

USAID's Fight Slavery and Trafficking-In-Persons (FSTIP) Activity



FSTIP
 Newsletter
 Issue 1

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The five-year (July 2021 – June 2026) Fight Slavery and Trafficking- In-Persons (FSTIP) project is the culmination of a 12-year partnership between Winrock, USAID, and Bangladesh's government and civil society to pioneer and expand interventions to combat trafficking in persons (TIP) and child marriage (CM). Our joint success enabled the government of Bangladesh (GOB) to make significant progress towards meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of TIP, resulting in the United States Department of State (USDOS) upgrading the country from Tier 2 Watchlist to Tier 2 in its 2020 TIP Report. Bangladesh retained this status in the 2021 and 2022 reports.

With the renewed commitment to squarely combat TIP and CM, FSTIP is working in 25 districts with 12 partner NGOs across the country. In the fight against modern day slavery, sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and child marriage, FSTIP is engaging with top level policy makers at the national level as well as Counter Trafficking Committees at the district, upazila, and union levels. The USAID funded project is strengthening the capacity of a wide range of justice actors including judges, police, prosecutors, and panel lawyers to prosecute traffickers; reaching out to tens of thousands of community people with awareness messages to prevent TIP and promote safe migration; providing quality protection services directly and using the referral mechanism to ensure dignified reintegration of TIP survivors into the society; and establishing partnership with different government and non-government stakeholders to holistically counter TIP and CM.

We are pleased to present out the first issue of the FSTIP Newsletter highlighting some of our efforts towards eliminating TIP and CM in the first year of the project.

We welcome feedback from our readers and stakeholders in order to contribute to future editions strengthening our collective efforts combating TIP and CM.

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Key Results




 <p>training of 457 justice sector actors.</p>	 <p>507 trafficking victims provided support services.</p>	 <p>135 CM victims were provided protection assistance.</p>
 <p>91 victims provided with legal support.</p>	 <p>about 9000 community members reached through awareness events.</p>	

PROSECUTION



FSTIP provided training to judges in collaboration with JATI.





Training Provided to

	168 judges
	130 public prosecutors
	111 tribunal staffs

PREVENTION









Cycle rally organized to create awareness against TIP and CM issues.

-  **3,518** members of CTC, CMPC, and GBV committee are oriented.
-  **127** peer leaders are trained to create awareness on TIP & CM in the community.
-  **94** staff members from DEMO and TTC are oriented on safe migration & modern technology.
-  **69** members of the marriage registers Association are trained.

PROTECTION



FSTIP provided skill development training for sustainable reintegration of VOT.

	585 TIP victims enrolled		152 received shelter support
	27 received health support		33 safetynet & loan support
	66 provided training support		329 provided counseling

Paradigm Shift in CTIP Initiatives in Bangladesh

There has been a paradigm shift in counter trafficking-in-persons initiative in Bangladesh over past few years. The country, which is a source and destination country for human trafficking, was placed in tier 2 watchlist for consecutive three years from 2017 to 2019 in U.S. State Department's Annual TIP Report, which given the Bangladesh's efforts to combat human trafficking required the Government to take immediate steps to improve its efforts to combat human trafficking.

During this time, the USAID funded Bangladesh Counter Trafficking-in-Persons (BC/TIP) project provided technical assistance supporting the current National Plan of Action (NPA) for Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking 2018-2022. All of the relevant stakeholders including the Government of Bangladesh under the leadership of the Ministry of Home Affairs, civil society organizations, national and international NGOs and UN agencies realized changes were needed in order to ensure that Bangladesh was not placed on the tier 3 ranking.

All of the CTIP stakeholders, including the Winrock's project, worked very hard to address the prioritized recommendations made by the



Members of NPA Drafting Committee after the meeting.

Bangladesh has been placed in tier 2 for consecutive three years, which is a manifestation of the paradigm shift in CTIP efforts!

TIP Report in line with the NPA. Considerable emphasis was placed on increasing prosecutions and convictions of traffickers. The Ministry of Home Affairs stepped up their efforts and intensely consulted with the national and international organizations involved in CTIP initiatives. This paradigm shift in focus resulted in the positive promotion of Bangladesh from tier 2 watchlist to tier 2 in the 2020 USDOS Annual TIP Report.

This positive change further encouraged the CTIP stakeholders to highlight positive examples regarding their work in human trafficking. BC/TIP focused on implementing U.S. TIP Report recommendations and providing standard protection assistance to victims of trafficking. The project worked closely with the Department of Social Services (DSS) under the Ministry of Social Welfare to adopt the comprehensive survivor services guidelines after completing their review and revisions also contributing to the

country's placement on tier 2 in 2021.

When the USAID Fight Slavery and Trafficking-in-Persons (FSTIP) Activity started, the project continued to support the Government of Bangladesh in maintaining its positive trend countering human trafficking leading to Bangladesh placement on the tier 2 ranking for three consecutive years!

Upcoming Events

- ▶ Formulation of District Referral Directory;
- ▶ Orientation on TIP and Safe Migration for Staff Members of CTC, DEMO and TTC;
- ▶ Workshop on CM with Marriage Registers.

PROSECUTION

U.S. Ambassador Mr. Earl R. Miller delivered his speech in an Orientation on Trafficking-In-Persons, to the relevant National and International Legislators ensuring Justice for Human Trafficking Victims’ in the presence of Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. FSTIP organized 13 of these trainings for judges, public prosecutors, and tribunal staff, that resulted in expediting the prosecution process and convictions of traffickers by TIP tribunals in Barishal, Dhaka, Khulna, and Rajshahi, as well as in Cox’s Bazar where the process of establishing a TIP tribunal is ongoing.



TIP Tribunal Task Force

Led by the tribunal judges and panel lawyers, prosecutors, police (investigating officers), and representatives from the civil society, the task force members expressed their commitment to work together for speedy trials and necessary legal support to TIP victims including regular case monitoring. The FSTIP activity formed five task force committees in the five Anti-human Trafficking Offence Tribunals in Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Rangpur and one at the Women and Children Repression Prevention court in Cox’s Bazar. The Bangladesh U.S. Ambassador and the USAID/Bangladesh Mission Director attended one of these events in Rajshahi.

Murad Sarkar, the bench assistant of the Anti-Human Trafficking Offence Tribunal (AHTOT) in Rangpur is now committed to giving his utmost to help the victims and witnesses of TIP cases processed under his tribunal after receiving training from FSTIP on ‘Applying a Rights Based Approach for Human Trafficking Survivors’.



PREVENTION



The FSTIP Activity is preventing trafficking in persons through public awareness on modern slavery and TIP, safe migration, child marriage, labor rights, and GBV issues involving youth, community people, and other stakeholders including government.

Md. Akhtar Hossain, Former Senior Secretary, Public Security Division, MOHA expressed his commitment to further strengthening the counter trafficking-in-persons activities in line with progress made over the past three years while attending two divisional workshops to **update the National Plan on Action for Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking** in Cox’s Bazar and Habiganj. FSTIP in collaboration with the Public Security Division, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh and the offices of Divisional Commissioner organized workshops in Chattogram (held in Cox’s Bazar), Khulna (held in Jashore), Rajshahi and Sylhet (held in Habiganj).



Child marriage survivor Meghla Roy (2nd from right), a daughter of a poor day laborer in Bangladesh, who once lost all hopes in life, vowed to reestablish herself as an educated member of society by pursuing higher education. FSTIP assisted her by providing a set of books for continuing education at the college level. Meghla is also a FSTIP Peer Leader working against TIP and CM.

Counter trafficking committees at the district, upazila and UP levels are working to prevent trafficking in persons in line with the National Plan of Action. Let us support them and stop trafficking.

PROTECTION



Strengthening partners' capacities for comprehensive protection assistance to TIP survivors

In order to increase the capacities, learnings, and develop a comprehensive survivor-centered service approach in a more effective and efficient manner, FSTIP provided TOTs (Training of Trainers) training on 'Comprehensive Survivors Services' to 44 government officials and FSTIP sub-grantees. The TOTs provided a robust, comprehensive and meaningful overview in understanding a survivor-centered and human rights-based approach, to ensuring the minimum standards of care in providing services to victims of trafficking (VOT).



FSTIP ANIRBAN network members are mobilizing resources from diversified sources supporting TIP survivors with protection assistance and creating awareness on TIP and CM. In Dinajpur, ANIRBAN members received a grant from Department of Youth Development (DYD) of GoB to organize awareness activities against TIP and CM within their community. FSTIP training on '**Leadership, Strategic Planning, and Resource Mobilization**' assisted them to increase their skills in leadership, develop and implement strategic planning, techniques on resource mobilization through mapping exercises, as well as preparing project proposals and understanding the importance of the Theory of Change. ANIRBAN members also liaise with government departments for funding support.



Shudangshu Bormon (2nd from right), a former victim of trafficking (VOT), changed his life by becoming a member of ANIRBAN and subsequently by being elected as an elected official of Komlabari Union Parishad of Aditmari Upazila under Lalmonirhat district.

Days Observation

World Day against Trafficking In Persons 2022

USAID’s FSTIP Activity celebrated the World Day against Trafficking-in-Persons in various locations across Bangladesh to express solidarity with this year’s theme of **‘Use and Abuse of Technology’**. The day was eventful with rallies, human chains, discussions, a pot song and a radio spot on anti-human trafficking messages, and a national level consultation hosted by the Ministry of Home Affairs.



Standing Together against Child Marriage

Moving forward heart-felt words, **‘Our time is Now-Our Rights, Our Future’**, this year, USAID’s FSTIP subgrantees shared their equal determination to stop child marriage in the community on the **‘International Day of the Girl Child 2022’** organizing various events such as discussion meetings with government departments and local committees, human chains, and a video documentary on CM survivors.

International Migrants Day

USAID’s FSTIP Activity promoted safe migration on “The International Migrants Day-2022” on December 18, 2022 expressing their solidarity with this year’s slogan – **“Thakbo Valo, Rakhbo Valo Desh; Boidho Pathe Probash Aay, Gorbo Bangladesh”**. (We will stay well, keep others well; earn remittance in legitimate way, we will build Bangladesh). USAID’s FSTIP sub-grantees organized rallies and human chains, discussion meetings, a Gambhira and talk show on safe migration, bi-cycle rallies, radio spots, football tournaments and video shows which included community people, government officials from the district and Upazila levels, DEMO, TTC’s, Welfare Desks, Counter Trafficking Committees, civil society, teachers, students, ANIRBAN, peer leaders and sub-grantee staff.



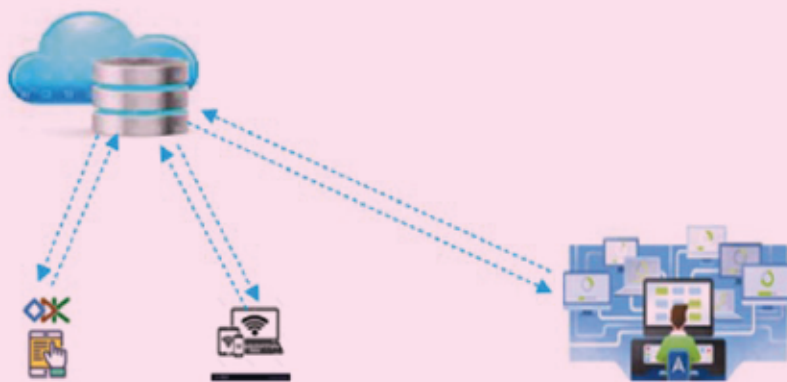
Coordination Meeting with Partners



FSTIP organized a **Coordination Meeting with Partners** to strengthen their capacities in program implementation, from December 12 – 15, 2022 in Dhaka. Subgrantee program and finance team partners participated in the meeting. The meeting focused on learning the SWOT analysis, branding and marketing policies, SBCC concepts, and the role of stakeholders in applying SBCCs, mapping education resources support, referral mechanisms, case management, private sector engagement, mobilizing resources, the M&E process in program management, the MIS system, pause and reflect, and identifying pathways towards sustainability.

Knowledge Management

FSTIP launched Brown Bag Technical Sessions with the aim to create a creative learning space where issues/topics relevant to FSTIP MERL will be discussed on a monthly basis. The first five sessions focused on **'Data Gathering and Quality Assurance, Data Repository Systems, Reporting Format, and Challenges'**.



Data entry by Mobile

Data entry by Laptop

FSTIP: Aggregated project Information (PowerBI)

Visibility



Concerted efforts have focused on building strong rapport with media at the national, divisional and local levels. During the year, FSTIP activities were covered on national, division, and local level electronic, online and print media for events such as observation of International Women's Day, International Day of the Girl Child, World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, International Migrants Day, and Divisional Workshops to Review and Update National Plan of Action.

Internal and External Visits

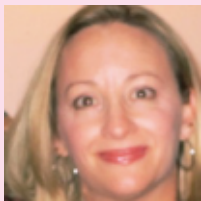
A team from Winrock International Home Office visited FSTIP in Bangladesh. During their visits, they met with the FSTIP team, discussed project implementation and designed different activities to combat trafficking in persons and child marriage.



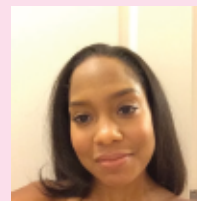
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J/TIP High Officials along with representatives from the U.S Embassy in Dhaka and USAID Bangladesh visited FSTIP on October 16, 2022 and met with ANIRBAN members and FSTIP team members. This meeting created a platform for the ANIRBAN members to share their individual and collective experiences in preparing themselves as representatives of the survivors' voice organization.



FSTIP visits jail in Cox's Bazar

In Cox's Bazar there are TIP victims, who have been imprisoned for months and years in jail and they are living in inhumane conditions. During a recent visit to the Cox's Bazar prison, FSTIP team members learned many victims of trafficking (VOTs) are imprisoned for their protection and some were accused of crimes when their traffickers filed false cases against them in retaliation. These cases are pending for some time, due to faulty and/or incomplete investigation reports and a lack of facilities for prosecutors and witnesses within the court premises.

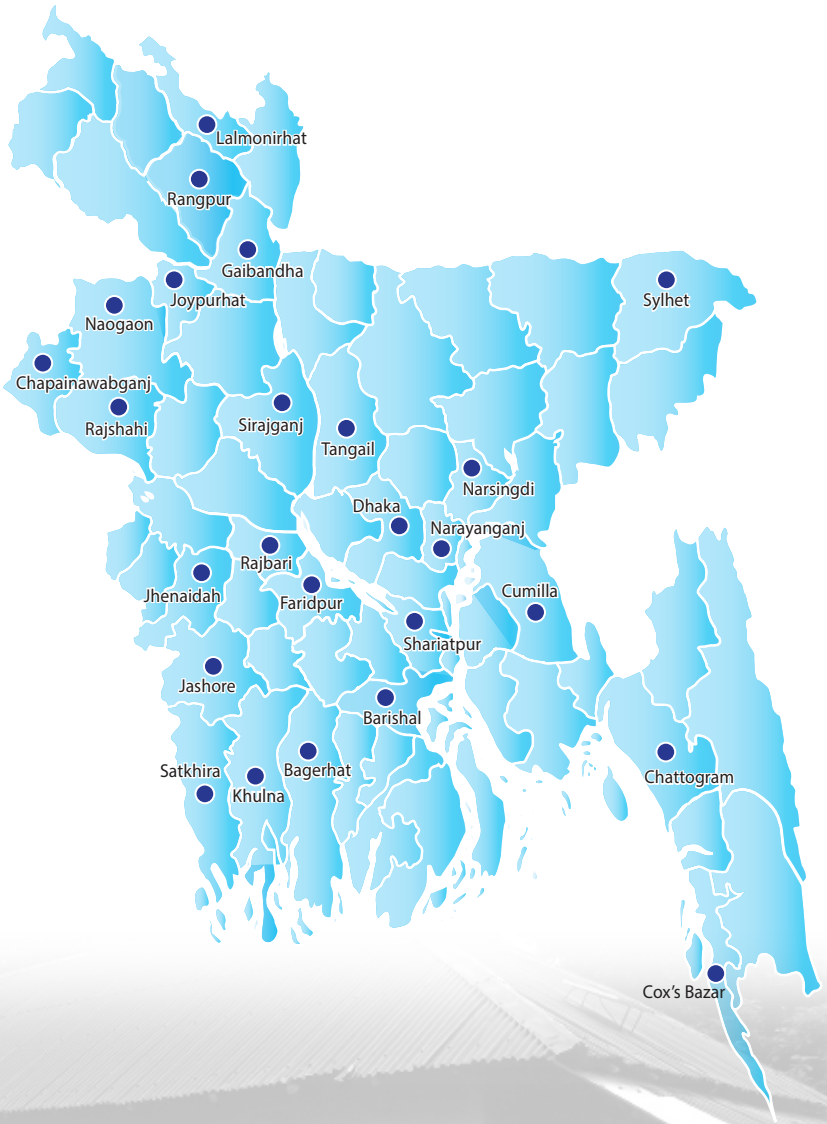


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TIP victims provided with legal support

FSTIP and its prosecution subgrantee are taking legal measures to free these TIP victims placing special emphasis on those, who have been incarcerated for an extended time. The project will also involve the task force team in the process of releasing the VOTs.

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FSTIP Working Location



The USAID's Fight Slavery and Trafficking-In-Persons (FSTIP) Activity is a five-year program aims to reduce vulnerability to trafficking in persons (TIP) and child marriage (CM) and promote safe migration.

The project is working in 25 Bangladesh districts to implement counter human trafficking and child marriage activities focused on prosecution, prevention, and protection integrating gender and social inclusion programming, while partnering with youth, survivors, communities, and community based civil society organizations, and promoting health, safety, and security practices against COVID-19 and promoting innovative best practices.

FSTIP is collaborating with national, regional, and local governments, survivor service provider networks, legal rights groups, civil society organizations, and committed partners to further strengthen the country's ability to combat trafficking and child marriage as well as to increase community resilience to identify people vulnerable to trafficking and child marriage and provide support.

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Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources.

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