



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



January - September 2023

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are delighted to announce the second edition of the USAID's FSTIP Activity newsletter, which shares a glimpse of the previous three quarters' highlights and an overview of our achievements.

We were honored to welcome a delegation from USAID to FSTIP working areas in Sylhet. The USAID team spent time visiting our incredible peer leaders, ANIRBAN network members, interacted with the members of Counter Trafficking Committee, Child Marriage Prevention Committee, and Marriage Registrars' Association, attended a training on trafficking-in-persons and victim rights, and visited a shelter home to learn about the situation of trafficking in persons and child marriage and CTIP initiatives in Sylhet. The visit was a huge encouragement to the FSTIP Activity, particularly our dedicated field teams who implement activities in the most remote locations to fight against trafficking-in-person (TIP) and child marriage (CM).

USAID's FSTIP and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) jointly organized a national level workshop to update the National Plan of Action (NPA) with the intention to extend its timeline from 2023 to 2025. The national level workshop was the final in a series of consultations (four) held at the divisional level. The workshops drew recommendations from the stakeholders across the country based on which the NPA has been updated. MoHA accepted the revised NPA as an official document, which will be shared with stakeholders.

For January – TIP Awareness Month and International Women's Day - we organized a signature campaign for college students, rallies and human chains, Gambhira show, bi-cycle rally, and also hosted debate competitions at the secondary school level to raise awareness on TIP with particular emphasis on the use and abuse of digital technology. We congratulate our team for continuously challenging ourselves to innovate and break social norms to stand against TIP and CM.

All of this encourages us further to dedicate our efforts to improve the lives of the survivors we serve, leading to dignified reintegration, and practicing a survivor approach implementing CTIP initiatives. We hope that the aggregated efforts will help Bangladesh retain its placement at tier 2 in the US Department of State's Annual TIP report.

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FSTIP at a Glance | January - September 2023

KEY RESULTS



training of 287 justice sector actors



101 victims provided with legal support



662 trafficking victims provided support services



about **26,909** community members reached through awareness events



420 CM victims provided protection assistance



PROSECUTION

Training Provided to



45 first responder police officers



19 district legal aid panel lawyers



27 tribunal staff

PREVENTION



5,679 members of CTC, CMPC, and GBV committees are oriented



515 peer leaders are trained to create awareness on TIP & CM in the community



173 staff members from DEMO and TTC are oriented on safe migration & modern technology



73 members of the Marriage Registrars' Association are trained





FSTIP reviews and develops district referral directory to ensure TIP and CM survivors' protection assistance.



TIP victims enrolled



received health support



56 provided training support



received shelter support

PROTECTION



safety net & loan support



557 provided counseling

FSTIP Supports the

TIP NPA Revision and Extension

The Bangladesh Government is taking various measures to fight against trafficking-in-persons (TIP), which is a heinous organized crime that causes the worst form of human rights violations. The most important initiatives of GoB were the enactment of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012 and its rules 2017. To



US Deputy Chief of Mission Ms. Helen LaFave speaks at the NPA national workshop, Dhaka

support the implementation of the Act, GoB formulated the National Plan of Action (NPA) 2018 - 2022 with technical assistance from Winrock's former project Bangladesh Counter Trafficking-in-Persons (BC/TIP) Project.

In 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), which is the lead Ministry in taking the CTIP initiatives in Bangladesh, conducted a mid-term review (MTR) that revealed the overall progress of the plan was slow due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore MoHA consulted with different stakeholders and decided to revise the current NPA and extend the duration from 2022 to 2025.

This time, Winrock's Fight Slavery and Trafficking-in-Persons (FSTIP) project provided comprehensive technical assistance including organizing drafting committee meetings on

the revision, four divisional workshops in Khulna, Rajshahi, Chattogram, and Sylhet, and one national consultation in Dhaka to gather recommendations from a wide range of stakeholders including different ministries, government departments, local administrations, counter trafficking committees (CTC), national and international NGOs, and UN agencies. FSTIP also in cooperation with MoHA conducted inter-ministerial consultation to finalize the revised version of the NPA extending it up to 2025.

The main features of the revised NPA are (1) 90% of the activities in the revised version are new and different from those in the old version; (2) The revised activities will be funded through SDG

implementation and the annual development plan under the 8th five year **Revision and** plan, which extension of the NPA will

adjusted



Md. Akhtar Hossain, Former Senior Secretary, Public Security Division, MoHA delivers his speech at one of the district level NPA review and update workshops in Habiganj, Sylhet

every year until 2025; (3) The civil society organizations are recognized; and (4) The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief has been identified as the major contributor to the implementation of the NPA.

It is expected the revised NPA will create a momentum in the implementation of CTIP activities that will help Bangladesh retain its placement at tier 2 in the US Department of State's Annual TIP Report.

will create momentum in the implementation of CTIP activities in Bangladesh.



Strengthening the Capacities of Police

FSTIP and ICITAP worked together to strengthen the capacities of criminal justice sectors to increase their responsiveness towards victims of trafficking. The 45 First Responding Police Officers demonstrated solid understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They further committed to expedite effective investigations of pending TIP cases maintaining a victim centered approach, following do-no-harm principles, and ensuring the protection of TIP victims. They also emphasized gender sensitivity while prosecuting TIP cases after receiving a training from FSTIP Activity on "Trafficking-In-Persons and Protection of Victims' Rights".

District Legal Aid Panel Lawyers' Capacity Development

A group of district legal aid panel lawyers (DLAPL) improved their understanding of the TIP context in Bangladesh the differences between human trafficking and human smuggling, the relevant national legal framework, legal aid in Bangladesh, victims' rights, and protection after receiving a training by USAID's FSTIP Activity. The training also enhanced their abilities to support victims of trafficking (VoT), improve VoTs' access to justice, expedite prosecution of traffickers, and dismissal of TIP cases.



FSTIP's Assistance for Successful Conviction of TIP Cases

FSTIP continued providing legal assistance to TIP survivors with the support from partner organizations and the Task Force (TF) committees. This type of assistance included filing of cases, assisting survivors during the investigation, and prosecuting cases until there is a conviction or dismissal. As a result of this support, Anti-Human Trafficking Offence Tribunals (AHTT) and the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Cox's Bazar announced 78 convictions involving 245 traffickers ranging from three years to a maximum of lifetime imprisonment.

FSTIP Launches GBV Benchbook for Judges



The Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Mr. Anisul Haque, MP and U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Mr. Peter Haas and other dignitaries displaying GBV Benchbook during the launching event on July 22, 2023

FSTIP developed a Gender-based Violence (GBV) bench book (a practical manual) for judges who adjudicate GBV cases. FSTIP worked jointly with Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT) and USAID's Promoting Peace and Justice (PPJ) project to develop this practical manual and included sections on a victim-sensitive approach to GBV cases, principles of a fair trial in GBV cases, and resources available to GBV victims in Bangladesh. The objective of the bench book is to support the judiciary in applying the existing legal frameworks related to GBV crimes, both substantively and procedurally, in a manner that is expeditious, uniform, and in line with the established precedent and international conventions to which Bangladesh is a party.

PREVENTION



Fighting Human Trafficking in the Community

FSTIP's volunteer group Peer Leaders (PL) are now able to use mobile-based applications and social media platforms to create awareness on TIP and CM within their community. This was made possible because of a Training of Trainers (ToT) provided by USAID's FSTIP Activity of Winrock International. The training helped Peer Leaders boost their confidence, facilitation skills and knowledge to apply new techniques of modern technology and mobile-based applications including online portals such as SafeStep, Ami Probashi and social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and IMO to

combat TIP and CM, and to promote safe migration in Bangladesh. The Peer Leaders also registered for the GoB sponsored online "Promotion of Safe Migration and Prevention of Human Trafficking" course at Muktopaath (https://muktopaath.gov.bd/course-details/369) to increase their knowledge. One of these Peer Leaders succeeded recently in stopping a child marriage by using the government's online birth verification portal (https://everify.bdris.gov.bd/).

Promoting Safe Migration



Dr. Chitra Lekha Naznin, Deputy Commissioner of Rangpur delivering her speech at the safe migration workshop in Rangpur, Bangladesh

With the intention to promote ethical and transparent recruitment by creating an effective network among District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMO), Technical Training Centers (TTC), Counter Trafficking Committees (CTC), and recruiting agencies in Bangladesh FSTIP provided an orientation on 'Safe Migration and Skill Development' to 65 participants including district administration, various government departments - Department of Youth Development (DYD), Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Women Affairs (DWA), TTC, recruiting agencies, Probashi Kallayan Bank, CTC members, Peer Leaders, ANIRBAN, potential and returnee migrants. The event enabled stakeholders to inform aspiring migrants in their communities about the availability of employment and the proper steps to ensure safe and orderly migration, which will help reduce the influence of middlemen and traffickers. After the workshop, the recruiting agencies and CTCs expressed their commitment to work collaboratively and share employment information and details concerning aspiring migrants.

The Shahidbagh union parishad (UP) Counter Trafficking Committee (CTC), located in a remote place in the Rangpur district is a CTIP role model that sets example of good practices in countering TIP and CM. On the seventh day of each month, this model CTC holds its monthly meeting and follows up on its decisions. After receiving training from USAID's FSTIP Activity, the Shahidbagh UP was one of the first UPs to allocate a budget for the CTC to cover its expenses of holding meetings, conducting awareness sessions in the community, observing international days, and assisting TIP survivors directly and through referral mechanism.

Shahidbagh Union Counter Trafficking Committee - A CTIP role model



PROTECTION



Dignitaries displaying CSS guidelines during the unveiling session on March 30, 2023, Dhaka

FSTIP and DSS Launches CSS Guideline

FSTIP and the Department of Social Services (DSS) of the Ministry of Social Welfare launched the Comprehensive Survivor Services (CSS) Guidelines in Dhaka to improve support services for survivors of human trafficking. This is a breakthrough step in standardizing the quality of care for survivors while reducing stigma and assisting them with dignified reintegration into society. Chief guest Dr. Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal, Director General, DSS unveiled the CSS Guidelines in the presence of

special guests Habiba Akter, Team Lead, Office of Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance, USAID/Bangladesh and Dr. Md. Bashirul Alam, Director General, Islamic Foundation and urged all the stakeholders to follow the guidelines. The launch of the guidelines completed the process of official adoption of the CSS Guidelines by the GoB that will be followed by all the stakeholders involved in providing protection assistance to survivors of TIP and CM across the country.

Develops and Updates District Referral Directories

FSTIP, in collaboration with district administrations, updated eight referral directories in Barishal, Chapainawabganj, Cox's Bazar, Joypurhat, Khulna, Lalmonirhat, Naogaon and Sirajganj, and developed four new referral directories in Bagerhat, Gaibandha, Jhenaidah and Narayanganj. In addition to the Deputy Commissioners (DC), 428 (Female 83 & Male 345) government and non-government service providers



Naogaon Deputy Commissioner presiding over the workshop on updating the district referral directory

including private sector representatives attended these workshops. These referral directories are playing a pivotal role in establishing an effective referral mechanism to ensure that more trafficking and child marriage survivors receive comprehensive protection assistance and are reintegrated into the society with dignity.



Babu Ali (pseudonym), once trafficked to Oman under the guise of migration and returned home empty-handed, is now supporting his family financially and bearing the cost of education for his two children. Babu is also expanding his fish farming business with loan assistance from the Bangladesh Rural Development Board, Rajshahi which is possible from the support arranged by the USAID's FSTIP Activity and through the Rajshahi referral mechanism.

DAYS OBSERVATION

Commemorates Human Trafficking Awareness Month



subgrantees to create awareness on human trafficking and informed the people on how to identify and prevent this crime and promote safe migration across the country organizing various cultural events including Gambhira show, street drama, puppet show, etc. Additionally, the project organized community meetings, outreach awareness campaigns and digital campaigns through social and online media, sessions with students in school and with religious leaders highlighting negative consequences of TIP and CM and importance of safe migration to avoid being end up in TIP situation. The project also highlighted USAID's work in combating TIP and CM.

Observance of the International Women's Day 2023

The FSTIP activity organized a series of events as part of its International Women's Day 2023 campaign to express solidarity with the theme of the day - DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality (Digital Projukti O Udvaban, Gender Boishammo Karbe *Niroshan*). The activities featured various events including the colorful rallies and human chains, debate competition, bi-cycle rally and community meeting, which attracted more than 3,000 participants who learned about how to effectively use technology to promote their work and to protect themselves from various forms of cyber violence and how people

child marriage through digital technology.

Students commemorated TIP Awareness Month with a signature campaign against CTIP







More than 60 Women Judges and Speakers emphasized empowering women across the country through the use of technology as well as providing the appropriate education and training, which will help women learn to use the digital technology to promote their work and to protect themselves from various forms of cyber violence at a FSTIP organized event in Dhaka on IWD 2023. FSTIP organized this event in collaboration with USAID's PPJ project that ended in July 2023.



USAID's FSTIP activity expressed solidarity with the theme of the World Day Against Trafficking In Persons 2023 - Reach Every Victim of Trafficking, Leave No One Behind (Pacharer Shikar Shakoler Pashe Thakbo, Bad Jabe Na Keo) engaging Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), networks like CTIP-TWG and BDUNNM, district and local government administrations and stakeholders including community people across the country. The various events featured national dialogue, colorful rallies, human chains, discussion meetings, signature campaign, debate competition, radio talk shows and spot on safe migration, bi-cycle rally, candlelight campaign on the sea beach, puppet shows, digital campaign through social media and union information center, video show, and community meetings, which attracted more than 2,500 people (1,054 females) who learned about the negative consequences of human trafficking, safe migration, and further vowed to combat this heinous crime within their community.

The Minister of Home Affairs
Asaduzzaman Khan, MP
called for collective action
to fight TIP at a National
Dialogue event held in
commemoration of the
WDATP 2023. USAID's FSTIP
Activity COP presented
FSTIP achievements in
combating TIP in
Bangladesh at the event.





Around 81,440 students including 28,874 girls took an oath to remain vigilant against TIP within their communities and further expressed their commitment to fight TIP and CM during the Oath Taking Ceremony, organized in collaboration with the District Administrations and District Education Offices at 160 educational institutes throughout the country.





Task Force Meeting jointly organized by FSTIP Activity and the Sylhet Anti-Human Trafficking task force (AHTT) committee discussed several ways to ensure justice for trafficking victims in Sylhet.

Dehorgoti Union UDC entrepreneur informs locals about safe migration during their visit to the center

Migration and Trafficking Information Center (MTIC) set up at the Dehorgoti Union Digital Center (UDC) of Babuganj Upazila under Barishal district is now helping the community people with vital information on safe migration and creating awareness about human trafficking. So far, USAID's FSTIP project has established four MTICs in Bagerhat, Barishal, Khulna and Satkhira in collaboration with the UDC entrepreneurs to promote safe migration and combat trafficking in persons in remote areas.



USAID'S LEARNING VISIT WELTING WITH WITH PROPERTY OF THE PRO

Discussion meeting with Cox's Bazar Interfaith leaders with USAID delegation A six-member delegation from the USAID's Office of Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance and Program Office along with the FSTIP team visited Cox's Bazar from 24 to 27 September 2023 to learn about CTIP initiatives and preventive actions. During the learning trip, the visiting delegation conducted various meetings and interacted with CTCs, CMPCs, interfaith groups, Marriage Registrars' and IMAMs Association, survivor service providers, and different private sector organizations that participated in discussions with the volunteer PLs and trafficking survivor's voice network ANIRBAN. The delegation also visited the Cox's Bazar Task Force, TIP Tribunal Staff, and a shelter home. USAID engaged with 112 stakeholders (Female 25 & Male 87) and learned how they plan to reduce the community's vulnerability to TIP and CM and further advance CTIP initiatives.

One of the ANIRBAN members discusses about their CTIP activities like awareness raising at the community level, identification of victims, and those at-risk of TIP and provide appropriate referral support.

ANIRBAN members also informed that they use digital technology - WhatsApp and Facebook page to promote safe migration.



COLLABORATION WITH THE MAM TRAINING ACADEMY



FSTIP Activity organized a workshop in collaboration with Islamic Foundation to develop sessions on TIP and CM for the Imams on March 13, 2023, Dhaka

FSTIP Activity has collaborated with Imam Training Academy of Bangladesh Islamic Foundation under the Ministry of Religious Affairs to develop a training module on topics related to TIP, CM, and safe migration that will be included into the foundation training course for Imams. Following the training, Imams will be able to disseminate appropriate messages to people in their communities daily, particularly during the Jummah sermon on Fridays. This will also enable the project to reach a very large number of people with CTIP, anti-CM, and safe migration messaging, raising awareness in these communities.



Bangladeshi companies representing sectors including banking, insurance, hospitality, IT, telecommunications, and recruitment vowed to join the government, NGOs, and development partners including a dialogue with think-tank in fighting trafficking-in-persons. They expressed their commitment at private sector engagement events in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar, and Rajshahi organized by USAID's FSTIP Activity. During these events, Matt Friedman, CEO of the Hong Kong-based nonprofit, The Mekong Club, shared examples of good practices adopted by the private sector, including renowned brands in South Asia promoting TIP-free operations. FSTIP urged the private sector attendees to raise consumer awareness and create employment opportunities for TIP survivors.



VISIBILITY



During the period, FSTIP activities were covered on national, divisional, and district-level electronic, online and print media for events such as January - TIP Awareness Month, observation of International Women's Day, National Workshop to Review and Update the National Plan of Action, and the Launching of the CSS Guideline.



The trafficking survivors' voice network 'ANIRBAN' and Peer Leaders – a volunteer group of young people together took an oath to boost their CTIP initiatives within their communities at a USAID's FSTIP Activity organized 'National Convention of ANIRBAN and Peer Leaders' held from August 22 to 24, 2023. The event was designed by the FSTIP Activity in consultation with ANIRBAN and Peer Leaders that allowed the participants to exchange ideas, views, strategies and innovative ways to combat human trafficking and child marriage across the country. The National Convention was attended among others by the USAID representatives, ASIA CTIP project team, Academician, and ANIRBAN Central Committee members. The guest speakers emphasized on social volunteerism and urged for a collective action to fight human trafficking and child marriage and uphold victims' rights through ensuring victim centered approach from identification to reintegration into the society.

The national convention was held in due festivity that boosted the morale of the volunteer groups and vowed to further intensify their endeavor to combat TIP and CM and promote safe migration in their community.

The participants vowed to further intensify their endeavor to combat TIP and CM and promote safe migration in their community



Guests observed the gallery exhibition on FSTIP contribution against TIP and CM presented by the Peer Leaders and ANIRBAN in the convention





One of the participants shared their endeavor to combat TIP and CM and promote safe migration in their community





KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

FSTIP launched Brown Bag Technical Sessions with the aim to create a creative learning space for its partner organizations where issues/topics relevant to FSTIP MERL are discussed regularly. This is also a good capacity strengthening activity from where the participants improve their learning and understanding of the sessions. FSTIP Activity hosted a series of brown bag sessions that focused on a variety of topics, including survivor-centered MEL, evidence uptake in FSTIP program, data quality, realities of field MEL, and GESI in MEL.



Snapshot of a brown bag session

From January to September 2023, FSTIP Activity provided prosecution and protection assistance to the host community in Cox's Bazar including a series of meetings with Public Prosecutors (PP), assistant PPs, senior lawyers, panel lawyers, and investigation officers to review TIP cases and to strengthen the case management system and foster task force committee members' collaboration. FSTIP continued its awareness-raising interventions in Cox's Bazar on TIP, CM, and safe migration within the host communities. The project mobilized Peer Leaders (PL) to carry out community activities to disseminate messages on TIP and CM, which were shared with wide range of audiences in Ukhia and Teknaf. In addition, FSTIP provided protection assistance to TIP victims directly from the project and through referral mechanisms needs-based shelter home and counseling support.

Host Community Support

2,656

community people reached through awareness discussion

41

religious leaders received orientation to create public movement against TIP and CM

93

TIP survivors received protection assistance

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

FSTIP Working Districts

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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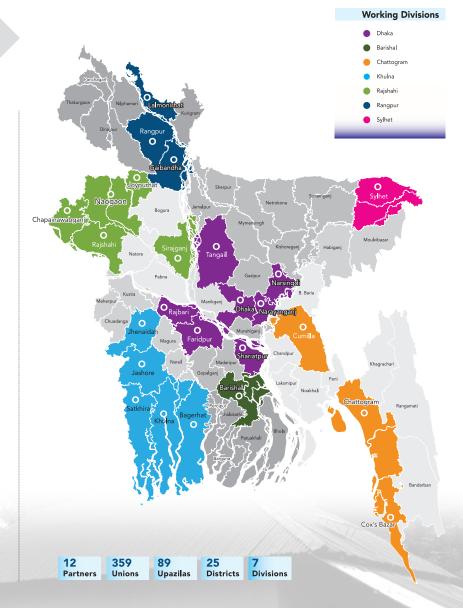
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Visit our project page to learn more about USAID's FSTIP Activity.



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