

# Reducing Exploitation and Abuse of Children through strengthening National Child Protection System in Bangladesh (REACH)

## Background:

Children in Bangladesh, in general, face multidimensional forms of deprivation, violence, abuse and exploitation. It can happen almost everywhere – within family, street, community, workplace, school or any state and non-state institutions. Reducing Exploitation and Abuse of Children through strengthening National Child Protection System in Bangladesh (REACH) program is focusing on reducing the vulnerability of children from abuse, exploitation and other violence including Physical and Humiliating Punishment, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Unsafe Migration and Trafficking.

## Implementing Partners:

Association for Community Development-ACD, Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts-BITA, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association-BNWLA, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust-BLAST, Breaking the Silence-BTS, INCIDIN Bangladesh, MAMATA, Nari Maitree, SANLAAP

**Project Duration:** 2011-2016

## Funded by:

DANIDA (2011-2015) and SIDA (2011-2016)

## Project Objectives:

Children are protected from Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Physical and Humiliating Punishment, unsafe migration and trafficking in Bangladesh and in West Bengal of India through a system approach.

## Geographical Coverage:

Bandarban, Chittagong, Chapai Nawabgonj, Dhaka, Gazipur, Jessore, Meherpur, Mymensing, Maulovibazar, Rajshahi, Satkhira and West Bengal in India

## Target Groups



Children



Community Members



Parents



Caregivers



Service Providers

## Major Achievements:

- Developed capacity of Save the Children staff as Country Trainers on Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (in partnership with University of Manitoba, Canada); began to develop capacity of parents in the communities.
- The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education accepted our recommendations on implementation of the government circular to ban corporal punishment in educational settings, and issued a series of letters to make schools violence free.
- Window Method (developed by our partner) to protect children from sexual abuse has been accepted by various organizations globally.
- Survivors of sexual and gender based violence received psycho-social counseling and are referred to services.
- Successfully piloted engaging men and boys approach to reduce sexual and gender based violence, which includes child marriage.
- Trafficked children have been rescued, repatriated and reunited with families.
- Child Protection has been incorporated in the textbook (grade seven) of national curriculum as a result of our advocacy.
- Government of India approved Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on repatriation of Bangladeshi trafficked victims due to the advocacy initiatives of SANLAAP.

## Major Challenges:

- Bringing perpetrators to justice is very challenging due to the existing culture of impunity related to violence against children.
- Societal acceptance of violence against children.
- Weak child protection mechanism (national and community levels).

## Future Direction:

- Advocacy to ban Physical and Humiliating Punishment of children in all settings.
- Capacity development of parents/caregivers and teachers on Positive Discipline techniques.
- Address online child sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Strengthen families and communities to reduce vulnerabilities of children to violence.
- Contribute to national and community based child protection system strengthening.
- Be part of a movement to make violence against children socially unacceptable.

“Earlier my mother used to beat me ruthlessly. Few years ago, she joined the parents meeting in the child space regularly, and came to know about the negative impact of Physical and Humiliating Punishment on children’s development. Now, she listens to me and does not beat me. I also listen to her. I feel very good. I used to be afraid of my mother, but, now, I do not have any fear. I love my mother very much.”

- Boy (12 years), UCEP School, Taher Colony, Ambagan, Chittagong

