



CONTEXT OF BANGLADESH

Human trafficking constitutes a criminal activity that flagrantly violates basic human rights. Over the past decade, human trafficking has increased by ten percent. Studies show a direct correlation between the escalation in human trafficking and factors such as poverty, unemployment, migration, limited access to education, climate change, political instability, and psychological trauma. Bangladesh is the sixth largest migrant-sending country in the world. In 2023 alone, skilled and unskilled migrant workers from Bangladesh numbered at about 1,200,000. Labour migration has been identified as one of the leading factors that has fueled human trafficking in Bangladesh. Although men account for over ninety percent of the migrant workforce, over the past ten years, approximately seventy percent of identified victims from the country have been women. As more women seek economic independence alongside their husbands and family members, the likelihood of pursuing better opportunities abroad and within the country increases. This makes women the primary target for traffickers; exposing them to dangerous and vulnerable situations. Despite numerous measures and actions taken by the government to combat and eradicate human trafficking, many women and girls in Bangladesh still face significant risks of falling prey to traffickers. The various forms of exploitation and entrapment by traffickers that culminates in trafficking, has been severely exacerbated by technology and social media platforms.

PROJECT OVERVIEW



The second phase of Ashshash builds on key lessons learned from the first phase, expanding important local partnerships to support the delivery of a more comprehensive and personalized package of social and economic support services. The Ashshash team will achieve this through continued collaborations, and by strengthening institutional capacities to manage cases and provide trauma-informed, better-adapted services.

The second phase of the project is being implemented across ten of the most trafficking-prone districts in Bangladesh. They are:

Dhaka, Manikgonj, Narshingdhi, Faridpur, and Shariatpur under the Dhaka division; Jashore, Satkhira, Khulna, and Jhenaidah under the Khulna division; and Cox's Bazar under the Chattogram division.

Ashshash is funded by the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh. The project works to ensure the protection of human trafficking survivors through various social and economic support services. And, prevent trafficking across at-risk and vulnerable communities in Bangladesh through various awareness activities. The project provides psychosocial counselling to human trafficking survivors directly, their families, and community members, under the umbrella of social services. It also provides healthcare and legal support to the survivors through referrals. Under the umbrella of economic services, Ashshash provides training on vocational skills and entrepreneurship, and subsequently facilitates wage and self-employment opportunities for the survivors. Ashshash also works to forge strategic partnerships with key governmental and private sector stakeholders of the country, and capacitate service-providers to provide various support services in a more effective manner, with increased accountability.



ASHSHASH PHASE II

CASE MANAGEMENT PROCESS



DURATION

June 2023 to May 2027

BENEFICIARIES

6,000 Survivors (65% Women) Will Receive **Social and Economic Services**

6,000,000 Men and Women (65% Women) from 'At-Risk' Communities will Be Made Aware on Human Trafficking and Associated Factors

IMPACT

Men and Women Who Have Escaped Trafficking Restore Their Dignity and Well-Being, and Become Self Sufficient

OUTCOMES

Men and women who have escaped trafficking improve their physical, social, and economic well-being through psychological support and other reintegration services

Institutions are made more accountable and effective in providing services beneficial to men and women who have escaped trafficking

OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SERVICES

Ashshash will identify human trafficking survivors and provide social and economic services (see the framework above) through its sub-partners, across the ten working districts. The sub-partnered organizations known as '**Sustainable Reintegration Partners**', will directly provide these services to the survivors, or alternatively, avail certain services from local public and private service providers through referrals. Hence, the SRPs will maintain a prosperous local network with governmental and private institutions/service providers, to avail support-services for the survivors. Each organization will oversee the social and economic reintegration process of each survivor in their respective district. Additional support for *Business Developmental Services* and *Career Counselling* will be provided by technical partners who will work in collaboration with Ashshash's SRPs. In turn, the SRPs will aim to sensitize local service providers and employers, local governmental institutions, and local companies, to nurture welcoming environments for the successful reintegration of the survivors. Ashshash's modality of social and economic service provision will ensure a holistic, accountable, and coordinated system of delivery, through which human trafficking survivors will be empowered and self-sufficient.

AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Ashshash reached more than **12 Million** men and women from 'At-Risk' communities through various awareness activities, in Phase I. In Phase II, the project will focus on raising **Awareness** on human trafficking and associated factors, the **Prevention** of human trafficking, and **Empowering Communities** to combat human trafficking in all forms. To ensure this, Ashshash will recruit dedicated '**Awareness and Prevention Partners**' across the working districts, and spearhead specific awareness activities through project-capacitated **Counter Trafficking-in-Persons (CTIP) Activists**. The APPs will also work to sensitize local governmental institutions on the trafficking scenario

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

Ashshash partnered with notable local and multinational companies in Phase I, to avail various support-services and ensure employment for its beneficiaries. Over **700** beneficiaries received direct CSR and in-kind support during the COVID-19 pandemic, while many project-capacitated microentrepreneurs were helped through value and supply chain linkages with local FMCG companies. Ashshash also worked at policy-levels with the

Banking, Telecommunications, and Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sectors of Bangladesh, to avail support-services for human trafficking survivors. In Phase II, Ashshash will expand on this strategy to engage key private sector stakeholders locally, and nationally.

In Phase I, Ashshash supported the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, to develop a roadmap for the '**National Referral Mechanism**' (NRM) - a coordinated framework of service-provision for human trafficking survivors. In Phase II, Ashshash will work to ensure the NRM's operationalization, and will conduct a pilot-run across the project's working districts.

Ashshash has, and will continue to ensure **gender-sensitive approaches** in providing social and economic services to the survivors. The project will integrate concepts of **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)** across its programming.

CONTACT INFORMATION :

For additional information on the second phase of the Ashshash Project and other Winrock programming, please visit our website at www.winrock.org

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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FROM ASHSHASH PHASE I

