASO will facilitate sessions in the training on legal aid issues including referral mechanisms, eligibility criteria and application processes in order to improve access to the existing government scheme.

NLASO will also emphasize how it provides legal aid to the victims of human trafficking in accordance with the Legal Aid Services Act 2000 (LASA).

The draft MoU was presented at the last meeting of National Board of Directors of NLASO. The board unanimously approved the MoU. The meeting was presided over by the Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs on 29 December 2015.

BC/TIP has Received Approval for Police Training

Police headquarters has approved the three-day long course 'Human trafficking Course for Front Line Enforcement Officials' to be delivered in Chittagong on a pilot basis. BC/TIP has received the approval letter for the said training on 23 November 2015, signed by Md. Firoz Al Mujahid, Additional DIG (Training and Sport), police headquarters, Dhaka, for 25 participants of

Sub-Inspector and Inspector level from different districts and departments of police in the Chittagong Division.

The training is aimed at enhancing intelligence management, investigative response to trafficking in person occurrences, as well as championing a uniform standard of victim management that promotes recovery and reintegration. BC/TIP, in consultation with DIG,

operating market-oriented short skills training courses and employment support services for unemployed and under-employed youth.

On 18 November 2015, BC/TIP signed an MOU with AYAT Skills Development Center (ASDC). Established in 2013, ASDC was founded by the Aman Group of Companies, which is a multi-unit, multi-interest business with a wide range of industrial activities. It is an organization that has founded its evolution on

BC/TIP is Going to Organize Training for Prosecutors

In order to increase the responsiveness of criminal justice actors to trafficking victims, BC/TIP is preparing to organize two days training on 'Trafficking in Persons and Protection of Victims' Rights in Bangladesh'. The training will be held on 22 and 23 January 2016 at BIAM Foundation Cox's Bazar Regional center. USAID from the American people is supporting the event. A total of 25 participants including Public Prosecutor (PP), Special Public Prosecutors for Prevention of Women and Childrens Repression Tribunal, Additional Public Prosecutors and Assistant Public Prosecutors from Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Comilla, Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban districts will attend the training. The Office of Solicitor General approved the training on 12 December 2015 and nominated the participants on 3 January 2016. Mr. AKM Salimullah, Solicitor General under Law and Justice Division of Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs has given his kind consent to open the training as well as conduct the session as a facilitator. After completion of training, the participant's capacity of identifying trafficking victims will be strengthened and also the capacity of trafficking victims to have assistance will be greatly increased.

value-based commercial practice. ASDC's services include specialized technical training (Approved by the BTEB), Basic English language training, office etiquette courses, industry-based practical training, an apprenticeship program, and job training and placement. ASDC is mandated to work with the support of the private and public sectors to provide information and training services to develop a skilled, informed and marketable workforce.

Chittagong is planning to organize the abovementioned training from 15 to 17 March 2016 at In-Service Training Centre, CMP, Chittagong. The training is supported by the USAID from the American people.

BC/TIP Partners with Private Technical Training Centers MONTAGE and AYAT

On 24 September 2015, BC/TIP signed an MOU with Montage Training and Certification, which is among the largest private vocational training centers in Bangladesh. Established in 2005, the institution has a proven track record of

Through these partnerships BC/TIP will support Montage and ASDC to incorporate an awareness module on Trafficking-in-Persons (TIP) in their ongoing technical trade courses. BC/TIP will train both the TTC's teachers on the module and will periodically conduct joint sessions with their students. Montage and ASDC will deliver the TIP awareness training and assist individuals referred by BC/TIP as at-risk/survivors of trafficking, with skills training or job placement opportunities or links to support services within their private sector network. Since the signing of the MOU, 500 migrants have received TIP awareness training from Montage to the end of December 2015.



A Survivor's Voice:

Finds her way through Education Support

"One day, my fiancée persuaded me that he will marry me if I leave my house. In fact, I was deceived and fell into a trap. I was sold and locked in a house long days. I came to know he sold me to his friends. The day when they crossed a river along with me in Vomra Boarder, I was rescued by a group of law enforcing agency. Police station referred me to an appropriate shelter home in Jessore. When I arrived I felt hopeless and could see no way forward. I was kept separate from the other shelter home residents. Every day, the shelter home staff used to sit and talk with me. I lied to them and tried to avoid them. After receiving counseling for many days, I started to feel

like I was gaining insight. I started to speak with other residents.

I enrolled in life skills training and my life totally changed. I realized that what had happened was not my fault and I stopped blaming myself. My confidence and determination returned. I expressed my wish to readmit school again and go back to my family. But my family was not ready to receive me. They felt scared to our community. But some of the ANIRBAN members convinced my family and community. At last, I went back to my family. I did not go outside of my house. Sometimes some of my fellows teased me. But when I re-admitted in school in grade eight with the support of ANIRBAN and counselor of shelter home, I started my journey towards a new life. Now my fellows

are accompanying me to go to school regularly. I've started to dream again. My neighbors also are encouraging me to continue my education."

- **Suma** (Pseudonym) Age: 14,
Upazila: Monirampur, District: Jessore

Note to reader: Suma consented to tell her story, in the hope of bringing justice to survivors and their families and supporting the rights and dignity of survivors. We thank her for sharing her experience, and for her commitment to countering human trafficking.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed herein are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) or Winrock International.

Peer Leaders Initiative to Reduce Unsafe Migration

Md. Moniruzzaman (20) lives in Mahmudpur village of Shyamnagar Union of Satkhira district. He is an imam who leads the congregation prayer in a local mosque and he is very much aware of his social responsibility. So, when he was approached by BC/TIP prevention partner Agrogoti Sangstha he willingly agreed to volunteer his time and efforts to combat Trafficking-in-Persons (TIP). After receiving basic training from Agrogoti he became a peer leader. He is very active and discussed human trafficking and unsafe migration with Muslims during his Friday afternoon Jumma sermon. Recently he has taken an initiative by himself to ensure outgoing migrants follow a safe migration process. Being a religious leader he holds honor and the trust of his

community. Utilizing this advantage, he collects information about those who are processing for migration. Then he physically visits their home, gives his identity and builds a rapport with the outgoing migrants and/or their family members. He reviews their papers and the migration process based on the knowledge he received from the training. He also gives them all the relevant messages about safe migration processes and informs them about services of the DEMO, BMET and other institutions. Now the people in his area trust him as a safe migration promoter.

In November 2015, he met with 3 women of his village who were in the process of doing a financial transaction with a local dalal (broker) for urgent migration to Oman. The dalal gave them a photocopy of their passport and committed that after the financial transaction he will hand over the

original passport with visa at the airport. Learning about this Moniruzzaman informed them about the proper process of safe migration and means to verify their VISA from Union Digital Center, BMET and/or the embassy. Those women were convinced and they did not do any financial transaction with the dalal. Now they want to process every step after proper verification; for example - registration of the recruiting agency, bilateral agreements between the government and destination country on manpower export etc. Moniruzzaman is proud of his work and takes inspiration from this success to continue his work.



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Winrock Headquarters:

2101 Riverfront Drive
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202-1748
United States of America

Telephone: 1-501-280-3000
Fax: 1-501-280-3090

Winrock Bangladesh Office:

House # 7 (2nd floor), Road # 23/B
Gulshan 1, Dhaka 1212
Bangladesh

Phone: 8819587, 8823528
Email: bctip@winrock.org