

Endline Assessment Report of Community Mobilization to Combat Trafficking (CMCT) project of Rights Jessore (RJ)

SUBMITTED TO:



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Executive Summary

Bangladesh is a source and transit country for men, women, and children for the purposes of sexual exploitation, involuntary domestic servitude, child camel jockeying, and debt bondage. Women and children from Bangladesh are trafficked to India and Pakistan for sexual exploitation. Bangladeshi women migrate legally to Gulf states—Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, the U.A.E., and Saudi Arabia—for work as domestic servants, but often find themselves in situations of involuntary servitude. In addition, Bangladeshi boys are trafficked to the Gulf to serve as camel jockeys (also as bonded labourers for the fishing industry). Women and girls from rural areas are trafficked for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. Burmese women trafficked to India for sexual exploitation also use Bangladesh as a transit country. The US State Department¹ reports that 10,000- 20,000 women and children happen to be trafficked globally on average annually. Bangladesh ranked in tier two in the said report in 2007. However, most development organizations agree that the situation is grim and therefore warrants collaborative effort both from the GoB and the NGOs especially.

A number of studies documented those women and child in the southwestern districts in Bangladesh are the most vulnerable populations in this regard, who happen to be at risk of trafficking. Rights Jessore (RJ) is a local organization based in one of the southwestern districts, Jessore, working to curb and stop women and child trafficking and actively involved to ensure human rights for people at the grassroots level by combating trafficking of women and children and other forms of illegal migration. Since 2005, it has been implementing **Community Mobilization to Combat Trafficking (CMCT)** project aiming at community mobilization and social awareness building activities in collaboration with ten local partner NGOs based in Satkhira, Jessore and Jhenaidah districts. Academy for Educational Development (AED) and Bangladesh Human Rights Advocacy Project funded by USAID Bangladesh provide the financial and technical support respectively to the project.

As the project “Community Mobilization to Combat Trafficking” has completed its full intervention period; thus, at this point, it is imperative to make an analysis of benchmark information of the community people including the key stakeholders of their knowledge and practices. Consequently, it would be possible to make a judgment with the project inputs and results, as outlined in the project goal. Besides, it would also explore the way it benefits the community to prevent trafficking of women and children from the project area and finally, explore ways to continue the activities beyond the project period. The assessment study maps out the level of popular understanding, social mobilization aspects, action taken by the community and the local government agencies for protection and use of BCC materials in three project districts viz. Satkhira, Jessore and Jhenaidah.

An assessment method was devised taking into consideration three broad issues mentioned in the paragraph above. First, a qualitative questionnaire was prepared and pre-tested. After pretest of the questionnaire, six unions were selected from Satkhira, Jessore and Jhenaidah districts.

The study revealed that respondents living in the Rights Jessore project areas have better understanding of the relevant issues. The concepts of women and child trafficking viz. why and how women and girl children are taken to other countries, such as India, Pakistan and UAE are clear. In the project unions, over 70 percent of the women, young and adolescent respondents, refer to the courtyard meetings organized by CTWF members as the source of information, from where they learnt about anti- trafficking issues.

¹ US state department report 2007

The respondents, during interactions, spoke about the social protection system existing in the intervention unions. The Counter Trafficking Women Forum, community vigilance forum members are the key actors—they have been in the lead not only in awareness building on trafficking of women and children but also in assisting the local police, PNGOs and Rights Jessore in rescuing and taking the trafficked victims to the safety of shelter homes. Thus, it could be mentioned that through the project, an informal safety mechanism developed, wherein Rights Jessore has been implementing its activities, which Rights Jessore may continue in the near future.

It was observed that information and communication materials like posters, leaflets, stickers, brochures and billboards had been made and printed, posted and circulated by Rights Jessore in its project areas. These materials have been in use in the field as well as the community level. The study team found that CTWF members and PNGOs used the materials in the courtyard and bazaar meeting and in some cases, during the interviews with local women, it was apparent that posters and leaflets were useful to them in understanding the trafficking issues better. However, it was reported that the number of such materials circulated was limited. On the other hand, the study team observed that “Hotline” telephone was utilized for informing incidents of trafficking cases—the CTWFs and community stakeholders inform the law enforcement agencies and Rights Jessore about the cases for necessary redresses.

However, the study revealed that the attitude of the stakeholders and people of the assessment unions is negative about accepting the trafficking victim women back in the family and society. It was almost a common opinion of the people that they were ready to take the child victim of trafficking back not women. The study team observed that acute gender disparity existed in the community, which warrants immediate intervention.

In all the study unions, people’s perceptions of the role of law enforcing agencies generally were not very comforting and quite far from being satisfactory. The study team observed that a gap was evident in this regard between the people and the local law enforcing agencies. However, the assessment team felt that there are scopes for Rights Jessore to work with them to minimize such gaps and create a healthy two-way communication flow.

Recommendations

The magnitude of the problem of women and children trafficking in the study area is serious. Rights Jessore may look at the following recommendations volunteered by the stakeholders and the assessment team while developing its future course of action.

People and community responses and suggestions

Suggested immediate activities

- Awareness raising through Counter Trafficking Women’s Forum (CTWF)
- Increasing the number and frequency of courtyard meetings
- Organizing more *baza* meetings and *jarigan* (folk song) events in the community
- Ensuring marriage registration
- Organizing community video shows as a tool of awareness raising
- Continuity of the project for at least a period of five years
- Awareness raising through seminar, workshop

- Distribution/ dissemination of information/ communication materials like posters, stickers, using mikes, and organizing documentary film shows as well as involving the media throughout.

Long-term activities

- Poverty alleviation programs
- Formation of anti-trafficking groups
- Skill devolvement training for women and children
- Employment generation for unemployed women and children
- Lobbying and advocacy for incorporating the issue of trafficking in the academic text books at all levels

Assessment Team’s response and suggestions

The magnitude of the menace of women and children trafficking in the study area is high. Rights Jessore may look at the following recommendations while developing its future course of action in this regard.

- It is important that Rights Jessore extends its activities further in the trafficking prone districts, especially in the southern districts. It may collaborate with its broader network **“Manab Pachar Protirodh Network”** and initiate more extensive awareness raising activities following its best/ tested practices.
- In the future, the CTWF, as a community group may be continued, Rights Jessore may strategically proceed and create scope to include them not only in community awareness building but beyond that limit, e.g. in community and resource mobilization. Rights Jessore may involve them in the following manner:
 - **Awareness raising through courtyard meeting:** CTWF may conduct the community meetings as they are doing now, but it will be helpful if Rights Jessore develops a guidelines / protocol for the courtyard meetings for the CTWF. For example, the discussion points should desirably include the issue of women and child trafficking, its present situation in the locality, laws and issues related to reintegration of returnees in the family and society. In the courtyard meetings, CTWF may use case presentation, poster, leaflet and video to lead discussions more effectively.
 - **Orientation with teacher and student:** CTWF’s expertise may be utilized in providing information and education to the student and teacher communities. CTWF may form peer group and train them, so that they continue to educate their peers, minimize cost and sustain the learning.
- Extensive BCC interventions may be implemented in the trafficking prone areas. Therefore, it is important for Rights Jessore to develop BCC strategies to address different paradigms of the issue. The strategy should include immediate and long term interventions.

- Right Jessoré may start working in rescue and rehabilitation areas and collaborate with other NGOs working in this sector. For this, legal aid support may be extended to the victims/returnees.
- Rights Jessoré may also initiate programs on educating the communities and stakeholders on the laws related to Women Oppression, Violence and Anti-trafficking.
- Rights Jessoré may initiate a “Pilot” activity to educate the border security personnel, police and other law enforcement agency officials on women and child trafficking and the related laws.
- The issue of sustainability is a crucial concern of the CMCT project. Thus, Rights Jessoré should take necessary initiative and try to formulate strategies to ensure that the community groups, e.g. CTWF and systems such as information dissemination through Hotline Services could be sustained after the closure of the project.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

1.1 Assessment purpose and scope

Human Trafficking for sexual exploitation and for other forms of coercion is believed to be increasing all over the world. A number of studies have made it evident that Bangladesh is a country of **“transit and supply”** of women and children to destination countries like the Middle East region, Pakistan and India. Geographical location (4,222 km long open land border with India and 288 km long border with Myanmar), poverty, unemployment and lack of suitable employment, discrimination against women, violence against women and lack of governance with the Government service delivery authorities like the police, BDR and local administration are the major factors leading to the growing incidents of trafficking. Traffickers use 20 main points in 16 south-western districts of Bangladesh bordering with or contiguous to the Indian border. The main trafficking route is Dhaka-Mumbai-Karachi-Dubai. Many of the victims end up in the Middle East countries. (Zahiduzzaman Faruque, “Women and children trafficking in Bangladesh” *Kyodo*, 5 May 1998)

As mentioned above, 20 out of the 64 districts in Bangladesh are reported to be the most trafficking prone ones and Jessore, Satkhira and Jhenaidah are three of them. Rights Jessore (RJ) is a regional human rights organization based in Jessore district which aims to ensure human rights for the people at the grassroots level by combating trafficking of women and children and other forms of illegal migration. Since August 2005, it has been implementing an anti-trafficking project titled “Community Mobilization to Combat Trafficking” (CMCT) project, funded by Academy for Educational Development, in collaboration with ten partner NGOs based in Satkhira, Jessore and Jhenaidah districts.

The project “Community Mobilization to Combat Trafficking” has completed its full intervention period now; at this point, it is imperative to make an analysis of benchmark information of the community people including that of the key stakeholders on their knowledge and practices. Consequently, it should be possible to make an assessment of the project inputs and results, as outlined in the project goal. Besides, it would also explore the ways the interventions benefited the community in reducing/ preventing trafficking of women and children from the project area. And finally, it would also explore ways to continue with the activities beyond the project period

1.2 Assessment approach and methodology

The approaches of the endline assessment were to assess Rights Jessore and the project CMCT’s programmatic strength, challenges and further directions to combat trafficking in the project districts. Accordingly, the assessment team proceeded with two methodologies: one, reviewing the probing documents and the other was qualitative and quantitative information collection from the intervention areas. The assessment team, in particular, reviewed documents related to the CMCT project as well as documents and reports linked to women and child trafficking issues in Bangladesh as a whole. As a first step of the assessment process, the Team Leader briefed and oriented 6 field Information Collectors on the CMCT project results and its indicators as outlined in the Project Summary. The Programme Officer, Rights Jessore and the Monitoring Officer were instrumental in providing relevant documents and information during the orientation sessions. Based on the information gathered on the project, the assessment team selected the process of collecting and recording information from the key informants and the community, with structured tools and

guidelines. The tools and guidelines were pre-tested before taking them to the field/ intervention areas for FGDs and in-depth interviews. During September 2-10, the team interviewed 30 key informants and interacted intensively with 200 stakeholders and community people through 20 FGDs. For this purpose, the team randomly chose 6 unions out of the 20 intervention unions as the sample size, that is, representative intervention area. Besides, the team leader herself interviewed the major stakeholders like the Executive Committee members of Rights Jessore, project staff, journalists and representatives of the law enforcement agencies. The number and categories of the people and stakeholders interacted with during the assessment are shown in the following table.

Number of Interviews	SI	Type of Respondents	Jessore		Jhenaidah		Satkhira	
	1	PNGOs	2		2		2	
	2	Police/Ansar	2		2		2	
	3	Journalists	2		2		2	
	4	Government Officials	1		1		1	
	5	Local NGOs	1		3		3	
	6	Rights Jessore	2		0		0	
Total			10		10		10	
Number of FGDs:	SI	Type of Respondents	Jessore		Jhenaidah		Satkhira	
			Payra	Laxmanpur	Kazirber	Pagrakana	Ghona	Islamkathi
	1	CTWF Members	1	1	1	1	1	1
	2	Social Elite	1	1	1	1	1	1
	3	Women	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Total			3	3	3	3	3
	4	PNGOs	1					
5	Staff of the Project	1						

During the period September 10 – 17, the team was engaged in analyzing field information and preparation of the draft report. As mentioned above, the impact assessment addressed and compared the baseline information with the current information and knowledge and practice level of the people on women and child trafficking e.g. prevention, rescue and social integration of the representative number of people in the selected unions. Besides, it reviewed and analyzed strengths, challenges and opportunities of Rights Jessore as an organization. It also gathered opinions of the people of the community with regard to addressing women and children trafficking in the project districts in the future, pointing to the sustainability of the interventions

The team followed a work-plan shown below to manage the available time and earmarked tasks.
Endline assessment - Time Frame

Endline assessment Activity	Weeks			
	1 st week	2 nd week	3 rd week	4 th week
Briefing meeting with Rights Jessore and contract signing, preparing milestones / study plan				
Review of the Rights Jessore documents				
Developing and pre-testing the questionnaire				
Recruiting the field assessment team and providing training on the output of the assessment and questionnaire				
Refining the questionnaire if required and updating Rights Jessore				
Field visit by the field assessment team and collection of information				
Conducting Focus Group Discussion				
Compilation of the field report				
Presentation of draft report and sharing with Rights Jessore				
Submission of final report				

Chapter 2: Project Setting and Description

2. Community Mobilization to Combat Trafficking

2.1 Background and objectives

Genesis of Rights Jessore: Rights Jessore (RJ) is a national human rights organization working in the south-western region of Bangladesh. The motto of Rights Jessore is to prevent human rights violations and ensure protection against exploitation and social injustice. It was founded in 1992 by a number of dedicated human rights activists, and registered with the Department of Social Service and NGO Affairs Bureau of the Government of Bangladesh. As far the governance of the organization, Rights Jessore boasts a 31-member General Council with a 9-member executive body. The executive body is elected by the general body of members annually to formulate the organizational policy options and provide programme direction for the organization and project activities. At present, Rights Jessore is mainly operating in eight south-western districts of Bangladesh namely, Jessore, Jhenaidah, Satkhira, Magura, Narail, Chuadanga, Meherpur and Kushtia.

Rights Jessore is currently implementing a number of projects funded by Academy for Educational Development/Bangladesh Human Rights Advocacy Project funded by USAID, viz. Counter-Trafficking Interventions in Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution for Victims of Trafficking in Persons in Bangladesh with the financial assistance of IOM-International Organization for Migration, Dhaka, Strengthening Cooperation to Combat Cross Border Trafficking between Bangladesh and India with the financial assistance of the SARI/Q, New Delhi, and Strengthening Local Governance through Participatory and Responsive Public Services with the financial assistance of the Wave Foundation and DANIDA

In order to implement its activities, especially the women and child trafficking and rights based initiatives, Rights Jessore maintains liaison and working relation with a number of different networks and forums, viz. Women and Child Trafficking Prevention Committee, Ministry of Home Affairs, GoB Action Against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children (ATSEC), Bangladesh Chapter, SAARC Autonomus Women Advocacy Group, Bangladesh Chapter, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, GoB, Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum –BSAF, Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh-CCHRB, Member of the Bangladesh Counter Trafficking Thematic Group, Member of Migration Development Forum, Member of the Bangladesh Institute of Human Rights-BIHR etc.

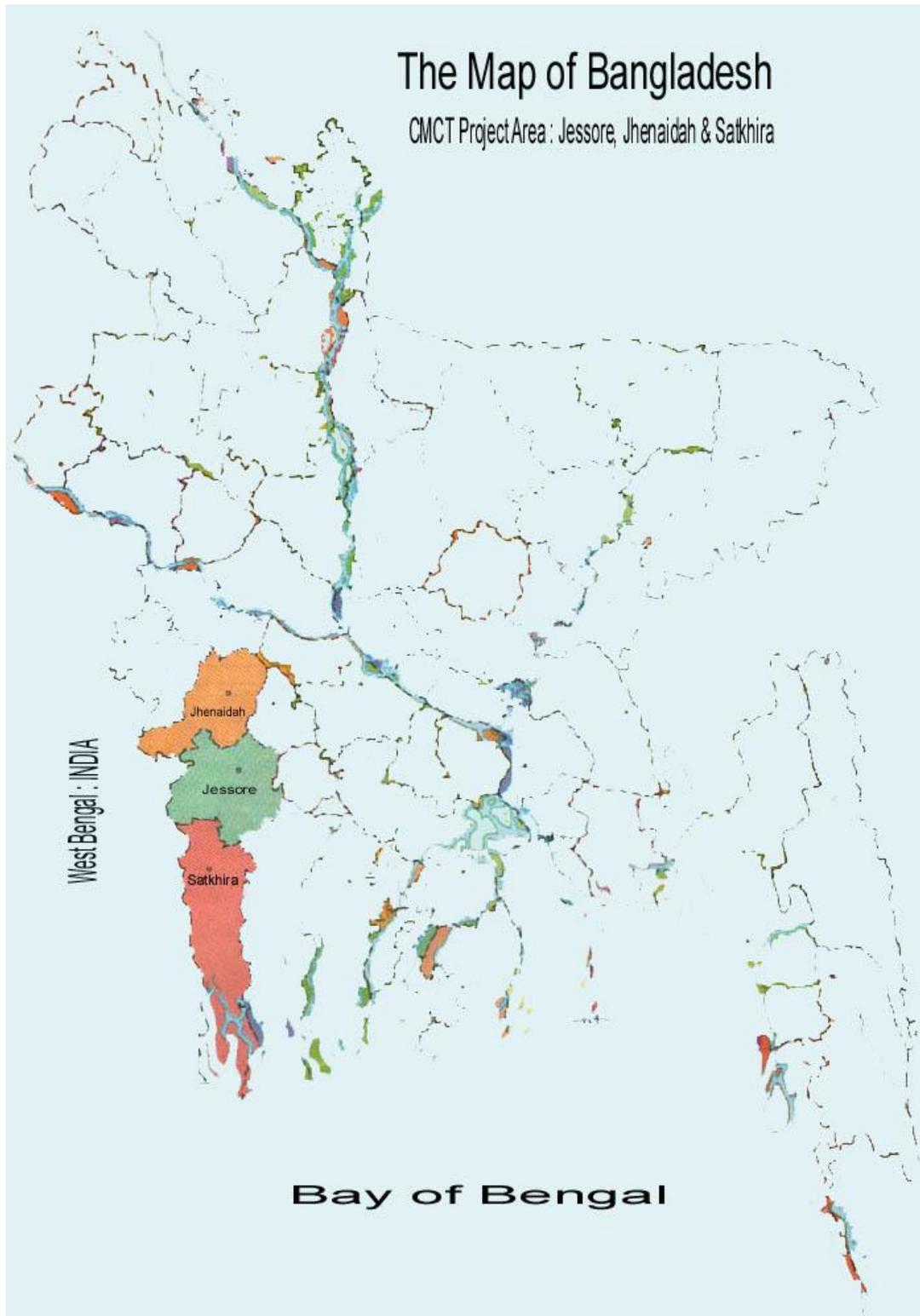
2.2 Community Mobilization to Combat Trafficking Project

This part of the endline assessment report describes the activities implemented under Community Mobilization to Combat Trafficking (CMCT) project financed by Academy for Educational Development/ Bangladesh Human Rights Advocacy project. The project was initiated in August 2005 and completed in September 2006 in Jessore, Satkhira and Jhenaidah districts.

2.3 Approach and activities

The overall goal of the project is to reduce and prevent trafficking of women and children in the districts of Jessore, Satkhira and Jhenaidah through community mobilization. Thus, Rights Jessore's approach to combat women and child trafficking are through mobilizing the community by involving

the local people, especially women's groups. Thus, community participation and ownership is one of the major thrusts of the project.



Through the CMCT project, Rights Jessore focused on community participation and networking involving the local women groups in the front line and other stakeholders in the community as well.

Thus, Rights Jessore designed three result-based interventions. The brief results are delineated below and details of the results, indicators and activities may be seen in the project summary, attached as annexure. The results and the brief activities outline are given below.

Rights Jessore implemented the activities in the south-western districts of Bangladesh prone to trafficking namely, Jessore, Satkhira and Jheindah. Under the three project districts, it had taken 20 unions for implementing the CMCT project activities. The following table (Table # 1) indicates the districts and the unions wherein the activities were implemented.

Before the start of the project, Rights Jessore observed and studied the situation of women and children trafficking in those areas and at the same time, tried to understand the state of knowledge, attitude and behavioural patterns/ norms of people in general and the stakeholders in particular with regard to addressing the trafficking issue. Keeping those in mind, Rights Jessore proposed the activities under the CMCT project involving the community people and stakeholders including women, men, teachers, journalists and local elected representatives of union parishad.

Table # 1

District		
Jessore	Jhenaidah	Satkhira
Paيرا	Kazirber	Ghona
Dihi	Paglakanaí	Islamkathi
Laxmanpur	Neyamatpur	Budhata
Shukpukuria	Nepa	Kholishkhali
Ramnagar	Porahati	Ashashuni
Upashahar	Kola	Bromorajpur

Result I: Increased understanding of the threats, consequences and modalities of human trafficking among the community and stakeholders including local NGOs, government officials, law enforcement agencies, journalists and lawyers.

The activities under result # 1 include comparative assessment of the interventions in the project districts, union level orientation, formation of counter trafficking women forum, bazar meeting, BCC need assessment training, organizing drama and billboard placement at prime location in the project districts.

Result II: Increased community initiatives to combat trafficking incidents.

The activities under result # 2 include capacity building training for the members of the CTWF on fact finding in the cases of trafficking using hotline and other sources, follow-up meeting with the members of the CTWF and PNGOs, performance review and use of BCC materials.

Result III: Increased support to survivors by service providers and enhanced actions by local administration and enforcement agencies in identifying and taking action against perpetrators

The activities under the result # 3 include organizing district level workshop for the stakeholders and concerned government officials and media, launching Hotline telephone services and collecting information through fact finding and documentation, information dissemination through BCC materials like Hot line brochures and organizing information sharing meetings.

As mentioned above, Rights Jessore utilized local resources e.g. **Partner NGOs** and involved them in organizing a first line of defense against trafficking through using the Counter Trafficking Women Forums (CTWF). PNGOs were also involved in conducting union level orientation with the local stakeholders including union parishad member, chairman, local journalist, teacher, Ansar and VDP member etc, all of whom are acting as linkage with the communities and Rights Jessore. To sum up, they are the key people responsible for implementing the CMCT activities in the community.

To coordinate community action and ensure people/ community involvement, Rights Jessore started forming the **CTWFs** in each of the 20 project unions. A CTWF comprises 15 female members including the female Union Parishad members, female teachers, female college students and female Gram Sarker members. Rights Jessore organized a number of capacity building training sessions to the benefit of the members of the CTWFs, and in particular, their convenors. All the convenors participated in the two 2-day training workshops held in Jessore. The main objectives of these training sessions were to develop the capacity of the CTWF convenors and to share the lessons learned in mobilizing their communities to prevent trafficking. Besides, the training also covered topics related to the CTWF members' skill building on fact-finding, documentation, strategizing to organize courtyard meetings and use of hotline telephone services.

An important element of the CMCT project is **"Hotline"** telephone services. Rights Jessore has been using this telephone Hotline as one of the means of information exchange, in order to aid the law enforcing agencies, shelter homes, PNGOs, CTWFs and the general community in rescue and rehabilitation of trafficking victims and identifying and assisting in arresting the perpetrators of trafficking. Through Hotline services, Rights Jessore had actually received several calls from the PNGOs and CTWFs about a number of missing and trafficked cases involving women and children, on which Rights Jessore has been able to initiate action in collaboration with the law enforcing agencies, community people and local NGOs.



Bazar meeting

Bazar meeting and courtyard meeting are the other tools which Rights Jessore utilized in information dissemination and awareness raising among the people at the community level. Through bazar meetings, Rights Jessore addressed the male members of the community; on the other hand, women and elderly persons of the household were reached through the courtyard meetings. Different aspects of women and children trafficking issues like how one should define trafficking, what the causes and the consequences of trafficking are, who the perpetrators of trafficking are and how an individual and people in general should act to prevent such misdeeds. The member of a CTWF in collaboration with the local PNGO/s has been responsible for organizing and conducting courtyard meetings in different locations of the project districts.

Building capacity of the stakeholders through organizing district and union level workshops to discuss important issues under the project. Rights Jessore conducted training workshops for journalists, law enforcement agencies, teachers and members of Partner NGOs. The objectives were to enable them address the issue of women and child trafficking and extend their support and help to all concerned.



Participants' group work during a BCC workshop

Rights Jessore conducted an in-house capacity building training for their project staff, in order to implement the project activities in a time-bound manner. All the project and core staff were trained on BCC message and material development and monitoring and assessment. Besides, as a part of technical assistance, AED/BHRAP provided training to the programme staff on gender justice, advocacy and financial management.



← Hotline Launching Ceremony



← Courtyard Meeting facilitated by CTWF Member



← Stage Drama

Chapter 3: Findings and results

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report elaborates the findings of the endline assessment conducted in the project districts, viz. Jessore, Satkhira and Jhenaidah. It is narrated in the document that the objectives of the endline assessment were to make a comparison of results of the interventions with the benchmark information, and assess impact of the activities at the community level as a whole.

A team of professional researchers from Participatory Communication Forum (PCF) conducted the impact assessment. The team comprised 7 members, viz. the team leader Ms. Afroz Huda and 6 other field information collectors. The process and the methodology of the assessment have been described in **Chapter 1** of this report.

The details of the assessment findings are laid out below:

3.2. Understanding Trafficking and its Paradigms

Throughout the 20 project union areas, Rights Jessore organized workshop and orientation sessions, at least one in each union with the key stakeholders at the union level participating everywhere. The purpose of those workshop and orientation sessions was to help the key stakeholder including representatives of the local NGOs, government officials, law enforcement authorities, journalists and lawyers understand the issue of women and child trafficking and its different dimensions. It was observed that more than 90 percent of the stakeholders interviewed perceived trafficking as transferring women and children from one place to other places or countries through lured, false promises for better job, fortune or marriage without dowry, which is close to the UN definition of women and children trafficking as mentioned below.

The definition of trafficking widely used by the UN is “Trafficking shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability [interpretative note (63)] or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation [interpretative note (64)], forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”. During the field interview with 600 key informants, the assessment team observed that over 90% possess good understanding of trafficking; they could articulate the causes as well as the consequences of trafficking. During the field visit, the assessment team observed that people interviewed understood the issues related to trafficking and they could articulate its causes as well as consequences.

It is interesting to note that the local people, especially the local elite and journalists, despite their mobility and access to information, were not quite familiar with or well informed of the routes of trafficking. As it happens, they came to be aware of the same only after Rights Jessore started the CMCT activities² and organized orientation sessions for them. It was revealed from the FGDs that their

² Comparative Assessment Report, Rights Jessore

understanding of the routes and ways of women and child trafficking was enhanced after they were afforded the RJ orientation, which covered information about the causes, consequences and contextual data of women and child trafficking in Bangladesh and other relevant countries. It was observed that 90 % of them identified the borders with India and Myanmar as trafficking prone and they even categorically mentioned areas such as Benapole, Bhomra, Shadipur, Kaligonj, Cholichia, Kholsehpur ghat, Shampur, Nepabazar, Kaliyanpur, Shrishaghat, Samanta, Kalarowra, Kashipur, Lebutala, Bagadanga, Hudapara, Jinzira, Putkhali, Godkhali etc as the most trafficking prone points, as there exists open land borders with India and the existing security measures practiced by the BDR and immigration authorities happen to be rather conventional and loose.

The assessment team noted that more than 70 % of the 200 stakeholders and community people interacted with could link the confounding issues of women and child trafficking and its dire consequences to outright gender discrimination and domestic violence occurring at the household as well as the community level in rural Bangladesh as a whole. Thus, as a result of different forms of violence, women and children become victims of trafficking and eventually live under pain and generally distressed conditions; they are also forced to be involved in flesh trade, work under sub-human and servile conditions in industries and business concerns as corroborated by the respondents present in the FGDs.

Although orientation on women and child trafficking and its causes and consequences was organized for the law enforcing agency people, it was observed that their understanding of the same was rather shallow. Out of the 5 local law enforcement agency officials interviewed, only one could mention such causes and their vile consequences. They reported that there were no reported cases of trafficking as such, and that they had heard that some cases of migration had taken place, where women and children had been taken to India and other countries for better employment and income and also that they didn't know what had happened to them eventually. This revelation indicated that the local police, Ansar and VDP members were not aware of the incidents of trafficking in their respective areas of duty or jurisdiction. On the other hand, it was observed that the community people including the CTWF members, journalists, members of PNGOs and local elected representatives had more information about the incidents of trafficking taking place in their localities. It was reported that as a result of certain CTWF members and PNGOs referring 13 such cases to RJ and others concerned, the perpetrators had been arrested and the victims rescued. The reason behind this may be that the community people and especially, the CTWF members became duly sensitized about the campaign and so kept an eye on the movement of strangers; they also watched carefully and followed up with people migrating for jobs, a girl getting married with or without dowry or marrying a rich person, family lured for a better job in India, UAE or other part of the country etc. doubtful occurrences.

A Real-Life Story: A CTWF member helped in stopping a woman being trafficked, lured by prospects

Munjur Ali, a village man (actually involved in trafficking) lured Ms Munjumala, aged 25 from Nepa union out with the prospect of a better job in the Middle East. A CTWF member of the same union came to know about that and informed the local community leaders immediately of the whole evil design. She expressed her concerns with great anxiety that this might lead to a trafficking case. Along with the CTWF member, the community leaders visited Munjumala's place, talked to the family and persuaded Munjumala not to venture abroad and saved her. Munjur Ali, however, escaped and never returned.

of a brighter future.

The team observed, however, that knowledge gaps regarding anti-trafficking law and its important clauses existed among the key respondents. It was observed that more than 50 percent of the stakeholders interviewed said that they had heard about the law, but none could delineate the details of the law, that is, its clauses and the severity of punishment of the offender etc.

3.3 Communities Mobilized

Awareness raising is considered to be a pre-requisite in mobilizing communities. As for the CMCT project, it was observed that most of the activities implemented to attain results were directed towards mobilizing the communities first. In mobilizing a community, Rights Jessore proceeded strategically and involved the community in question in the following manner:

1) Networking with local and national level NGOs

Rights Jessore established linkages and networks with 325 local level NGOs whose work involved preventing trafficking in the area and built a broader alliance called "*Manab Pachar Protirodh Network*" spanning the south-western districts of Bangladesh. Among the NGOs, Rights Jessore selected 10 as its Partners based on their interest, capacity and area of work (geographical location) to work closely together in preventing women and child trafficking. Thus, they were involved closely with the community people and made them aware of the anti-trafficking activities they were pursuing including rescue and rehabilitation of the victims, through forming CTWFs in their respective localities, organizing courtyard meetings, bazar meetings etc. RJ has been providing training for the PNGO staff to enable them build their capacity of understanding the trafficking menace and its different dimensions, monitoring and BCC material development etc. Besides, RJ also became a member of the ATSEC EC, which enabled it participate in the national level anti-trafficking activities.

2) Involving community people and especially women through Counter Trafficking Women Forums

It was observed that RJ through forming 20 CTWFs in the region has been able to initiate and create a social safety mechanism involving the members of the community. The forums were engaged in sensitizing women and adolescents in the community, organizing courtyard meetings, investigating incidents of women and child trafficking cases and even assisting the local law enforcement agencies in arresting the perpetrators of trafficking.

The CTWFs have, so far, successfully referred, as the assessment team observed, more than 60 percent of the total local trafficking to the local police stations for action. Besides, in

collaboration with the PNGOs, the CTWF members investigated 6 cases of trafficking and subsequently forwarded them to RJ for documentation and further action. It also came to notice that the CTWF members were engaged in rescue process mechanism and family/social rehabilitation of the victims of trafficking. Thus, these community-centred groups of women could be seen as a social safety net against trafficking at the community level.

“I am a member of the local union parishad and I am also a member of the local CTWF. I have extended my cooperation in organizing courtyard meetings ever since I came to know about the severity and consequences of trafficking”.

A CTWF member, Cholishia

5 out of 6 FGDs conducted with the CTWF members informed the team that besides anti-trafficking awareness raising activities, they are also providing education to the community people, and mostly women on dowry, early marriage, domestic violence etc. They have also been handling *shalish* (arbitration) cases under the Muslim Family Law and 2 cases were reported as having been mediated through them.

3) Establish linkage with law enforcement agencies and the community people

It was observed that Rights Jessore has developed a good working relation with the law enforcement agencies in the three project districts. Through union and district level workshops, Rights Jessore helped them understand the severity of the women and child trafficking problem in the area. Through these repeated interactions, the local police have become more responsive to the issue. It was reported that the local police rescued 8 trafficked victims and filed 9 cases against the perpetrators within the preceding six months, which, of course, was perceived as an encouraging development.

3.4 Actions by the community and local administration /authority

It was revealed from the FGDs and document review that the local authorities had taken initiatives and action in a number of cases where victims were rescued in collaboration with the local law enforcement agencies and the community. The community and local authority together have rescued 8 victims and arrested 6 perpetrators; charge sheets were filed against 6 perpetrators of trafficking as well. However, it was observed that more than 80 percent of the stakeholders interviewed showed negative attitude and feelings about accepting the trafficked victims/ returnees, if female.

3.5 BCC materials

Under the CMCT project, Rights Jessore has developed a good number of Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) materials. In general, the response of the stakeholders and key actors interviewed yielded positive feedback about the contents and messages of the posters, stickers and leaflets. The members of the CTWFs and PNGOs mentioned that they were involved in the planning and developing of the materials. Out of the 200 such respondents, 70% mentioned that posters, leaflets and stickers were effective tools for communicating with people, although their quantity, i.e. number were limited for distribution in the community as well as the project locations. Discussions held with the PNGOs and 42 CTWF members during the FGDs revealed that they had been using posters, leaflets and stickers in the courtyard meetings, wherein considerable number of village women used to be present. These visual aids were much helpful to the CTWF members and PNGO

staff in conducting meetings, explaining issues of trafficking, its causes and consequences. The CTWF member from Dihi union mentioned that the information contained in the billboard was informative and useful, especially the Hotline telephone number, and also that Rights Jessore provided three basic messages about risk of women and child trafficking there. In summary, the team observed that the BCC materials had created a positive impact in two areas; viz. a) awareness raising among the community people in the intervention area, b) assistance in rescue and rehabilitation.

3.6 Analysis of Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

The assessment team made an assessment of management of the CMCT project through an analysis of its strengths, challenges and opportunities. The details of this assessment are described below.

Strengths

The Executive Committee is supportive to the organizational and programme goals.

It was observed during the FGDs held with the members of the executive committee of Rights Jessore that they were firmly committed to serve the humanity and especially women and children and hence supported any efforts of rooting out such menaces as human trafficking.

“It is an emerging issue and we as sensible citizens of the state, can not sit idle...”

The President, Rights Jessore

The Executive Committee provides advice and directives in implementing the project activities. It was reported that communication with the EC members and project staff was good and that they are well informed of the ongoing activities of the project.

Policy for implementing the project (s)

Right Jessore has a number of policies in place to operate the core and the project activities, as appropriate. The project, CMCT adhered to the standard provisions set by the organization and the donor(s). The assessment team observed that they were going by such policies while implementing the project activities.

Staff capacity

Under the CMCT project, there were a total of 10 staff of whom 2 were women. The staff hired under the CMCT project had prior experience of working with NGOs on human rights issues. Therefore, it was natural for them to conceptualize the CMCT project activities and its expected programme indicators. Besides, through the project, all the core and project staff received training on monitoring and BCC material development. The Program Officer of CMCT project also provided on-the-job training to the staff including the partner PNGO staff on gender and justice, domestic violence and fact finding with regard to the victim of trafficking.

Supervision and monitoring system

It was observed that the project followed a monitoring system using a number of programme-based tools and component specific indicators. These tools were mostly utilized to oversee the field level activities, for example, the courtyard meetings, bazar meetings, fact finding into the incidents of trafficking etc. A monitoring officer and the staff of respective NGO/ PNGOs were involved in the field level program monitoring.

Staff commitment

Through the interviews held with the project staff, the assessment team found that the staff turnover rate/ level in the organization and for the project were rather low. It showed that the program staff

were satisfied with their work and the overall environment of the organization helped generate a strong sense of commitment amongst the professionals working there. It was, however, perceived that there existed rather obvious gender imbalances when one looked at the staffing pattern.

Stakeholders of the CMCT project were quite active against trafficking of women and children and had ably created a social safety net through the CTWFs in this regard.

There were effective and strong information and communication exchange norms established through Hotline telephone service and dissemination of the BCC materials produced, i.e. posters, leaflets, stickers and billboards spreading messages on the trafficking related issues.

Challenges

The issues of women and child trafficking are multi-dimensional, which warrant long-term and continuous efforts and initiatives. The CMCT is a yearlong project dealing with awareness raising and social mobilization components, in addition to the service delivery business. Rights Jessore has created just the right and required information flow in this regard, meaning a well coordinated and ensured way to meet the ***demands for information and services*** effectively for the project, which has become its important achievement-cum-tangible asset.

- Women and child trafficking is a sensitive issue and the rescue of a trafficking victim involves legal and security support. Therefore, maintaining good working relationship with local level administrative authorities i.e. the office bearers of the local police and keeping them aware of and supportive to the CMCT activities was an important but at times, a difficult challenge that had to be handled. Rights Jessore made extra efforts to manage and maintain such relationships through continuous monitoring and follow-up gestures as the office bearers of the local *thanas* (police stations) are often transferred without much ado.
- For family and social re-integration and rehabilitation of the trafficking victims, adequate logistic and financial supports are the must needs. Rights Jessore, despite its goodwill and sincere urge of providing total support in every case, has not been quite able to do so through the CMCT project simply due to severe fund constraints. Therefore, they had to depend on other service delivery organizations having such facilities as a shelter home for the trafficked victims etc. Coordinating effectively with the NGOs working in the rehabilitation sector in the project districts, however, was also perceived to be a difficult activity due to logistical constraints.

Continuing the project activities beyond the project period would be difficult for Rights Jessore without material support.

Opportunities

There exists ample and wide scope for Rights Jessore to work with the local women groups in the near future, as the CTWFs organized in connection with the CMCT project stand firmly motivated to work against such heinous human trafficking. This is surely an opportunity for Rights Jessore to further utilize these catalyst groups in awareness raising in the community with regard to women and children trafficking and other similar activities.

Rights Jessore, through the project collaborated with local and national print media, which may be utilized for mass awareness raising and social mobilization activities in the future.

Tapping and deploying local resource by involving local NGOs is another valuable experience that RJ has earned also poses an opportunity.

Cooperation and support gained from the local administration including the law enforcing agencies has been another plus point. Right Jessore has successfully catalyzed such relationships, which resulted in filing a number of women and child trafficking cases against perpetrators.

Chapter 4: Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Introduction

Community participation and mobilization was one of the core themes of the CMCT project implemented by Rights Jessore.

The task of attempting any assessment of the knowledge and attitude of the people with regard to any chronic social ailment such as women and child trafficking against the backdrop of only a one-year intervention poses myriad formidable challenges. The study team, however, made utmost efforts to explore the relevant perceptions and insight, if any, of the communities in the study areas through fielding a qualitative assessment in the Rights Jessore project areas.

The study revealed that Rights Jessore achieved to a great extent or at least, has attained a position which dares claim that RJ has gone quite far in the achievement of results as stated in Project Summary. The assessment team found that the community people, local elite, NGO workers, teachers, women and other stakeholders living in the Rights Jessore project unions can now tell people that they have a better understanding of the project issues. The meaning and concept of women and child trafficking e.g. why and how women and girl children are taken to other countries like, India, Pakistan and the UAE is clear. In the intervention unions, over 70 percent of the women, young and adolescent respondents, mentioned the courtyard meetings organized by CTWF members, wherein they had learnt about the needs of preventing trafficking and related issues.

There exists a good understanding of the trafficking issue and its different paradigms among the stakeholders, and they are also aware of gender disparities in the society. But unfortunately, as the study revealed, the attitude of the stakeholders and the people in general in the project area was rather negative about accepting the women trafficking victims back in the family and society. It was almost a common opinion of the people that they were ready to take a child victim of trafficking back, but not women. The study team observed different dimensions of gender based violence in the family, household and community level. It also observed existence of acute gender disparity in the community in this respect, which warrants urgent and immediate redress.

It was clear from the FGDs and the in-depth interviews conducted with the CTWF members that they have played most vigilant roles in the community, they took lead not only in awareness building on trafficking of women and children but also in assisting the local police, PNGOs and Rights Jessore in rescuing and taking the trafficked victims to safe shelter homes. This community-centred group plays a key role in the prevention and combating maltreatment and victimization of women and children in the community and provision of protection. Thus, through the project, an informal but very effective social safety mechanism has been developed in the regions where Rights Jessore has been implementing its project activities. It was rather a common demand voiced in all the project communities that measures be taken to nurture such groups and support them in continuing with their activities.

The study team observed that except a small segment of the respondents, most people's knowledge of the Anti-Trafficking Law was inadequate. Also, people's perceptions of the role of the law enforcing agencies in this regard appeared to be generally unfavorable. The study team observed pronounced communication gaps and lack of mutual trust as far as the communities and the local law enforcing agencies are concerned.

It was observed that information and communication materials like posters, stickers, leaflets, billboards and brochures were developed, printed and circulated by Rights Jessore in its project areas. Such materials have been used in the field as well as the community level. The study team found that the CTWF members and the PNGOs used the materials in the courtyard meetings, bazar meetings and in some cases, during their training. From the interviews held with local women, it was apparent that posters and leaflets were useful to them in understanding trafficking issues better. However, it was reported that the number of such print materials circulated was inadequate.

4.2 Recommendations

What can be done?

People and community's response

This part of the report illustrates the response and suggestions of the community people. The responses were gathered during the interaction with the community people, women groups and other stakeholders in the locality. The assessment team disaggregated the information gathered and crafted them as short-term, immediate and long-term activities delineated below.

4.3 Suggested immediate activities

- Awareness raising through CTWFs
- Increasing the number of courtyard meetings
- Organizing more bazar meetings and jari gan (folk song) sessions in the community
- Ensuring marriage registration
- Organizing community video shows as a tool of awareness raising
- Continuity of the project for a period of five years
- Awareness raising through organizing seminars and workshops
- Distribution of information/ communication materials like posters, stickers, also using miking and involving the media and organising documentary film shows.

4.4 Long-term activities

- Poverty alleviation activities
- Formation of anti-trafficking groups
- Skill devolvement training for women and children.
- Including the issue of trafficking in the academic text books
- Employment generation for unemployed women and children

4.5 Suggestions and recommendations for Rights Jessore

The magnitude of the problem of women and children trafficking as perceived in the study area is serious and grievous. Rights Jessore may look at the following recommendations, while developing its future course of action in this regard.

- It is important that Rights Jessore extends its activities further in the trafficking prone districts, especially in the southwestern districts. It may collaborate more closely and intensely with its broader network "**Manab Pachar Protirodh Network**" and initiate an extensive awareness raising campaign in this regard following its best/ tested practices.

- In the future, CTWFs, may be continued to function as community groups; Rights Jessore may strategically proceed in this respect and create scope to include them not only in community awareness building but beyond that, viz. in community and resource mobilization activities. Rights Jessore may further involve them in the following manner:
 - **Awareness raising through courtyard meeting:** The CTWFs may conduct the community meetings as they are doing now, but it will be helpful if Rights Jessore develop a guidelines / protocol for the courtyard meetings for CTWFs. In such meetings, the discussion points may include issues relevant to women and child trafficking, its present situation in the locality, law and other emerging issues related to the reintegration of returnees in the family and society. In the courtyard meetings, CTWFs may use case presentations, posters, leaflets and videos to lead the discussions.
 - **Orientation of teachers and students:** The CTWF's expertise may be utilized in providing pertinent information and education to the students and teachers. The CTWFs may form peer groups and educate and train them, so that they continue to educate their peers and thus minimize cost and sustain the learning.
- Extensive BCC interventions may be implemented in the trafficking prone areas. Therefore, it is important for Rights Jessore to develop detailed BCC strategies for addressing different paradigms of the issue.
- Right Jessore may start working in the rescue and rehabilitation areas and collaborating with other NGOs already working in the sector. Legal aid support may be required to be extended to the victims/ returnees in this connection.
- Rights Jessore may also initiate programmes on educating the community and stakeholders on the laws related to Women Oppression, Violence and Anti- trafficking and also try to bridge the existing gap between people and police and also offices of the local law enforcing agencies.
- Pilot activities to educate the border security, police and other law enforcement agency officials and personnel on women and child trafficking and its related laws may be undertaken.
- The issue of sustainability is a major concern of the CMCT project; hence the suggestion that Rights Jessore takes necessary initiatives and try to formulate strategies to address such emergent issues as to how the community groups, viz. the CTWF and information exchange through Hotline services could be sustained after the closure of the project.

Annexure

Project Summary

PROJECT TITLE: Community Mobilization to Combat Trafficking	IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION (GRANTEE): Rights Jessore	START DATE: 01 September 2005
GRANT NUMBER:		COMPLETION DATE: 31 August 2006
PROBLEM STATEMENT: Trafficking is a gross violation of basic human rights. The community people, law enforcing agencies, government officials as well as the potential victims of trafficking are unaware of the causes, consequences and magnitude of trafficking in the earmarked project areas of Bangladesh. Due to this widespread ignorance of the menace, the communities are not mobilized and hence unable to take necessary measures to prevent trafficking of women and children especially in the bordering areas.		
PROJECT OBJECTIVE: To reduce trafficking (as reduced number of afflicted persons) in the districts of Jessore, Satkhira and Jhenaidah through community mobilization.		
PROJECT RESULTS AND ACTIVITIES		
<p>RESULT 1: Increased understanding of the threats, consequences and modalities of human trafficking among the communities and stakeholders including grass root NGOs, government officials, law enforcement agencies, journalists and lawyers.</p> <p>EVIDENCE OF RESULT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 50% (101,160 out of 202,320) community people of the 20 project unions would be able to understand and explain the issues of trafficking (Union Level Orientation 30 x 20=600 people, Bazar Meeting 1,500 x 20 = 30,000 people, stage drama 3,000 x 20 = 60,000 people, Courtyard Meeting 300 x 35 = 10,500 people, one-day experience sharing meeting 30 people and two-day need assessment 30 NGOs) • Comparison between pre- and post- tests from training, workshop, bazar meeting, courtyard meeting and stage drama • Comparison between rapid assessment results and those of Impact Assessment Study • Report of rapid assessment <p>ACTIVITIES:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1) Rapid assessment of the situation of trafficking of women and children in three unions of three Districts 1.2) Twenty (one-day) union level orientation sessions 1.3) 20 Counter-Trafficking Women’s Forums (CTWF) formed 1.4) 300 courtyard meetings by CTWFs 1.5) Twenty bazar meetings with the community people 1.6) One-day experience sharing meeting on the findings of rapid assessment 1.7) Two-day BCC need assessment workshop 1.8) 20 stage drama sessions on trafficking issues 1.9) 15 billboards posted at prime locations 		

Note: This activity will also contribute to achieving Results 2 and 3

Result 2:

Enhanced community initiatives to combat trafficking incidents.

EVIDENCE OF RESULT:

- 20 Counter-Trafficking Women’s Forums (CTWF) formed
- 50 fact-finding cases into the incidents of trafficking by the 300 members of CTWF and 10 PNGOs
- Information on missing, kidnapped and trafficked victims available in the register maintained by the respective PNGO and CTWF.
- Increase in number of hotline calls received by RJ by 20 % by each quarter
- Law enforcement agents and local officials taken action in 80% cases recommended through Hotline calls.
- 100% hotline calls received regarding suspected traffickers referred to the local law enforcement agencies and administration.
- 100% hotline calls received regarding victim support are referred to the shelter homes or other support services.

ACTIVITIES:

- 2:1) Two (two-day) capacity building training events for the members of CTWF on fact finding into the cases of trafficking, rescue, hotline and documentation of the cases etc.
- 2.2) 20 one-day follow-up meetings with CTWF and NGOs
- 2.3) Half yearly performance review meeting
- 2.4) Fact finding into the incidents of trafficking by the CTWF and grassroots PNGOs
- 2.5) Developing and reprint of training manual/ materials for project activities

Note: These activities will also contribute to achieving Results 1 and 3

RESULT 3:

Support to survivors by service providers increased and action by local administration and enforcement agencies in identification and taking action against perpetrators increased

EVIDENCE OF RESULT:

- Local officials of law enforcement agencies taken action in 80% cases recommended through hotline calls.
- 90% of the trafficking survivors who are referred to shelters and other service providers through hotline calls receive the support they request
- Increase in number of hotline calls received by RJ by 20 % by each quarter
- Number of conviction increased
- Rescue of survivors enhanced
- Number of phone calls increased

ACTIVITIES:

- 3.1) 3 (two-day)District level capacity building and documentation training events for the Network Member Organizations, journalists and law enforcement agencies
- 3.2) Launching hotline and fact sheets
- 3.3) Fact finding into the cases of trafficking
- 3.4) Maintaining Registers by the members of CTWFs and PNGOs
- 3.5) Report preparation by the PNGOs
- 3.6) Circulation of Hotline Brochure
- 3.7) Sharing meeting
- 3.8) Follow-up meeting

Note: These activities will also contribute to achieving Result 1 and 2

PROJECT BUDGET (Please list figures below in local currency)

Total Requested from BHRAP: Tk. 4,093,500	Total Cost Share: Tk.670,225	Total Project Budget: (Total Requested from BHRAP + Cost Share) Tk. 4,763,725
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Question guidelines for the Rights Jessore and PNGO staff members

- 1. What is the overall objective of your organization and how the goal of the project matches with it?
- 2. Is it complementing? If yes, how?
- 3. Why and how do you make partnership with NGOs? How are you working together? Is there any conflict of interest? How do you minimize conflicts that arise?
- 4. How many staff do you have?
- 5. What is the staff turn over percentage?
- 6. Do you think that the staff has capacity to achieve the results? Why (explain)
.....
- 7. Have you experienced any lacking in performing the activities? If yes, how do you manage it?
- 8. How do you communicate with staff and PNGOs?
- 9. How do you monitor the activities and achievements?