



Bangladesh Ashshash Project

(2018-2022)

Restoring Dignity, Well-Being, and Self-Sufficiency for Men and Women Who Have Escaped Trafficking

With a population of over 160 million people, Bangladesh has taken great strides in reducing poverty; increasing education rates, especially for girls; and reducing infant, childhood and maternal mortality rates. However, many economic and social factors continue to fuel labor migration, leading to the exploitation and human trafficking of thousands of women, men and children each year. Most people who escape trafficking experience psychological and sometimes physical trauma. They also have difficulties reintegrating into their families and communities, a key element of leading healthy and productive lives.

The Ashshash project works in partnership with public and private-sector service providers to deliver counseling, legal services and economic empowerment support to men and women who have

escaped trafficking. The four-year project is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by Winrock International.

Impact

By the end of the project in 2022, Ashshash will have provided services to over 5,000 men and women who have escaped trafficking to restore their dignity, improve their well-being and build self-sufficiency. The project will also increase the capacity and commitment of local organizations and institutions to ensure sustainable services and engagements on trafficking.

Expected Outcomes

Ashshash will focus on services and activities to achieve two outcomes:

1. Men and women who have escaped trafficking improve their social and economic well-being by using services for reintegration; and
2. Institutions are made more accountable and effective in providing services beneficial to men and women who have escaped trafficking.

Strategic Approach

Building upon lessons learned from current and previous counter-trafficking initiatives in Bangladesh,

Ashshash will use four strategies to ensure high-quality services to beneficiaries:

- **Partnerships with local organizations and institutions for services and capacity development.** Ashshash will identify experienced and committed social protection partners and strengthen their capacity for case management, counseling and other psychosocial support services, legal services referral mechanisms, and training and support capacities for sustainable livelihoods for men and women who have escaped trafficking. Partners will include non-governmental and governmental service providers, institutions that train counselors and social work professionals, and private organizations.
- **Market-driven economic empowerment services.** Through *performance-based* partnerships with Training Service Providers (TSPs) with proven track records and an accredited by BTEB (Bangladesh Technical Education Board), Ashshash will design and implement skills development initiatives for jobs in the private sector that provide decent employment that offer a living wage. For beneficiaries more focused on enterprise development and home-based income generating activities, technical and business training and mentoring will be provided. This will improve their access to markets and aid in attaining self-sufficiency and resilience.
- **Private sector engagement for jobs and corporate commitments to services.** Ashshash will build upon the partnership between TSPs, providing skills development services and companies providing jobs to expand commitments to support men and women who have escaped trafficking. The project will engage the private sector in providing jobs and relevant support services through their corporate social responsibility and other initiatives.

- **Gender-sensitive approaches to social protection and economic empowerment interventions.** Ashshash interventions will be informed by gender and vulnerability assessments and ongoing contextual analysis to understand opportunities and challenges for beneficiaries and to achieve project outcomes. An Ashshash Project Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from relevant service delivery organizations, advocacy groups, skills development programs, private sector and government, will play an important role in planning and reviewing the implementation and progress on outcomes.

Geographic Focus

The Ashshash project office is located in Dhaka. The program focuses on five districts in southern Bangladesh with some of the country's highest prevalence levels — Satkhira, Khulna and Jashore in the Khulna Division and Chattogram and Cox's Bazar in the Chattogram (formerly Chittagong) Division.



Contact Information

For additional information on the Ashshash Project and other Winrock programs, please visit our website at www.winrock.org. Contact project staff at: wi.ashshash@winrock.org.

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