

Strengthening Community Collective Actions to Prevent Child Trafficking and Provide Rehabilitation Support to Trafficking Survivors



An Impact Assessment
October 2018 - March 2021
North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India



Barasat Unnayan Prostuti (BUP) has been implementing the Anti-trafficking program since July 2006 with focus on prevention and protection of the vulnerable girls from trafficking. BUP has been catering to rehabilitation needs of the trafficked survivors over the years together with the communities and district administration. This project has been supported by Paul Hamlyn Foundation during the last two years.

BUP has worked over the years and expertise themselves in facilitating the process of rescue and rehabilitation of the trafficked survivors. The organisation has been able to established effective partnerships with the organisations working at the destination points and also some of the organisation at the source point. This has resulted in systematic case management, rescue and subsequent rehabilitation of the survivors. Over the years BUP has been able to establish meaningful relationship with the district administration and law enforcement agencies. This has also been useful in effective case management through Rights based Approach. The organisation has also specialised in evidence-based advocacy with duty-bearers ensuring equal participation from survivors, families and larger communities addressing issues of stigma mitigation, child marriage and domestic violence.

Till date the intervention has been focussed only on rescue, repatriation and rehabilitation of the trafficking survivors, but this intervention was primarily focused towards creating community safety nets and ensure three layers of protection for the children and adolescents.

Project Objectives:

Preventive Aspect

- Strengthen family safety-nets with greater involvement of the family members and larger communities to understand the vulnerability of the children and their role in protecting them.
- Strengthen existing statutory platforms like VLCPC and BLCPC to be proactive in addressing the vulnerable situation of the children and prevent them from being trafficked.
- Sensitize communities to combat vulnerable situations of the children and ways to address the issues that affect the lives of the children.

Curative Aspect

- Early identification of missing / trafficked cases with help from statutory authorities and law enforcement agencies.
- Strengthen process of rescue, repatriation and rehabilitation including legal assistance to the survivors.
- Strengthen coordination among families, communities and statutory mechanism for early resolve of the cases and subsequent sharing of knowledge.

Significant Changes

Improved subject knowledge particularly in the areas of understanding about human trafficking, community-based safety net mechanism and specific services of the government up to 60%

50 % Significant improvement in communication with the communities, stakeholder and among team members helped in strengthening self-confidence

Clarity about developing vulnerability mapping and subsequent facilitation at the field level with youth group members up to 65%

Theatre has been an useful tool for community mobilization and communicating several social issues. 50 % Community participation ensured at the end of 2 years

Process of field team building and youth group building have helped in enhancing confidence among project team members

Problem analysis mechanism and skill through group activities involving the Youth Vigilance Group members increased 55%

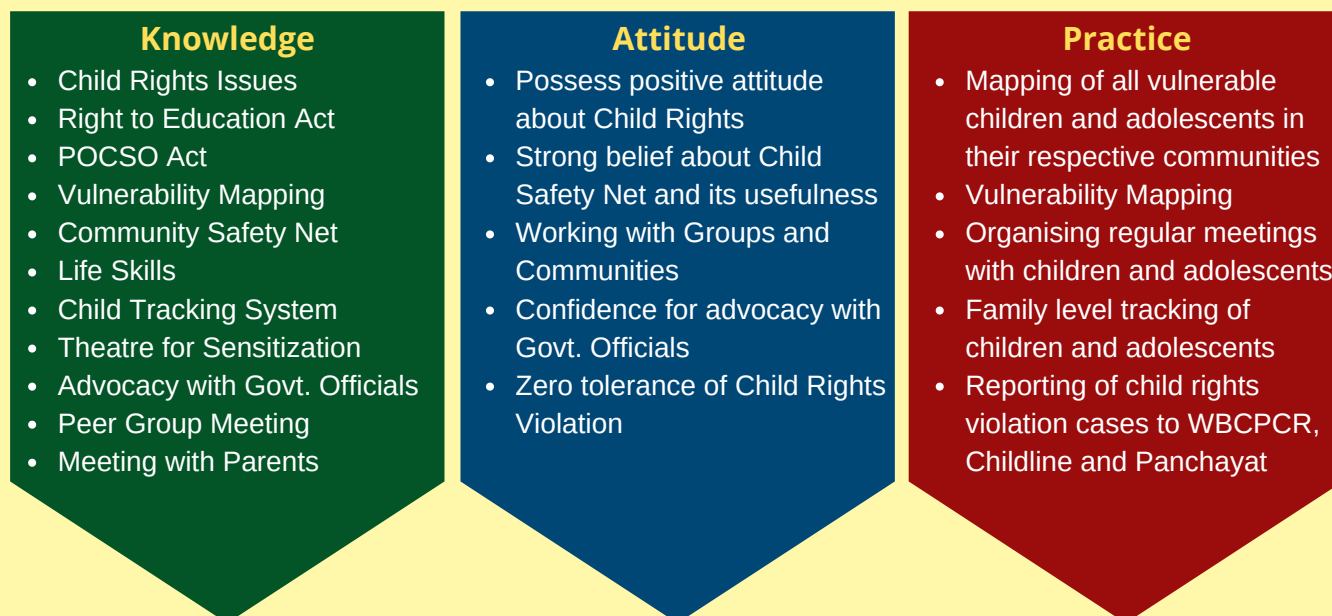
Community Safety Net mechanism has been ensured up to 30%

Reflection from Project Team on Knowledge Acquisition and Application

- Wider understanding of legal aspects of child rights, juvenile justice system and other related social legislations. These include – Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection) Act, Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act.
- During these two years, the project team members have also been able to understand the Panchayat, Block, District level structure and communication portfolio.
- Learnt the process of working with the communities and process of involving them in the development aspects of their children.
- Learnt and practiced the process of working closely with the adolescent and youth members of the intervention villages.
- The intervention has also helped the team to learn the process of interacting with political persons and people's representatives.
- The intervention has also helped in learning and conducting advocacy with concerned authorities.
- Clarity about understanding issues like child marriage, eloped marriage, human trafficking, vulnerabilities for children, out of school children, violence against children, gender discrimination, child labour, adverse effect of early pregnancy and community safety net.
- The entire team has been able to establish meaningful relationship with the local administration and resolved several cases of child marriage and rescue of trafficked girls.
- Regular community consultations have helped the team to disseminate knowledge and earn confidence of the community people towards strengthening community safety net mechanism.
- The community people, particularly the youth group members have been able to understand the importance of creating community safety net in the villages. Over the last two years, the youth group members have been able to make the communities aware about the adverse effect of child marriage and child trafficking. This has helped stop several cases of child marriages, prevention of child trafficking and rescue of trafficked girls from other states with help from Panchayat and Administration.



Reflection from Youth Group Members on Knowledge Acquisition and Application



Significant Changes Among Adolescents & Youth

During the last two years, adolescents have been the most important stakeholders of this project and they have not only upgraded their knowledge but also helped others to get acquainted with the issues concerning children. They have been able to establish meaningful relationship with their communities and strengthen their presence towards establishing Community Safety Net.

Significant changes that have been observed among them which include:

- At least 70% adolescent and youth have increased level of knowledge about child rights, prevention of child marriage and child trafficking.
- Over 90% adolescents and youth group members have increased level of confidence to discuss any issue related to child rights and reporting back to appropriate authorities at times of violation.
- Improved understanding about gender equality, violence against children and domestic violence. This has not only helped them create community awareness but also placed themselves in their communities with much dignity.
- They have been able articulate their demands with schools, Panchayats and Block Development Officer.
- Effective and meaningful use of Theatre as a means for wider community sensitization regarding child marriage and human trafficking.
- They have been able to identify cases related to child marriages and reported to WBCPCR directly for resolution. Subsequently, such cases have been addressed from local administration, however their identity remained undisclosed.
- Collection efforts in sensitization of the communities through theatre and articulation of their demands in consultation with other children and adolescents.

Significant Achievements

18

Youth Groups formed with 393 active members across 20 intervention villages.

3

Drama Groups formed comprised of human trafficking survivors and youth group leaders.

15

Theater based community sensitization activities held covering over 1170 people.

12

Govt. schools covered and sensitized on basic health & hygiene, adverse effect of child marriage, cause & effect of human trafficking including sensitization on 'Sankalp' programme of the District Police.

120

Community stakeholders joined the community based Child Safety Net initiative. This has helped in accelerating the community level sensitization and follow up activities.

5

Human trafficking cases prevented by youth group members with support from other stakeholders, police and Panchayat.

Success Stories: Overcoming Trauma helped Leadership Building

The adverse effect of social media led this adolescent girl to become a victim of unsafe migration and early marriage. Nargis (name changed) is about 15 years old from Amdanga area. She was addicted towards social media apart from her studies which put her into life threatening situation. She came in contact with Karim (name changed) from Punjab through social media. The friendship turned into a close relationship and led to such situation when they could not live without each other. Considering their feeling for each other, Nargis eloped from her home and met Karim in Punjab. They got married and started staying together, however life was not happy for her.

Immediately after the incident of eloping, the father of Nargis lodged a complaint with Amdanga Police Station and also informed Childline. The Amdanga Police Station immediately started intervening in the case and contacted the Punjab Police. A team was sent from the Amdanga police station to trace the location of Nargis but unfortunately they didn't receive any support from Punjab police, as a result they had to return. Later on, father of Nargis, placed the complaint with the Superintendent of Police, North 24 Parganas for further investigation in the case. The matter was then referred to the SP of Punjab police and Nargis was rescued from Karim's house by Amdanga Police Station.

After being rescued, Nargis explained her painful experience at Karim's house. She faced physical and mental torture over there, resulting to excessive trauma and feeling of insecurity. Later on, she was provided with series of counselling support from BUP. The project team and vigilance committee members kept on following up with her. After about 2 months of counselling support she could overcome significant part of the traumatic situation and resumed her studies. She has been involved as one of the members of the vigilance committee. She now keeps a watch over other girls in her community and attends meeting of the vigilance committee. She intends to become a change maker in her community and save other girls from similar frauds.

Success Stories: Rescue Led towards Youth Leadership

Life of adolescents nowadays are governed by lucrative offers, gadgets leading towards eloped marriages. This has happened with one among the adolescent girls in the project intervention areas. Pushpa (name changed) has been studying at the secondary class and staying with her family members. There was no such problem for her to continue studies and the family was supporting her in this context. But she came to know that one of the boys Rajesh (name changed) of her similar age has been following her during commuting to school. The boy started disturbing her on the way and tried to chat with her as well. Initially, she did not like it but slowly she started interacting with him and one day Rajesh proposed for marriage. But it was not possible for Pushpa to give her consent as her family members were extremely strict. The pressure from Rajesh continued and it compelled Pushpa to leave her home with him at the age of 17 years, resulting into marriage.

Parents of Pushpa were certainly worried owing to missing of their daughter and they lodged complaint with the local police station. In the meantime, they came to know from one of their neighbors about the incident. The parents also informed the BUP team about this incident and asked for their help as well. After having the information, the BUP team along with the parents of Pushpa went to Rajesh's house and took back their daughter. The police have warned the family members and Rajesh to keep away from Pushpa and not to create any further disturbances.

After having recovered from the trauma, Pushpa has resumed her studies and now acting as one of the youth members in the community to sensitize other girls to combat these kinds of situation.

Way Forward

The journey over the last two years have been quite effective in creating community level sensitization towards addressing the issues of child marriage and human trafficking. The project team have put significant effort in bringing about changes in the thought process of the larger communities on issues of child rights, adverse effect of child marriage and human trafficking. The youth group members have participated immensely in the entire process of community mapping, orienting the children in their respective communities and reporting back about violation of child rights.

The journey has been a learning process and significant changes among the youth members have been observed in their own knowledge, attitude and practice. Not only they themselves have been able to continue their studies but also ensured that children in their communities also continue their studies and do not get engaged in work or become victims of child marriage or human trafficking.

Keeping in view of the success of the two year intervention, it would be meaningful to carry on with the intervention in the existing two locations and also to explore in new locations about the usefulness of Community based Child Safety Net mechanism. This would strengthen the effectiveness of this model and replication of the same in any location.

As planned so far, that Barasat Unnayan Prostuti and Paul Hamlyn Foundation would explore all possibilities to continue with the existing intervention along with exploration in new locations.

Supported By



Implementing Partner



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