



Partnering with Persons with Lived Experience to Counter Human Trafficking



Persons with lived experiences (often referred to as survivors) have unrivalled insights into trafficking in persons, risks, and appropriate response. Winrock recognizes persons with lived experience as experts and leaders and engages them throughout program cycles.

Design of Interventions

Winrock designs projects with survivor input through links to survivor networks and individual or group consultations. Winrock uses a “do no harm” approach to engage survivors

who are further along in their healing journey to avoid re-traumatization. As part of this process, Winrock recognizes that survivors are not a monolith and considers diverse survivor perspectives.

In the design of the **U.S. Department of State Kazakhstan Actions Against Trafficking in Children (KATCH)** project, Winrock, with the support of service providers, organized a focus group discussion to inform KATCH activities. During the project’s start-up, KATCH formed a Survivor Advisory Group (SAG) to support project planning and interventions. The SAG is engaged in grant selection, reviewing child trafficking training materials, and supporting delivery of training sessions for child-specific care.

USAID Thailand Counter Trafficking in Persons project led provincial “Roundtable Forums” for migrants, local government, NGOs, employers, community leaders, and youth to identify gaps in migrant labor protections and recommend improvements. These discussions shifted the outlook of duty bearers, businesses, and service providers towards recognizing the importance of migrants’ voices in the discussion of policies that affect them, with the goal of continued collaboration beyond the life of the project.

While designing the **USAID Vietnam Counter Trafficking in Persons** project, Winrock held interviews with individuals working in the sex industry and in factories, including representatives from the LGBTQIA+ and internal migrant communities. The interviews revealed a lack of trust in justice and complaint mechanisms and feeling of marginalization when attempting to access services. In response, Winrock planned activities to improve support and referrals within at-risk communities as well as expand trauma awareness among first responders.



Trauma-informed Assistance

Winrock recognizes that a trauma-informed, human-centered approach to counter trafficking in persons cannot exist without inclusion of survivors and integrates their experiences and skills to assist others.

USAID Asia Counter Trafficking in Persons project, in collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies, produced research on [survivors' perspectives on successful reintegration after trafficking](#) to understand experiences of successful reintegration and which services are most critical. Interviews with 40 trafficking survivors in Cambodia and Bangladesh revealed that food, clothing, shelter, reconnecting with family, finding meaningful work, and creating societal change were the priorities.

USAID Fight Slavery and Trafficking-In-Persons (FSTIP) project strengthens two volunteer groups in Bangladesh, Peer Leaders and the survivor network ANIRBAN (“the flame that will not fade”), to lead the fight against trafficking in persons and child marriage. The groups engage in advocacy, development of Bangladesh’s anti-trafficking National Action Plan, community outreach, survivor identification, contribute to annual project work plan development, provide basic mental health support and referrals, conduct family counseling, and address stigma and biases that perpetuate trafficking and inhibit survivor reintegration. ANIRBAN has

“I will never forget the day when the Peer Leader informed me about the FSTIP Activity. It was the day of a new hope and a new beginning.”

-Shahina, child marriage survivor

staged protests when justice is not served, presented policy recommendations to national policy makers, and acted as community resources and changemakers.

Networks for Prevention and Advocacy

USAID Cambodia Counter Trafficking in Persons project, through its partner “Chab Dai”, convened two Survivor Care Forums to build confidence, foster connections, and strengthen leadership among trafficking survivors. Participants can join the Survivor Learning Group as consultants, offer feedback, and (co)lead local and international counter trafficking activities.

USAID Hamro Samman project in Nepal uses Winrock’s flagship “Leadership for Change” program to bolster counter trafficking Champions’ abilities. The survivor Champions utilize their skills to raise trafficking awareness and advocate to local governments for more support to aid survivors’ reintegration into their communities.

Winrock’s commitment to “Do No Harm” principles pledge to not create risks to staff, partners, project participants, and the communities where we work. All individuals engaging with persons with lived experiences carefully consider interventions so that they neither cause harm nor exacerbate tensions, conflicts, and vulnerabilities. Some actions that Winrock takes to uphold “Do No Harm” include:

- Employ culturally sensitive outreach
- Obtain informed consent of participants
- Ensure safety, privacy, and confidentiality
- Uphold the rights and dignity of participants
- Have referral information available in case of need
- Employ additional safeguards when working with children

Compensation

Winrock uncompromisingly compensates all persons with lived experience for their time, energy, and expertise that contribute toward the development and implementation of effective counter trafficking interventions.