



Violence against Children, Child Protection

PROCESS DOCUMENTATION



ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS (EMB) TO PREVENT SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Save the Children International implemented Reducing Exploitation and Abuse of Children through Strengthening National Child Protection System in Bangladesh (REACH) program from 2011-2016 with the help of its local partners. REACH had focused on a range of deprivation, exploitation and abuse affecting the children in Bangladesh. The program adopted unique strategies on reducing the vulnerability of children from abuse, exploitation and other forms of violence including Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Physical and Humiliating Punishment and Unsafe Migration and Trafficking.

With financial and technical assistance from Save the Children International a national NGO called Association for Community Development (ACD) implemented 'Allies for Change: Engaging Men and Boys to Combat Gender-based Violence' in Rajshahi Division' under the REACH program. The project worked in a total of five unions in Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj districts and two wards under the Rajshahi City Corporation. The strategy was first piloted in 2011 prior to its implementation under REACH. It was also experimented by other partners of REACH but this summary paper only documents experiences of ACD which used the strategy as a major approach in combating gender based violence and preventing child marriage.



The engaging men and boys (EMB) strategy was primarily implemented at the north east region of Bangladesh by Association for Community Development (ACD). It involved boys and male youth groups forging partnerships with female and adult groups alongside religious leaders in executing different roles in addressing sexual and gender based violence and preventing child marriage. The youth were trained to involve in changing the mind-sets of youth, peers, family members and the community through raising awareness or influencing and together with other groups facilitate community dialogue in trying to solve problems related to violence against The engaging men and boys (EMB) strategy was primarily implemented at the north east region of Bangladesh by Association for Community Development (ACD). It involved boys and male youth groups forging partnerships with female and adult groups alongside religious leaders in executing different roles in addressing sexual and gender based violence and preventing child marriage.

It draws from the concept of hegemonic masculinity¹ which overpowers women and helps to keep patriarchy alive. According to this concept men's gender identities and practices are learned and can be changed² with exposure to other forms of masculinity. The project used young impressionable youth as conduits to change the traditional norms of the adult community while creating an impression on their mind-frame about positive masculinity. They sought help from female youth whose self-image and confidence also soared through participation in the process.

1. Key Approaches:

The project adopted a range of coordinated approaches in implementing engaging men and boys strategy (EMB). This paper compiles the best ways of working with men and boys on changing gender inequitable attitudes and practices.

1. Originally developed by Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell.

2. USAID Publication 2015: Working with Men and Boys to End Violence against Women and Girls: Approaches, Challenges and Lessons.

Federating and sensitization:

The intervention started with a variety of groups adapted from previous programme phases especially distinct **groups of boys and youth**. During the project period a total of 150 boys and youth were mobilized and placed among 9 youth groups across the working areas. The EMB strategy was also used in mobilizing the children and youth at the ethnic minority communities like the Santals and the Horijon³ community.

The project organized a series of awareness trainings for the male youth on issues of gender discrimination, gender division of labour and equality and costs of early marriage among others. Further, with a more sensitized mind-set the group engaged in the practice of ‘positive masculinity’ and expressed solidarity by trying to share household work more equitably. As a youth member reflects, “I started to wash clothes, made my bed, cleaned the rooms, helped my mother with household chores and lent a hand to my father.” Their sense of social commitment was further pushed by encouraging them to participate in a drive of cleaning the roadside drains. With their revised gender sensitivity the youth engaged in **peer-to-peer** gender dialogue speaking out about purging of sexist behaviour contributing to sexual violence and mobilized men to take action against violence and child marriage. The youth identified 13 perpetrators among the peers and tried to motivate them towards non-violent masculinity.

At this point, the male youth groups felt that despite developing gender affinity their motives were sometimes held in question by family members and the community. They realized the need of **including female co-workers** who had a more realistic understanding of the issues and acceptability among parents. In total 311 girls participated in group activities out of which 115 girls participated into girl’s forums.

Weightier activities like addressing issues of trafficking or monitoring unsafe migration necessitated **working with adult community members and parents**. It also lent more traction in doing advocacy with the elected leaders or holding duty bearers to account like the school committees or Government’s counter trafficking committee. Adult men integrated into various groups to fulfill diversified roles major among which are parents group, violence protection committee (VPC), community based child protection committees (CBCPC).

The project conferred grave importance to the inclusion of **religious leaders** whose support seemed vital in a large Muslim majority community. While working in a Santal community the church priest was also included as an advocate on gender based violence and control of drug or alcohol use.



In order to empower the federated groups as agents of social change their **technical capacities** were enhanced. They were provided a total of 60 trainings on gender relation and equality, positive forms of masculinity, laws and policies, child rights and Violence against women and Children Suppression act 2000.

Creating space for synchronization

An important feature facilitating synchronization between groups is the existence of physical space or structure in the working areas popularly known as socialization centres. In two **socialization centres** male and female youth groups gathered for meetings to share ideas, make work plans, participate in trainings and recreation. The adult and parent groups also used the centres as a venue for meetings, training and socialization among themselves and across various groups. It also ran sessions on psychosocial counselling for victim children and families, life skill training and education. Having such physical structures helped crystalize the bonding between various groups and gaining endorsement from the community on the work of men and boys.

3. Low cast Hindu

Awareness raising and local advocacy:

The youth groups used the ***popular culture as a useful tool to raise awareness***. A youth drama team of theatre for development (TfD) was trained which conducted eighteen shows altogether. The team incorporated a traditional form of folk tool from Rajshahi namely ALCAP to create greater emotional response among the viewers. After the shows the spectators were given an opportunity to give out their reactions.

The youth forum gradually got its foothold in more serious ***local advocacy*** with help from the parents group. It developed strong networks with local journalists and elected bodies. Soon, the youth forum engaged with the government's counter trafficking committee which was so far non-active.

Project M&E data (2011-2016)

- Rescued 176 girls vulnerable girls, provided shelter support to 176 girls.
- Provided counseling support to total 1,854 children (girls-1,280, boys-574)
- Provided legal support to 176 girls boys-10 and girls-166)
- Provide education support to 5,735 children (girls-3,054 and boys-2,681)
- Capacity building for community children to 4,776 (girls-2,842 and boys-1,934)
- Capacity building for parents, community leaders/religious leaders/teachers are total 7,230 (female-3,800 and male-3,430)
- Altogether 168 child marriages were stopped by combined group efforts at the working areas among which the youth groups alone thwarted 97 child marriages.
- 13 marriages were accomplished without dowry.
- Youth groups dealt with 29 eve teasing [basically they dealt more but documented on 29 (i.e. they basically worked with their friend and community people to change the attitude of other men and boys] on the spot, and filed 1 case on child sexual abuse.
- The youth forum ensured birth registration of 232 [directly register 232 children but they ensure 100% birth registration at their working areas] children.
- The Marriage Registrar refused to register 34 marriages on finding discrepancy with the birth certificate.
- Youth group admitted 332 children at school, 188 dropped out children readmitted at schools out of which the youth forum helped readmit 58 children.
- The youth groups identified 199 children who engaged in hazardous jobs and placed 172 children in jobs considered safe for children.
- 6 youth received vocational training through ACD vocational training center, privet service providers, consequently job placement to 66 youth.
- The youth forum identified and communicated with 21 children who went to India for jobs. Among them 15 is back in Bangladesh. It was not possible to communicate with rest of 6.
- Over 90% girls from Horjon Polli attend school.
- At least 50 ethnic minority families are avoiding gambling during their festivals.
- 16 core trainers are working as change agents in their respective communities to protect and reduce child marriage, sexual and gender-based violence against children.



They identified children already trafficked and from at risk households and engaged in a discussion with the community and religious leaders. Similarly, the youth groups have been involved with the Child Protection Group. They insisted the local Marriage Registrar to check birth registration certificates while registering marriages.

The youth forum capacitated officials of three village courts on the issues of child protection and rights and laws related to sexual and gender based violence, child marriage, and domestic violence. They encouraged the village courts known generally to be biased against women to accept a higher number of gender related cases and be more gender sensitive in delivering judgements. Alternately, they created awareness in the community about the activities of the village court and encouraged them to seek justice and participate in village court activities.

Linking wider community needs with participation of men and boys

The Engaging Men and Boys component is embedded in a more holistic framework which also sees poverty as a key form of violence to be tackled alongside all forms of discrimination. It developed links with different service providers, government agencies, local administration for providing support and services for the survivors and children at risk of violence. Further, with alternative funding, the NGO includes a number of initiatives within targeted communities beyond violence related issues to cover livelihood skills for girls, vocational training, and larger efforts to promote schooling and support communities to overcome other forms of discrimination or poverty related problems. It also runs a shelter for victims of trafficking and violence. 56 youth received vocational training through ACD vocational training center and private service providers, consequently 29 youth were placed in jobs.

2. Key Achievements:

This section documents some significant visible changes in communities collected through interviews during the 2014 evaluation of the project as achievements. Also, box 1 collates some M&E data that gives indication of achievements related to strategic engagement of men and boys.

- i. Eve-teasing for which girls and women would not come out of houses without urgent and unavoidable situations has decreased. An environment is created where boys and girls are being able to work together.
- ii. Men and boys behave better and started trying to support women and girls at household and community levels. Women's opinions are being heard more at home and in community interventions.
- iii. Family environment is better with a 'supportive' father or man in the family which makes the family less violence-prone. The generic perception about girls and women being worthless is diminishing.
- iv. Youth have received a better social acceptance rather than getting negative impression from the elderly people in the society.
- v. Awareness is also raised about other socially marginalized groups and minorities in the community, such as. Hindu Para, Fishermen Village, Horijon Polli. Actions are also being taken to better their environment and accessibility.
- vi. Gender-sensitive families are promoted through parents' group meetings. Parents are better interested in educating girl children. More girls are going to school, even from minority groups of people.
- vii. Other forms of violence are also reducing like domestic violence, peer violence.
- viii. A culture of inter-generational dialogue is opened up.

3. Key Lessons Learnt

- i. Integrating female perspectives into the federation of men and boys helps fill up the gaps in understanding contributing to a more comprehensive group consciousness based on felt needs. Moreover, the collaborative action helps to earn a buy in from the community and involvement of girls facilitates access among more conservative quarters.
- ii. Involving the parents and the adult CBCPC gave the youth group protection against repercussion from the vested interest group and provided confidence to address problems of more serious nature and leverage the local duty bearers.
- iii. It is essential for men and boys engagement strategy to target inclusion of religious leaders and village elders as they hold transformative powers over a large portion of the community. Clearly, a public declaration by them on ending gender based violence will generate quicker adoption of the values resulting in decrease in various forms of violence, especially domestic violence.

iv. Familiarizing the male youth to domestic and care work and exposing them to neighborhood cleaning drive will help promote more positive, productive masculinities taking mind away from harmful thoughts and in due course leading to an increased sense of social responsibility.

Way Forwards

- Compile examples that endorse that religion does not encourage violence against women and highlight women's positive and powerful contribution in society from religious history to legitimize the demand for fairness.
- Continue with recruitment and training of new batch of youth to address the high turnover. Many boys and girls share similar interests in struggling for a better future. Design child protection interventions tying with other incentives related to self or community development.
- Consolidate referral linkages with other service providers in order to create development opportunities for the youth and their families.
- Project design on EMB requires appropriate planning based on robust baseline analysis, lessons learnt from previous examples and phases in order to involve in intense work in targeted areas with adequate provision for funding.
- Capacitate men and boys in taking more action for survivors of violence alongside engaging in preventive measures.
- Project design should include provision for measuring or tracking attitude and behavior change at various levels and find ways to document the most significant changes as a result of EMB strategy.

ii. Although sexual harassment is reported to have reduced considerably within the community, outsiders entering community spaces still embody a source of harassment and violence for girls. Also, when girls travel outside

the community spaces the risks of sexual harassment remains, for instance on the way to school or when fetching water.

iii. It is difficult to retain the youth for a longer period of time which disrupts the flow of activities and also affects the individual attitude change objectives. Due to migration, job placement, educational needs, family pressure, poverty a total of 97 youths had dropped out from the youth groups.

iv. The Project withdrew from two locations before the completion phase due to fund crisis. Challenging sexual and gender based attitudes through engaging men and boys strategy is elaborate and requires time and costs. It involves changes at many levels such as targeting Individual level attitude and behaviour, community level practices, holding local duty bearers to account among others.

v. It has proven difficult to convey messages condoning violence against women and girls in the ethnic minority communities that are plagued by men's use of drugs and alcohol. In this context the youth had to target change of habit through control of substance abuse which is congruous with domestic violence.



REINFORCING THE COMMUNITY SECURITY SYSTEM IN FIGHTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: A CASE STUDY OF BAUNIABADH SLUM

Save the Children International implemented Reducing Exploitation and Abuse of Children through Strengthening National Child Protection System in Bangladesh (REACH) program from 2011-2016 with the help of its local partners. REACH had focused on a range of depravation, exploitation and abuse affecting the children in Bangladesh. The program adopted unique strategies on reducing the vulnerability of children from abuse, exploitation and other forms of violence including Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Physical and Humiliating Punishment and Unsafe Migration and Trafficking.



As a good practice example this paper documents the dynamics of the community security system operational at Bauniabadh slum in Mirpur 11, Dhaka experimented by a national NGO called Breaking the Silence (BTS). Built on an embankment Bauniabadh slum is a semi structured urban settlement. The residents are mostly permanent who were transported here from Bhashantek area as a part of Government's rehabilitation plan. Consisting of six blocks the documented population stands at 2600. However, the population is increasing fast with arrivals of new tenants. The majority of the people at the slum are day laborers, workers at embroidery factories, transport workers and traders at the local bazar. It has a typical slum status in terms of demographic, socioeconomic and health status with congested living conditions.

Reinforcing the community security system has been earmarked as a useful strategy for child sexual abuse within a community by all REACH partners. The strategy is based on the belief that if existing strengths and knowledge endogenous to a community can be mobilized and reinforced, they work best in mitigating local problems. The system capacitates a number of groups and institutions in target communities that includes groups of male and female youth, mothers, community and religious leaders, schools uniting under the umbrella of an apex committee called the Community based Child Protection Committee (CBCPC). The CBCPC are aligned with the requirements set in the Children's Act 2013.

1. Background: group formation

Prior to intervention at the Bauniabadh community the BTS was conducting counselling sessions on child abuse to mother and children who sought health services from Radda clinic in Mirpur. It became evident that most of the case reporting of sexual abuse were from Bauniabadh slum. Therefore, BTS started awareness activities at C block of the slum in 2000 with help from a female youth group. On realization that male youth are also exposed to experiences of abuse the NGO formed a male youth group in 2004. In 2005, based on the learning of Block C the project decided to spread activities at the remaining five blocks. After two years of preparation in 2007 with joint funding from Save the Children Sweden and Save the Children Denmark BTS was fully operational in all the blocks of the slum. In order to promote cultural participation and exchange of experiences across the blocks a 35 member central apex committee called the **Child Rights Implementation Committee** was formed in 2010 consisting of community leaders, parents, school teachers and religious leaders from each block. Since 2011 till project phase out in 2015 the committee performed under REACH funding as a watch dog of sexual abuse and provided safety support to the children at Bauniabadh slum.

2. Approaches

Activities under REACH started in 2011 with groups adopted and systems built during the previous phases. At this stage the community security system at Bauniabadh slum had fully evolved and was functioning with minimal guidance from BTS. It still remains operational subsequent to the project phase out in 2015. This section compiles the key approaches that have proved useful in operationalizing a sustainable community security system at Bauniabadh slum in coping with issues related to child sexual abuse and violence. The information gathered here has been collected from the trawl of project documents, evaluation reports and reflection of project staff.



i. Reaching a varied section

AT each block the strategy aimed at including **community members** like parents, children, and community elders for sensitization and community campaign development on sexual abuse. Also, through peer-to-peer support the youth forum members expanded the reach among the wider community of children. Simultaneously the strategy trained participants from **community institutions** like teachers of community schools and religious leaders from the local mosques who have transformative powers over devotees, community leaders, employers, local elected members. Five schools were included for school based awareness activities where the teachers and parents also received training. Interestingly, it also created awareness among the school security personnel and block based night security guards who monitor night entry of outsiders to the community. For coordination between groups from six blocks a 35 member central **apex committee** called the Child Rights Implementation Committee was formed with representatives from all the blocks.

ii. Capacity development

Different groups received training and attended workshops on child rights, laws related to child marriage, what is child sexual abuse, how to prevent child sexual abuse at personal level and in the community, the physical and mental changes adolescents go through. As a part of the participation process the groups received lessons on sensitivity related to CSA and as a team engaged in solving problems through following the complaints and response procedure.

iii. Attempting prevention and troubleshooting

The role of the groups are vital in mostly preventing uncalled for incidents of child sexual abuse, child marriage and eve teasing. The groups hold inter-group meetings once a month and a larger CBCPC coordination meeting once in three months. The youth group also get an opportunity to take part in the coordination meeting. In the meetings the groups invest time in reporting or exchanging knowledge about area wise incidents of sexual violence and planning action points.

However, the groups also interact besides regular meetings whenever situations require immediate attention. Youth members and pro-active adult representatives are recognized as resource persons when problems in relation to children arise. The CBCP leaders too can be accessed for problem solving.



iv. Mass Awareness raising and campaign development

The youth and adult groups engaged in wider block based campaign program through cultural engagement on child sexual abuse, child marriage. There were also cross block activities and cultural participation and exchange visits by parents. The youth groups conducted 13 Theatre for development shows on issues of child abuse, marriage and eve teasing. They organized 4 campaigns and held 11 day observance.

v. Developing culturally sensitive tools

Breaking the Silence developed specific methods for awareness raising on sexual abuse. For example, it put together a toolkit in the light of Islamic ideals for training of religious leaders on child rights and sexual abuse. Citations from the toolkit has attracted many devotees especially men attending mosques during religious sermons.

Further, BTS developed a resource book which contained an innovative specialized child friendly model called the window method in initiating discussions on sexuality which was particularly used in school based awareness programs.

Among other innovative ways of capturing sensitive responses are setting up one complaint box at each block and also in schools to encourage children and adult community members to report on cases of abuse. The youth group and CBCPC members open the boxes together once in fifteen days to investigate and decide on response collectively.

vi. Providing referral services and networking

The project helped the CBCPC to develop links with different service providers, government agencies, local administration for providing support and services for the survivors and children at risk of child sexual abuse. With the help of the groups the project prepared a case management file of 4593 children and provided necessary support to some in health, education, legal and safety net.

The Window Method

The windows of a room are opened one by one as discussions on child sexual abuse evolve. Each step is carefully explained to the students. The first step of a window method is to initiate discussion about general experiences then gradually progressing towards sharing other specific experiences on child sexual abuse. The sensitive issues are not put forward abruptly but explained step by step. At one point the students open up about their personal experiences. The discussions revolving around specific experiences of sexual abuse help the students develop a clearer perception on the issue. Follow up sessions are carried out to resolve any problem faced by the students.

Project M&E Data (2011-2016)

- The community based groups stopped 159 child marriages during the project period.
- A total of 244 cases of child sexual abuse were dealt with by different community groups.
- 08 cases were reported to the local Thana by the community members.
- Referral data (Medical support-48 children, Counseling-277 children, 35 adults, Vocational training-166 children, 100 adults, Legal Support-08 children & 4 adults)
- Through vulnerability mapping educational support was provided to 303 children, 17 got safety net support, and 13 disable children got support from Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation.
- 424 birth registration completed by adolescent groups and CBCPC.

3. Achievements

This section documents some significant visible changes reported by the groups in the community collected through interviews during the 2016 final evaluation of the REACH program as achievements. Also, the box collates some M&E data that gives numeric indication of achievements as a result of reinforcing the community security system at Bauniabadh slum.

- A Strong awareness and a reflective discourse held by girl participants with a clear reference to the dynamics of sexual abuse. There was great emphasis on the need to protect oneself rather than relying on supposedly safe or dangerous locations.

Way Forwards

- The future initiatives should try to ensure a formal status for the CBCPCs by considering registration as a CBO under either the Social Welfare or the Cooperative Ministry before phase out.
- A lot of NGOs are operating in Baunbadh slum. The CBCPC with the help of Save the Children International can link up with other NGOs to make them own the issue of child abuse and continue awareness raising through the youth group at the community.
- Future initiatives should reserve funding to address sustainability issues. They can also leave behind a kind of an endowment fund which would help the CBCPCs to finance small awareness activities post project.
- There should be maximum utilization of the Information gathered on vulnerability through the process of case management. The referral service should be streamlined in accordance to the case management data with channeling of the right service to the right child.



- The parent group reported that 'before child abuse was horrible.' It has been tackled as a result of collective effort.
- The adult group define progress by the fact that they now feel 'brave enough' to protest, to go to the police or to the court. They feel that they had broken a taboo and were now capable of discussing the issue of child sexual abuse in an open manner.

- There was evidence of improved relationships between children and parents.
- Gender Based Violence is similarly addressed within this project, particularly the sexual harassment of girls in public spaces (eve teasing) through collaborative work between men and women and male and female youth for improved gender relationships as well as between generations.

4. Lessons Learnt

- i. Formulating a robust community based child protection system which befits the local situation takes a longer time than five years. Therefore, working with already formulated groups and selecting an NGO which has long presence in the community can fast-track the operationalization of a good community security system in a short term project.
- ii. Committees formed with long term residents with credible reputation and with an accurate gender balance and representation from different sections promote unity among members and lead to increased acceptability among the people. When sense of unity and ownership is strong the community based child protection groups are likely to persist even after the project funding expires.

- iii. Community based protection should also take into account other weaknesses and risks its members are exposed to that causes vulnerability to child abuse. Engaging into an in-depth vulnerability listing and channelling right services for referral support is likely to reduce vulnerability to child abuse.
- iv. Projects working on child abuse should take into account the cultural sensitivity with regard to sexual abuse.
- v. Recounting experience of sexual abuse is traumatic, risky and fraught with stigma as the perpetrators are often known to the victims. Initiatives trying to address such cases should create opportunities for the victims to recollect the trauma or lodge complaints in privacy and if possible in writing. On the other hand, collaborative problem solving cuts down the risks of retaliation and increases transparency in decision making related to response.

5. Challenges

- i. The existence of CBCPC post project is good for monitoring and checking occurrence of violence but psychological counselling to victims of abuse requires a lot of sensitivity, expertise and awareness about the psychological impact of trauma.
- ii. There are difficulties in bringing perpetrators of crimes to justice. No option for hard dealings with abuse cases. It is not always easy to respond to sexual harassment through law enforcement officers.
- iii. The youth groups have ceased activities after the project phased out. There are a general recognition by the youth and adult groups that the reduced presence of BTS in the slum is making it more difficult to retain the same level of operation. The scope for sustainability is Limited without opportunities for training for the new youth group members and a declining trend in supply of new recruits to replace the outgoing youth members.
- iv. As a result of the cessation of the awareness activities on child sexual abuse the new entrants to the slum who are mostly tenants or their children remain unaware or untrained and they are not necessarily listening to adult groups.
- v. The CBCPC was created in response to a government requirement set in Children's Act hoping it would eventually be linked with the national system of child protection. However, the GoB decision has not materialized as yet. Further, the government directive suggested a legal structure of CBCPs for rural areas but did not identify any clear guideline for CBCPs in urban areas.
- vi. A lot of data on vulnerability through case management had been generated but the information gathered had been underutilized and planning regarding its future utility is unclear.

PROVIDING NIGHT SHELTER TO CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREET

Save the Children International implemented Reducing Exploitation and Abuse of Children through Strengthening National Child Protection System in Bangladesh (REACH) program from 2011-2016 with the help of its local partners. REACH had focused on a range of deprivation, exploitation and abuse affecting the children in Bangladesh. The program adopted unique strategies on reducing the vulnerability of children from abuse, exploitation and other forms of violence including Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Physical and Humiliating Punishment and Unsafe Migration and Trafficking.

Children living on the streets are one of the most abused and exploited groups among vulnerable children. They grow up in the streets in poverty unsupervised by an adult and are also exposed to abuse and intimidation from the police, pimps, drug peddlers and many others. They may develop a form of resilience towards all inadequacies but their daily struggle still drives them to engage in work which is hazardous or dangerous. Studies have shown children are more exposed to danger just sleeping on the streets at night unprotected. Therefore, many development initiatives have developed nocturnal shelters for children and have attached them with rehabilitation and reintegration operations where the community is also involved in providing protection and opportunities for them.

1. Background

INCIDIN¹ Bangladesh implemented the project Misplaced Childhood addressing the concerns of sexually exploited girls at Motijheel in 1999 with support from Save the Children Denmark. In 2005 the NGO conducted a rapid survey to assess the vulnerability of children living and working on the streets. Based on the findings INCIDIN launched another project called Safe Night for Sexually Exploited Street Boys in 2005 with assistance from Save the Children Sweden-Demark. However, operationalizing the night shelters for street boys in the community gave rise to negative responses. In 2012 a new shelter project was designed with funding from European Union which included a community protection group in management who helped in defusing the public tension regarding the shelters. In 2013 the project under REACH program, Prevent and Response towards Violence against Children through a System Approach funded by Save the Children International continued to support the three night shelters for street boys in the same format developed during the previous phases. The shelters are built with capacities to accommodate minimum ten children from 9-18 years of age in each centre that are managed in accordance with the community based night shelter management guideline developed by INCIDIN Bangladesh.

Under the REACH program a national NGO called INCIDIN Bangladesh managed three community based night shelters as a part of the process of strengthening child protection systems to protect children on the streets from sexual abuse and street violence. The project used community based child protection groups in providing protections to the children linked with the two shelters situated in Manda and another one at Maniknagar at Kamalapur area. Many groups of men and boys were also involved in protecting children from abuse and exploitation.



Survey Findings

- Children surviving on the street become victims of sex abuse, prostitution, exploitation, forcefully involved with sex trade.
- More than half of the boys are living in the street without any family linkage.
- All are exposed to harsh and hazardous forms of child labour like scavenging, begging, hotel assistant, car cleaning, and selling newspapers at traffic lights.
- For higher income boys get involved in sex trade either as prostitutes or assisting pimps.

2.Approaches

Activities under REACH started with standards and systems developed during the previous phases. This section compiles the key approaches that have proved useful in functionalizing three nocturnal shelters to protect street boys from sexual abuse and street violence.

i. Identification and intake of children



Field organizers of INCIDIN, peer educators, the child rights violation group (CRVG) identify children on the streets and motivate them about availing the facilities of the night shelters. Many street children come to know of the night shelter coming to the project operated open air school at Kamalapur railway station. Some are referred by the men's protection groups formed by the NGO, such as the railway police, transport workers and the perpetrator's group.

Initially the boys are linked with the day time drop-in-centres (DIC) also used as night shelters run by the project. Later they are referred to a community based night shelter. Every registered child is entitled to a

bed, have access to a locker and clean shower and toilet facilities and meals at a subsidized rate. The children using night shelters are given an opportunity to use all the facilities offered by the project.

ii. Case management process

The case management process starts with the registration of each child at the DIC and continues till the time when a child leaves a centre with follow up support. On entry a designated medical staff conducts physical examination and medical background checkup followed by a psychosocial counsellor reviewing the mental status of the child. After the first fifteen days of observation a multidisciplinary team hand in a comprehensive report to the case manager. On evaluation the case manager design an appropriate care plan in consultation with the team to ensure timely delivery of the services to a child.

iii. Psychosocial support

A team of multidisciplinary staff provides psychosocial support to each child based on needs assessment under the case management process. A child has an opportunity to participate in non-formal education in the railway open air school with a flexible curriculum. Based on aptitude and interest children are also mainstreamed into formal education. The children can also participate in life skill training, and vocational training through a referral process. A counsellor has one on one session with a distressed child and encourages each child to participate in developmental activities and plans reintegration with family or through job placement. The children receive medical support through an in-house physician or are referred to a service externally.

iv.Involving men and boys

Numerous groups of men and boys are sensitized and involved in ensuring protection for the street boys. A group of children called the **child rights violation group** (CRVG) from the DIC are engaged in identifying vulnerable children in the streets and work as a peer support group to motivate them to use the night shelters. The above group also worked together with Bangladesh scouts group children on surveillance at Kamalapur area. The scout group organized clothes and food drive to donate supplies on special occasions like Eid to children at night shelter. A group of transport workers were also mobilized to reroute and link street children within their working areas with night shelter support centres.

The **railway police** had been identified as a group which can protect children from falling into scrapes and also refrain from being an agent of exploitation themselves. The project sensitized the group on child rights, protection issues and involved them in providing protective support to children around the railway area.

The project worked in sensitizing men with **exploitative powers** made up of pimps in Kamalapur area who generally abuse children. A group of these men was sensitized to link children with adjacent centres for shelter support and not treat them exploitatively on the street.



Project M&E Data (2011-2016)

- 1,826 boys used facilities of the night shelter.
- 1,915 boys and 767 girls received drop in center facilities
- 862 boys and 622 girls received counseling support.
- 112 boys received formal education.
- 2,642 boys and 750 girls received non-formal education.
- 885 boys and 365 girls received Life skill training
- 1,284 boys and 995 girls received medical support.
- 141 boys and 90 girls received vocational training.
- 55 boys and 44 girls received job replacement support.
- 31 boys and 13 girls were reintegrated with their family.
- 7 boys and 75 girls were rehabilitated externally.
- Different groups (adult and child groups) dealt with 156 CSA&E cases.

v. Community based child protection Committee (CBCPC)

As per the requirement of the 2014 Children Act a 13 member community based child protection committees (CBCPC) was initiated at two centres to supervise the management of the night shelters. The committee is led by the female ward counselor of the Dhaka south city corporation. The CBPCs were initially facilitating integration of children within the communities. Currently, the respective CBCPCs are responsible for monitoring and supervision of the night shelters and INCIDIN Bangladesh provides operational and capacity development support. Most importantly, the CBCPs are involved with resource mapping and mobilization, locating sources of various referrals and networking with various entities to facilitate the referral process.

vi. Providing referral linkages

The night shelters are viewed as transit points where street children receive temporary protective and rehabilitation support till they are integrated or rehabilitated into mainstream society. The project promotes referral support to create opportunities for street children to pursue education in mainstream schools, seek treatment support in external hospitals, and receive vocational training support from external technical institutes and rehabilitation and job placements outside the nocturnal centres.

vii. Reintegration

Planning for reintegration starts within three months of entry as a part of the case management process. Children are integrated with family, rehabilitated in another care institution or placed in jobs. In many cases prior to family integration staff from the home engaged in family risk assessment visiting the child's home. Many children have also been coopted by INCIDIN as a centre in charge at the emergency night shelter.

3.Achievements

This section documents some significant visible changes reported by the INCIDIN staff as achievements. Also, the box collates some M&E data that gives numeric indication of achievements as a result of the strategic intervention:

- Changes can be seen within communities that have come to progressively accept children in schools and offer their support.
- Changes can be seen in treatment of perpetrators towards the street children.
- Many children are attending and are accepted at formal schools.
- Many went back to family.
- Many are placed in jobs.
- As a result of INCIDIN's advocacy with the government the government had approved and allocated 5.67 crore taka for the children on the streets in the fiscal year 2009-2010 and had established child development center at four divisions. Later government established Child Development Centers for the underprivileged children all over the country.

Way Forwards

- Funding for providing institutional care for street children should increase with support for free meals and medical care.
- Policy support needed with special quota system for mainstreaming children in formal schools.
- Interventions on behavioral change of perpetrators might change their attitude towards children.
- Develop communication campaign on changing stereotypical perceptions about street children and promote philanthropic zeal of the community towards this group.

4. Lessons Learnt

- Programs aiding street children should not just offer only sleeping solutions for children but also include opportunities to provide quality psychosocial counseling and life skills training in a child friendly environment to help children overcome psychosocial problems, stay safe and make healthy choices about the future.
- Mobilization and involvement of potential perpetrators in child protection can make a difference in terms of reducing their exploitative propensities towards a street child and linking them with protective services.
- Changing the attitudes and mindsets of community people and duty bearers is very crucial for integration of street children in mainstream society and creating or accessing life changing opportunities for them. A well represented community based protection group with diverse influences can operate as a conduit for change.
- When night shelters are designed with remedial purposes planning strategies to discourage children from going back to the streets and including interventions with potential to produce productive adults, street children can consider leaving the street for good.
- A robust care plan and a system of case management conducted by multidisciplinary experts can ensure effective psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration of the children engaged in harmful line of work.



5. Challenges Faced

i. Community perception about street children are full of prejudice and stereotypes. Initially, the residents of the neighborhood where the night shelters were housed objected to having night shelters for street boys in their vicinity. The mainstream schools were also not comfortable having these children.

ii. Designing educational and other skill training interventions for the street boys is challenging. The street boys are working children who are not likely to be stationary in one locality for too long. Without continuous support it is difficult to have expected change within a short time period.



iii. Due to fund constraints the night shelters could not provide free meals to children for too long. Also, though the shelter organized free medical consultation through referral the children had to buy their own medicine.

iv. Overall institutional care support for uncared for or street children are declining and those existing have limited capacity. Therefore, it is difficult to find institutions to rehabilitate children.

v. Men's groups created within the project especially men with exploitative powers have little scope in generating change that contribute to reducing violence against children living on the streets given the nature of their calling.

PROTECTING CHILDREN AGAINST PHYSICAL AND HUMILIATING PUNISHMENT

Save the Children International implemented Reducing Exploitation and Abuse of Children through Strengthening National Child Protection System in Bangladesh (REACH) program from 2011-2016 with the help of its local partners. REACH had focused on a range of depravation, exploitation and abuse affecting the children in Bangladesh. The program adopted unique strategies on reducing the vulnerability of children from abuse, exploitation and other forms of violence including Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Physical and Humiliating Punishment and Unsafe Migration and Trafficking.

Campaign on protecting children against physical and humiliating punishment (PHP) is a new component of the child protection program in Bangladesh. In 2010, a High Court judgment declared making the use of corporal punishment of children unlawful and unconstitutional. The Ministry of Education has released a circular prohibiting corporal punishment in all educational institutions including madrasas. Despite the declaration, the main barrier identified to reducing its occurrence is the lack of awareness among parents, teachers and employers. Many of REACH partners are working with the component of PHP in varying degrees. Especially, a Chittagong based national NGO called MAMATA is working to create awareness about the problem at various settings where children are exposed to such violence.

MAMATA is working to raise awareness on positive discipline and everyday parenting among the parents through training in a selective slum community in Chittagong and trying to set up an example on how to rear and train children through positive discipline by establishing child friendly spaces at 18 slums. This paper shares the best ways of working with the component in the community and especially highlights the concept of the child space as a good practice awareness model. Therefore, it does not reflect on the project experiences on working at schools and work settings.

Background

MAMATA had been running Early Childhood Care and Development Centres (ECCD) in slums for the 4+ children of the garment workers and low income families first under CARE funding followed by support from Manusher Jonno Foundation till 2012. The main focus of the ECCD had been on delivery of healthcare and nutrition services and early childhood development.

In June 2013 MAMATA received a funding from Save the Children International for implementing a project called Protect Children against Physical and Humiliating Punishment under which it worked at 50 slums in 11 wards under Chittagong City Corporation. Four existing ECCDs were converted to Child Spaces under the new project with six more added to the portfolio. The community intervention was initiated with the view that the results or evidence of positive change generated from experimentation of the new model can be fed into national advocacy on PHP.

1.Approaches

This section discusses some key approaches that the project adopted in creating awareness on PHP among parents and running the child safe centres in the community.

i.Targeting and area selection

The project conducted a vulnerability assessment in 2013 of the residents including children living in the 50 slums based on a Save the Children prescribed standard case management format to assess the care situation of children in slums and identify households where children are uncared for or at risk of PHP, child abuse. In 2016 for efficiency and greater impact the project was downscaled to 18 selected slums in 4 wards. It was done based on another vulnerability analysis in 20 slums.

ii. Capacity development of staff

It became crucial to capacitate the local level staff on managing the child space and provide training on positive parenting.

Following are a few important trainings the staff received: i) how to run early childhood centres and impart entertainment based pre-primary education; ii) training on positive discipline in everyday parenting to provide training to parents; iii) training on script writing, puppet production and developing puppets with raw materials especially coconut from BITA¹; iv) collecting vulnerability data on a SCI prescribed format and managing the data through a case management tool.

iii. Working with children and adolescents through child space

The child spaces are intended to be drop in centres for the children of working parents at slums. Children between the ages of five to ten are given free admission to the child spaces with the project officers also helping with the process of birth registration. The centre offers preprimary and value based education and lessons in creativity through recreational facilities up to grade three. Two coaches consisting of one centre facilitator and one cultural facilitator are providing care to children. Children with good aptitude and willingness to continue beyond pre-school are helped to mainstream into formal schooling. In 2016 the project also opened the centre to adolescents above ten years of age. They use the centre for recreational facilities and meet once in 45 days to have discussions on child rights and protection. They also help in collecting information on incidents of PHP. In severe cases the adolescents have also used government helpline numbers to report cases of abuse to the concerned authority.

iv. Training parents on positive discipline

One of the most important features of this project is to raise awareness among parents on positive discipline in everyday parenting. The project used a positive discipline approach developed by the University of Manitoba in Canada for Save the Children Sweden. The approach shows how parents can teach their children by respecting their human rights, developing a relationship of warmth alongside providing a structure. The NGO facilitator trainers conducted a four day training among 2739 parents altogether including fathers on positive discipline. Many of the parents who received the training on positive discipline in everyday parenting work as change makers to further spread the message among their fellow community members.



v. Awareness raising

The project engaged in mass awareness on the harmful effects of PHP through puppet shows held at open community spaces. The adolescent group also participated in the cultural programs on awareness raising. Further, the child space facilitators and social workers held courtyard meetings on PHP and shared information about the child space activities. Festoons and promotional materials are also posted on prime spots of the slums creating awareness on centre activities.

1. Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts

vi. Community engagement in monitoring and problem solving

The project involved the local community members by formation of 11 Community Based Child Protection Committees (CBCPC) in 11 wards consisting of 13 members in accordance to the Ministry of Social Welfare guideline. The female Ward Councilor is the chairperson of the committee. The committee holds meetings once in three months. Inclusion of elite members of the community has helped in trouble shooting and made the referral linkages stronger. Further, complaint boxes were set up in all the Child Spaces to gather written information about personal problems related to PHP or abuse and service complaints. A nine member committee called an Accountability Ensuring Committee (AEC) was formed to collect and address the complaints from the boxes. The AEC convenes monthly to take decisions regarding the complaints and engages in follow up activities like meeting parents for discussion and counselling in response to an appeal.



vii. Addressing other needs through referral support

Transition from EECD to child space approach came with its challenges. The service users of EECD still expected health support and other facilities they received previously. Therefore MAMATA continued to have health satellite camps and health awareness sessions at the centre where the concept of PHP was slowly injected until the users accepted the idea. The NGO still provides health support by providing referral to their own health clinic called MAMATA. Moreover, among other referral support are mostly in education with getting admission at mainstream schools after preschool. Also many uncared for or street children were placed in shelter homes.

2. Achievements

- This section documents some significant visible changes reported by the beneficiaries in the community collected through interviews during the 2016 final evaluation of the REACH program as achievements. Also, the box collates some M&E data that gives numeric indication of achievements as a result of the project.
- Beneficiaries have very positively received the training and described it as important knowledge that changed their daily practices. In Anandabazar slum occupied by the rag picking community the parents reported, ‘We got to know our children better, who they are. We need to take care of children like young plants.’
- There is clear evidence that the child space centres are well received by the adults within their communities.
- The community takes over responsibility to ensure a space and cover running costs with technical support from the NGO for the child space in Paschim Sondobi after phase out by the NGO.
- Adults within the community who received training in positive discipline described sustainable changes, indicating that if before they saw PHP ten times, they can witness one or two incidents only after the launch of the programme.
- The parent group in Anandabazar slum highly valued the effort to support children’s formal education and reported an increase from 20% to 50% in enrolment rates.

Project M&E Data (2011-2016)

- Total 14,725 children (girls-7,163 & boys -7,562) and total adults 22,249 (female-14,492 & male – 7,757) reached directly through this project.
- 2,064 children enrolled in child spaces during the period. 993 among them were girls and 1,071 boys.
- 110 parents in total received training on Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting. Among them 74 were female 36 male.
- 749 children (girls-426, boys-323) were mainstreamed into formal schools.
- Further 11,342 parents (female-9,432 & male-1,910) were reached by 614 courtyard meetings.
- 2,482 children and 2,729 parents received free health support from the project.
- 2,033 children and 2,678 parents received free medicine.
- 139 children and 161 Parents were referred to Chittagong Medical College and other hospitals for treatment.
- During 2013-2016 period 1,393 births of children were registered through the project.
- 11 CBCPC Committee were functioning with 172 members. Among them children were 22 (11 Girls-11 Boys) & Adult 150 (female-77 & male-73)

3. Lessons Learnt

i. Introducing a new and non-traditional issue like physical and humiliating punishment can be met with a lot of resistance especially from a community of people suffering from many existential concerns. The new line of discourse should be slowly injected with patience alongside a development intervention which the community is more used to like education or health until they gradually realize the value of the new input and are ready for replacement of intervention.

ii. Creating a prototype or a concrete model on how to train children with positive discipline and producing good visible results leads to a faster clarification and acceptance of an unfamiliar concept. The child space model has unrolled the rhetoric of positive discipline into practice which many representatives from school administration and ward councilors are also interested to follow for replication.

iii. Parents who inflict physical and psychological punishment on children are most likely to have grown up experiencing or witnessing such punishments. Exposing adults to a positive or nonviolent experience of disciplining can open their eyes to their own mistakes and a monitoring of behavior and parenting advice by fellow community members can lead to a change of behavior.

iv. Children reporting physical and psychological punishment or other abuse are often not taken seriously or they fear reprisal. Installation of a complaint mechanism especially a complaint box encourages victims or those who have witnessed PHP report in confidence and in safety and also with the faith that their complaints will be listened to. Also, being able to approach the child space facilitator gives them confidence that they are taken seriously by someone who becomes almost like a surrogate parent looking after their best interests.



Way Forwards

- The youth members should be federated into working groups with a deeper mandate in relation to monitoring cases of abuse and creating awareness within community.
- Include provision for a professional counsellor who can provide counseling to victims of abuse or deal with children with discipline issues to bring them to the right path.
- Formalize the referral system through signing of MoU and streamline the referral response or systematically link it to the case management database.
- Make space for active members in CBCPC who can make up for or replace the non-active members.

4. Challenges

i. Physical punishment was deemed to be a culturally acceptable behavior and the concept of humiliating punishment was unheard of. The project could have floated the new concept in a small number of areas and scaled up based on the learning of a pilot initiative. Instead the project downscaled it from a larger reach.

ii. The slum communities undergo a number of other serious forms of violence particularly sexual violence and harassment, hazards at work, drug abuse alongside poverty. They poor families in the slums perceive these problems of more critical nature requiring immediate solution.

iii. Retaining consistency, follow up and tracking progress becomes difficult in the slums due to high mobility of slum dwellers and drop out as a result of time pressure.

iv. Involving adults in creating awareness within their communities and changing other parents' behavior is faced with resistance as people have little regard initially for the issue. Besides in a community made of loose bonds such peer influencing is not as strong.

v. Not all CBCPC members are active. Also, it is difficult for the lady Councilor of the CBCPC to actively engage or address problems related to the project as she is responsible for three wards simultaneously.

vi. Turn out of fathers to the day long four day training sessions was low. It was difficult for them to attend due to time pressure and lack of interest.

vii. There are cases when mothers seek one on one help in disciplining unruly adolescents or sometimes in a serious abuse case a child needs special psychosocial assistance from a professional councillor which the project cannot provide. It puts extra load on the project staff to provide extra time in counselling without having a training in the discipline.

viii. Seeking help through government hotlines are not always easy. In some cases of domestic violence, members were unable to get immediate support.



USING PUPPET THEATRE IN CHILD PROTECTION EDUCATION

Save the Children International implemented Reducing Exploitation and Abuse of Children through Strengthening National Child Protection System in Bangladesh (REACH) program from 2011-2016 with the help of its local partners. REACH had focused on a range of depravation, exploitation and abuse affecting the children in Bangladesh. The program adopted unique strategies on reducing the vulnerability of children from abuse, exploitation and other forms of violence including Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Physical and Humiliating Punishment and Unsafe Migration and Trafficking.

Using the innovative puppet theatre BITA educated the ethnic groups in Bandarban in Chittagong hill tracts on the ill effects of child marriage, sexual and gender-based violence, unsafe migration and trafficking. The project under REACH program 'Prevent and respond towards violence against children through a system approach' organized and trained the local youth in adopting indigenous language and culture in performance of the puppet show and using local resources to develop props for the theatre which helped in spreading the sensitive messages on child protection with ease bridging the cultural gaps.

The module created by BITA was regarded as a good practice example in 2013 at SCI global communication hub. Also, Save the Children Denmark replicated the model in Africa.



The REACH partners widely experimented with using various culturally adapted tools including theatre and puppet shows for raising awareness on child rights and issues of child protection and violence among the local community. The strategy was also adopted to successfully engage the youth in the community with the program activities and in raising their consciousness in relation to child protection. Theatre in Education (TiE) was developed by a Chittagong based NGO called Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA) to create awareness among ethnic groups in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) on child rights and protection issues. The organization particularly used puppetry in disseminating issue based messages to the community through entertainment. Many REACH partners later employed the strategy with training received from BITA.

1. Background

Survey findings on feelings of insecurity

- 86% children feel that they are not safe in the family.
- 72% children feel that they are not safe in the community.
- 68% children do not feel safe with neighbors.

BITA has a long experience of working with ethnic communities in CHT in the south east region of Bangladesh, home to eleven indigenous ethnic groups. The district suffered a long civil unrest with Bengali settlers which officially ended in 1997 with signing of the peace accord.

In 2004 BITA received funding from Save the Children Denmark for awareness raising on child rights and protection among the local people through theatre and puppetry performed in the distinct languages of the ethnic communities. Under REACH program BITA continued working in two of the former communities such as Marma and Bawm and added the most disadvantaged Khyang community under its intervention at three locations.

Under REACH funding in 2012 a situational analysis on CSAET¹ condition revealed that the children at the working areas were exposed to various types of sexual abuse including child marriage. The indigenous community are known to be a private society used to being quiet regarding abuse, settling matters internally or resorting to Karbari and Headmen, their own traditional leaders.

2. Approaches

Activities under REACH started with modalities developed during the previous phases. This section compiles the key approaches that have proved useful in implementing the strategy. The information gathered here has been collected from the trawl of project documents, evaluation reports and reflection of project staff.

i. Using culturally adapted tools

A popular puppet character called Etching was brought to life through the puppet shows who looked like the ethnic children. The performances were done in three ethnic languages of Bandarban district. Important lessons on child rights, protection, child marriage, trafficking were imparted through Etching at each show. After each show the facilitator groups engaged the spectators in discussion about the problem presented and offered solutions by Etching. The performing groups used natural waste materials and local resources like coconut shells, sacks, twigs to make puppets and other props for the shows.



ii. Mobilizing the youth

A mixed group of twenty local male and female youths were trained and employed as facilitators to organize and conduct the puppet shows and theatre activities in three localities. Among the groups two were involved in puppetry and one group was responsible for theatre performance. To assist the facilitator groups a band of youth volunteers were recruited who were natural leaders in the community. The key responsibility of the volunteers were to inform and mobilize the populace living in distantly located houses in the mountainous region about events, day observances and shows.

iii. School program

Sixteen schools in Bandarban were brought under the purview of the project. The school administration allowed the team to perform puppet shows once a week in the last period on every Thursday. The teachers also received a two day training on issues related to CRC, child protection, physical and humiliating punishment. However, the continuity of the school performance proved difficult as the schools in Bandarban have high dropout rates.

iv. Child space



In order to attract a higher number of ethnic children between 6-18 years of ages the project founded one child space in each of the three locations with help from the local community. Spaces were allocated either in a church or a pagoda to continue sessions with children. Children gathered in three child spaces to gain knowledge on child rights, value of education, protection issues and harmful effects of child marriage. Messages were delivered through various creative methods like role play, picture methods including puppet shows. The children were encouraged to freely reflect on personal experiences of abuse by known and unknown perpetrators, teasing especially during commute to school or work. Children started opening up to mothers, peers, and community watch group members. Most importantly, they participated in preparing a joint report on the child rights and protection experiences in the community for presentation to parents groups and the community watch group. A committee was formed to manage each of the spaces where the youth facilitator group members were also included.

Project M&E data (2011-2015)

- 430 children were reached directly through children space intervention.
- 325 children from Bawm, Khayang and Marma communities were under case management process.
- 58 puppet shows arranged on child sexual abuse (CSA) issues in 16 schools.
- 40 puppet shows arranged in the three communities.
- 16 community based youths were capacitated on protection and countering of CSA.
- CBCP stopped 4 child marriages at Khyang community in 2015.
- 91 birth registration done
- 383 children received health care support from ICDDR,B facilitated by the project.
- 70 families of Kyayang community got financial support from Red Crescent facilitated by the project.
- 30 youth received technical vocational training.
- 20 families were linked with Bangladesh Krishi Bank for getting free fertilizer card.
- 15 children from Bawm & Marma communities were linked with services
- 20 young girls of Khaayang community were trained on art & fashion.

helped the parents to do birth registration of children as a preventive measure to stop child marriage.

v. Educating parents

The project educated both fathers and mothers on child rights and protection through puppet theatre. It organized mother and father groups as support groups to children and mobilizing opinions on various issues of child protection and rights. Many of the participants in this group were young mothers as underage marriage is quite common in the hill district. They played an active role in monitoring cases of child marriage, sexual violence and abuse and reported to the project official, child protection groups or their local administrators. The project

vi. Community Based Child Protection Committee (CBCPC)

The CBCP committees formed by the project worked under a structured toR as a decision making body evaluating the management of the child space activities, recruiting youth facilitators for the puppet team and monitoring the attendance of children to the cultural learning sessions. The committee members are accessed by people with complaints and reports of child marriage and violations for taking action. The committee is also known as the community watch group. The local Union Parishad female member is the president of the CBCPC with other members such as the karbari, school teacher, religious leader and the youth representative assisting her. The CBCPC members maintained liaison with local influential in order to route safety net benefits to families of vulnerable children. They were given an orientation on vulnerability mapping, issues related to child protection, sexual and gender based violence and child marriage.

vii. Referral linkages

The project created referral linkages with the Departments of Women and Children's Affairs and the Social Welfare at Bandarban in order to influence decision making regarding distribution of safety net packages to its targeted community. Also, close linkages with the international agencies helped in attaining educational packages like stipends for the vulnerable children. Further, with alternative funding BITA provided capacity development trainings like computing to BAWM youth and fashion unit set up training especially to Khyang girls.

Way Forwards

- A long term program should be designed challenging the long standing tradition of child marriage.
- Future programs should include livelihoods components, training opportunities for families of children and youth groups to prevent migration. Referral packages should be stronger.
- More scope for training of traditional leaders in adjudicating child abuse offences. And, include local administration more closely with the intervention.



3. Achievements

This section documents some significant visible changes reported by the BITA staff as achievements. Also, the box collates some M&E data that gives numeric indication of achievements as a result of the strategic intervention of puppet theatre:

- The children and parents in the ethnic communities have become more open about discussing experiences of violence and abuse.
- Relationship of children with parents have become friendlier and more trusting.
- The youth facilitators are working as trainers for BITA's training unit on theatre and puppetry in Education.
- In 2013 when BITA officials visited Khyang community they found no new incident of child marriage since the project started. There was only one report of a child marriage which took place outside the community.
- The CBCPC has become more vigilant about restricting child marriages and there are many cases where they stopped marriages from taking place.

4. Lessons Learnt

- Ethnic community children are hesitant to share sensitive experiences related to child abuse and violence. Puppet theatre provides a medium in which ethnic children are less inhibited in telling their delicate stories hiding behind a puppet character and similarly the viewers respond favorably to the creative modality like puppetry especially when the puppet character is able to find a wider appeal in the community and is grown to be a role model.
- Cultural programs or projects encouraging use of indigenous languages in delivery and promoting traditional culture and local resources have a greater chance of bridging the gap with the indigenous community unlike initiatives which operate in the dominant language guided by a dominant ideology.
- Engaging a team of male and female local youth in resource development and production of puppet theatre in local languages provided opportunities for the local youth to develop as a diverse skilled groups. Voicing concerns related to child protection has also allowed them to develop as a conscience of the community.
- Educating parents especially motivating fathers' group through puppet theatre has proved to be an important strategic move in motivating a segment of adults in the community who were generally disinterested in rights of children.

5. Challenges Faced

- The ethnic communities are known to be a silent society. It was difficult to penetrate initially and bring the children and parents to open up about experiences of abuse.
- It is challenging to mobilize children, parents and people in the mountainous terrain of Bandarban where houses are sparsely located. Information sharing about events and gathering people for a puppet show required a lot of efforts and manpower.
- The propensity of child marriage is high in the indigenous community. Due to lack of entertainment opportunities boys resort to pornography and entice females into having relationships. Underage couple seemingly in love rush into marriage without consent of parents.
- There is high rate of drop out or turnover among the youth group members who mostly migrated to the city for a better job opportunity. Also, the youth in the locality are moving away from occupations related to agriculture. The trend of voluntary activism which was evident before is slowly declining due to lack of purpose and discrimination by the Bengali community.
- The CHT indigenous society is fraught with multifarious problems like the struggle over realizing their rights promised by the peace accord, poverty, access to quality services. The projects only implementing awareness or cultural activities cannot hold the interest of the ethnic community for a longer period of time without addressing issues of more immediate concern.



COMPREHENSIVE PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING

Save the Children International implemented Reducing Exploitation and Abuse of Children through Strengthening National Child Protection System in Bangladesh (REACH) program from 2011-2016 with the help of its local partners. REACH had focused on a range of depravation, exploitation and abuse affecting the children in Bangladesh. The program adopted unique strategies on reducing the vulnerability of children from abuse, exploitation and other forms of violence including Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Physical and Humiliating Punishment and Unsafe Migration and Trafficking.

The child protection objectives under the REACH approach also emphasized the importance of extending care and psychosocial support to the survivors of child sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking (CSAET) as an essential part of survival. The program encouraged strategies promoting increased access to psychosocial support including physical, mental health, education, and entertainment and counselling support alongside legal assistance, integration and repatriation services to the survivors of CSAET.

1. Background

BNWLA has a long history since 1993 of providing small scale institutional care and psychosocial support to survivors of violence and trafficking. The demand was created from a need to ensure protection for the rescued victims of trafficking and abuse, help them recover from trauma and prevent relapse. In 1998 the NGO first received a small funding from Red Barnet for a pilot initiative and in 2002 Save the Children Sweden-Denmark disbursed a larger funding. BNWLA developed a guideline for minimum standard care for survivors based on its operational experiences. Execution under the REACH funding from 2011-2015 was carried out with standards and approaches developed during the previous phases.



Identification and entry of victims: Girl children between the ages of 0-18 who are rescued or released from any police station, jail or court in the country or anyone at risk of trafficking have the right of entry to the three BNWLA shelter homes in Jessore, Gazipur and Dhaka.

The staff engage in random thana visits or follow up news items for identification and rescue of child victims. The victim support centres in all the districts also refer survivors to the BNWLA shelter homes. The staff also receive random calls at their 10 hot line numbers from victims in need of rescue. It also rescues underage children from brothels. The organization has strong networking with safe homes in Dubai and India and have rescued and repatriated many trafficked children with help from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

2. Approaches

Activities under REACH started with standards developed during the previous phases. This section compiles the key approaches that have proved useful in aiding survivors with psychosocial and rehabilitation support services motivating towards repatriation. The information gathered here has been collected from the trawl of documents, evaluation reports and reflection of project staff

i. Home Management

On entry each survivor child receives an identification number and her name is listed at the centre registration book. The House Mothers and peers respond to addressing the survivor's immediate needs for food, clothing, medication and other logistic facilities. During the project period medical checkups were done by an in-house physician if examination reports were not sent along from former locations with serious cases referred to Dhaka Shishu Hospital. In accordance to the minimum standard guideline each child is entitled to her own separate bed in a room with adequate lighting and water and the ratio for toilet access is 1:8. The children are given wholesome, nutritious diet with five meals each day.

Staffing Pattern

1. 4 House mother. (24 hrs)
2. Cook. (24hrs)
3. 3 Counsellors. (9:00 am-5:00 pm)
4. Teachers. (9:00 am-5:00 pm)
5. Cultural trainer. (part time)
6. Vocational trainers. (contractual)
7. 1 Doctor.
8. 3 Nurses.

All the staff are trained on how to behave with traumatized children with behavioral codes printed out and displayed at different places at the shelter homes. The occupant children have an opportunity to lodge complaints about any mismanagement at a complaint box in each home.

ii. Individual care plan or case management

Preliminary background information is gathered on review of accompanying papers and personal statement of each entrant. A multidisciplinary team develops a psychosocial care plan for each individual with sessions designed on assessment of the survivor's need and psychological status. The documentation process is maintained till the post reintegration period with updates from follow up psychosocial services.

iii. Psychiatric care

The project employed three trained counselors assessing the degree of trauma each survivor is suffering and taking decisions on the nature and frequency of counseling accordingly. The counseling assessment is done in privacy immediately on rescue or entry. Sessions are designed in accordance to individual mental status and degree of trauma. If any victim requires advanced therapy or psychiatric help she is sent outside especially to PG hospital in Dhaka. Services continues during the stay at the centre, prior to facing the court, during the integration and post integration period. Sometimes guardians are also included for counseling to assist with integration.

iv. Peer support

The survivors receive support from peers with similar background. The peers participate in three separate committees such as management, food and entertainment committees. On arrival the management committee welcomes and orients the new entrants on the ground rules, makes inquiries about needs and well beings. The peer food committee enquires about food choices and supervises quality and the entertainment committee responsible for organizing events encourages participation in events.

v. Educational support

Every child is introduced to an open door joyful learning program. The technique is therapeutic enabling the children to overcome depression through participation in games, interact freely and learn basic literacy. It also strengthens mental ability of distressed children through introduction to life skills training, rights education and confidence building.

The curriculum is flexible permitting a child to start at any grade. There is also scope for pursuing formal education if a child shows willingness and aptitude. Those who reach high schools are also assisted with private coaching. Children also get opportunity to attain skills through vocational training.

vi. Culture and recreation

Cultural engagement is also considered as an effective process of handling trauma. The survivor children get an opportunity to learn singing, dancing, and drama and organize events internally and participate in external programs. Girls showing promise are also sent outside. The shelter homes also organized recreational trips like study tours and picnics few times a year.

vii. Legal literacy

The project appointed child friendly lawyers with orientation on how to counsel traumatized children. The legal counsels prepare the children on how to face the court procedure with courage especially running them through a mock trial scene prior to the court appearance. The children and their families are given updates on the development of their cases by a female lawyer repeatedly.

viii. Security

The security of the CSAET survivor children are treated with utmost importance. Female and male guards are appointed to protect children with the female guards having duties inside the homes and the male guards posted at the gates. A child is not allowed to carry any mobile phone or money but can use the shelter home office phone to talk to parents.

ix. Reintegration

Rescued children at shelter homes have varied lengths of stay. The project mostly tried to reintegrate the children with their families providing follow up counseling to children and families. A focal point for reintegration keeps a tab on the progress and responds quickly to avert crisis. There are incidents where survivors were also married off under the shelter home responsibility. Using the referral linkages the homes placed many children in jobs especially to agencies with dormitory facilities. Recently a few survivors found jobs with Beximco and Square Pharmaceuticals.

3. Achievements

This section documents some significant visible changes reported by BNWLA staff as achievements. Also, the box collates some M&E data that gives numeric indication of achievements:

- Many children were reunited with family.
- Many received formal education and appeared for Secondary School Certificate examination.
- Many became culturally developed.
- Many received vocational training and have a calling now.

Project M&E Data (2011-2015)

- 824 girls rescued and registered.
- 864 children were repatriated from another countries.
- 88 boys rescued and registered.
- 1,587 children received shelter support.
- 1,203 children re-integrated to their families.
- 17 girls and 4 boys referred to other organizations.
- 567 girls received legal support.
- 20 girls and 8 boys received formal education.
- 145 girls received vocational training.
- 134 child marriage prevented.
- 95 survivors enrolled with formal school and 1,281 with non-formal school.
- 912 children were referred for services.

4. Lessons Learnt

i. Rescue and release of victims of child abuse and trafficking becomes easier when the organization pursuing rescue operations maintains a strong partnership and understanding with government law enforcement agencies and the local government. When the rescuing organization has an activist orientation and maintains vigilance at rescue or release point chances of relapse or mishandling reduces.

ii. Setting up and regular monitoring of the minimum standards for institutional care services and code of conduct for care providers are essential for protecting the rights of victimized children. Involving the child survivors through peer committees in review of the compliance and setting up complaint boxes creates an opportunity for children to exercise their rights and gain the confidence to challenge any violation.

iii. Documenting a comprehensive individual care plan taking stock of survivor's psychosocial status at the time of entry followed by regular review facilitates structured decision making regarding graduation and helps lead towards a robust reintegration plan.

iv. Peer to peer support can prove effective in reducing trauma and stress as they share similar pasts. Also participation in peer led committee enhances the survivor's decision making skills especially when the survivors are encouraged to make decisions about their day to day life at the shelter home and influence the way the home is run.

v. Orientation of families and referral organizations on psychosocial care and post integration counseling to survivors can improve sustainability of repatriation. A focal point especially assigned to facilitate the reintegration process and conduct follow up visits is essential to prevent setbacks.

5. Challenges Faced

i. Lack of infrastructural support is a major constraint to maintaining the standards set by the BNWLA guideline. For example, an open space which is essential for physical and psychological development of the children cannot be provided in the shelter homes.

ii. Some survivors require long term rehabilitation support due to a longer duration of the legal trial or delay in identifying family or unwillingness of family to take the child back. In a short term project with limited funding support sponsoring a victim child with extensive needs becomes difficult.

iii. Many children were re-victimized or re-trafficked after repatriation due to negligence of the family and the community.

iv. Sustainable rehabilitation of CSAET children is time consuming requiring a range of steps and activities. On the other hand, sensitization of parents, extended family and community is also an integral part for sustainable integration. In a time bound project planning long term developments on a case by case basis becomes challenging.

Way Forwards

- Shelter home support for a victim child should be for an interim period designed with reintegration objectives. It should not be seen as a long term rehabilitation solution.
- Awareness of parents, extended family members on the risks of CSAET and engagement of community and other social actors are essential in ensuring sustainable reintegration and preventing re-victimization.
- Long term investments should be made in economic empowerment of victim's families and young adults for a successful integration within the community.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEES IN URBAN SLUMS

Save the Children International implemented Reducing Exploitation and Abuse of Children through Strengthening National Child Protection System in Bangladesh (REACH) program from 2011-2016 with the help of its local partners. REACH had focused on a range of depravation, exploitation and abuse affecting the children in Bangladesh. The program adopted unique strategies on reducing the vulnerability of children from abuse, exploitation and other violence including Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Physical and Humiliating Punishment and Unsafe Migration and Trafficking.

The value of building social capital within communities in order to tackle issues related to child abuse or protection is increasingly being recognized by development initiatives. Many partners under REACH program also have experimented with the strategy in creating a protective environment for children both in the rural community and in the neighborhood of urban slums. There are examples where some partners tried empowering already existing community associations and others have initiated new community based child protection committees that act as the focal point in the community for the children and parents to seek help from, provide support and resolve problems.

A national NGO called Nari Maitree set up drop-in-centres (DIC) for the uncared for girl children of working parents in the slums of Dhaka under a REACH funded project 'Prevent and Respond towards Violence against Children through a System Approach.' As a part of ensuring protection for the children of the DICs living in adjacent slums the NGO formed and capacitated two community based child protection committees, a local voluntary body taking on collective responsibility of protecting children from abuse or any kind of violence in their respective communities. The CBCPCs are aligned with the requirements set in the Children's Act 2013.

1. Background

The Drop in Centre (DIC) services

Naree Maitree has been operating drop-in-centres (DIC) in Dhaka city for the slum children between the ages of 9-14 years since 2008 financed by Save the Children Denmark-Sweden. The objective was to provide care and protection to the children during the hours when their parents were at work. Many of the children cared for their smaller siblings, engaged in daily work of selling flowers, rag picking or supplying water to neighborhood shops and houses besides attending the DICs. Under REACH program during the period from 2013-2015 three DICs in Korail, Tejgaon and Nakhalpara catered to 168 girl children living in the neighboring slums. As Tejgaon and Nakhalpara were nearby the centre in Tejgaon was shut down in 2014. The children spent time at the DICs from 9:00 am-4:00 pm participating in literacy, cultural and vocational training sessions on mild machine embroidery. There were provisions for educational and health referrals. An important feature of the DICs were to provide counseling support to traumatized children and creating awareness among their families about child rights and protection.



Community based child protection committees (CBCPC)

During implementation the organization conceived that servicing a group of children who were vulnerable, at-risk of violence or is frequently exploited is challenging. In 2008 Naree Maitree formed and mobilized a group of driven community members to facilitate in ensuring protection for the slum children using the services at the three DICs. Initially, the community protection group was known as the Street Girls Protection Committee (SGPC). In 2014 the SGPC was changed to Community based Child Protection Committees (CBCPC) in response to the requirements set in the Children's Act 2013 linked with the two DICs in Nakhalpara and Korail under REACH program. Members in the committee in Nakhalpara still provide ad hoc support after project phase out in 2015.



2. Approaches

Activities under REACH started with two CBCPCs already evolved and working in a format approved by the Ministry of Social Welfare. This section compiles the key approaches that have proved useful in functionalizing child protection committees in two locations one of which still garners support when the safety of community children is at stake. The information gathered here has been collected from the trawl of project documents, evaluation reports and reflection of project staff.

i. Group composition

The CBCPCs were a collection of respectable people from the community, representatives from the government and the private sector consisting of 13 members led by the female Ward Counsellor of the North Dhaka City Corporation. The CBCPCs were formed in accordance to a government guideline with the idea that the diverse group would draw on the community resources that potentially can support child protection and utilize personal influences and reputation for the wellbeing of children, especially in mobilizing referrals services and seeking favors. The committees maintained good rapport with the police, local government, the City Corporation and political entities to ensure security for the slum children.

ii. Capacity building

Providing protection to vulnerable children requires a specific set of skills. To this end the groups were given training on vulnerability mapping and case management and child protection issues in order to understand how to recognize and identify vulnerability in children and families and follow up progress. The members were also given an understanding on issues of child rights and positive development to engage in preventive initiatives like engage in dialogues with parents, service providers and advocacy with duty bearers.

iii. Interface with children and their families

The inclusion of child representatives in the CBCPCs created an opportunity for both to benefit from each other. The children got a platform to present their problems and the committee got an internal information source on cases of child marriage, abuse, violence. The committee members also visited the DICs to familiarize the children about their work and encourage them to seek support from the committee. On occasions the members also visited the houses for awareness raising, or investigation of a case and influence the parents about sending children to DICs.

iv. Involved in awareness raising

A major activity of the CBCPC had been raising awareness about child protection issues including good parenting, physical punishment, unsafe migration, and abuse among the parents living in the slums. The project also sought assistance of the committees on reaching the perpetrators and identifying their possible locations and discouraging them implicitly through sensitization on how they can change their behavior. In Nakhalpara the committee held a number of meetings among the young men at the clubhouse near the railway line. The female counselor and her representative worked as a conduit and shield for the project officials. The committee also assisted the project in sensitizing the identified service providers on child rights and exploitation and helped in negotiating with some on giving a fair pay or concessions to children in exchange for their work.

v. Problem solving

A principal obligation of the committees had been to address complaints of abuse, child marriage reported by the social worker of Naree Maitree, parents, child leaders and collected from the complaint boxes at the DICs. The CBCPC had played a crucial role in stopping child marriages in the slums. On information received the committee members visited the houses of the parents to convince them to stop the marriage. Moreover, an emergency meeting was held on report of a serious violation in the presence of the NGO social worker, child leaders and CBCPC members. Together the team visited the house of the perpetrator accompanied by a paralegal contacted on referral. The offender was forced to confess about his offence by the committee in the presence of other slum people. Finally the CBCPC handed over the offender to the local police. The GoB Health Worker in the committee conducted initial health checkup of the abused child.

The CBCPC held quarterly coordination meetings where they reviewed the security status of the community through discussion with members especially the child representatives. A member of the CBCPC also led the Accountability Ensure Committee which was responsible for opening the complaint boxes once in fifteen days.

vi. Advocacy

The project also benefitted from engaging the CBCPC in advocacy particularly related to stopping child marriages. For example, the CBCPC convinced the local government secretary and local marriage registrar not to give false birth and erroneous marriage certificates to children usually obtained unfairly by parents to conceal incidence of underage marriage. The Social welfare Officer, male and female Ward Commissioners, imam, Head Teachers of local schools participated in developing a local campaign on stopping child marriage.

Project M&E data (2011-2015)

- 20 child marriages were stopped by the CBCPCs.
- CBCPCs dealt with 270 incidents of CSA and child marriage issues.
- 310 cases of abuse were reported. Among them 270 were of sexual abuse and 40 were of child marriage.
- 188 girls enrolled in the child spaces.
- 168 children received services through referral and philanthropy.
- 80 girls were mainstreamed into formal schools.
- 188 girls and 300 parents received free health support and medicine.
- Birth registration of 150 girls completed by the project.
- 728 perpetrators were sensitized on CSA through 71 meetings.

vii. Mobilizing referral and philanthropic services

The CBCPC members played a vital role in mobilizing referral resources for the slum children. Many children received government educational stipends, health assistance, and birth registration support and were mainstreamed into formal school systems. It is important to note that Naree Maitree signed a MoU with Bangladesh Association of Maternal and Neonatal Health (BAMANEH) and Urban Primary Health Care Program (UPHCP) till 2016 to provide medical services to the slum children associated with the DICs free of cost. Out of commitment for the local children CBCPC members assisted many children in paying for school admission fees, organizing clothes drive in winter, food drive in Ramadan and provided especial assistance to disabled chil.

3. Achievements

This section documents some significant visible changes reported by Naree Maitree staff as achievements. Also, the box collates some M&E data that gives numeric indication of achievements as a result of the strategic engagement of the CBCPC in mitigating problems related to child protection:

- Parents especially fathers behaved better with girl children and were less abusive. Complaints about discrimination and parent behavior from children reduced in the complaint box towards the end of the project.
- The CBCPC prevented many child marriages and were able to sensitize duty bearers like local government official and marriage registrars to refuse to issue birth and marriage certificates to underage children.
- Children reported that their service providers treated them better and gave them fairer wages.
- Children were disturbed less by local street boys on their way to work or school.
- Relationship between the police and the slum community has improved.

4. Lessons Learnt

i. A committee consisting of a mix group of people from a diverse line of work and having influence within the community leads to a faster and cost effective problem solving, helps in changing harmful cultural practices and mobilizing community resources. Also, including members with strong linkages to formal systems like the local police and the local government agencies helps in quicker disposal of cases and locating effective referrals.

ii. Including child leaders in the CBCPC produces a two way benefit such as it eases the beneficiary access to the community focal point of justice and on the other hand it improves the process of first hand reporting and investigation of complaints.

iii. The existence of an influential committee works as a security cushion for the project implementers as well. The committee provides protection not only to children but also to project staff trying to reach a risky and dangerous group of stakeholders who were themselves potential perpetrators.

iv. Without capacity development of child protection groups on child protection issues, psychosocial aspects, vulnerability analysis and facilitation members cannot recognize the extent of rights violation or abuse, understand the family dynamics and fulfill obligations like engage in dialogues, advocacy or address complaints.

v. Projects paying attention to overall well-being of children alongside providing child protection supports is able to gain community trust and pave the way for addressing highly sensitive issues.

Way Forwards

- Future interventions should target creating CBCPCs with a goal of sustainability and not just have entities facilitating only the project implementation process.
- Prior to CBCPC formation planning for area selection, beneficiary coverage and costing should be based on baseline data analysis, community consultation and lessons learnt from earlier similar interventions.
- During group formation careful attention should be given to selecting likeminded members with philanthropic bent of mind.
- It is vital to make committees more accountable and giving them a clear idea about roles especially in resolving cases of abuse.
- Donors should allocate longer term funding for development of CBCPC.

5. Challenges Faced

i. Creating a sustainable CBCPC with a strong sense of ownership, understanding of roles and self-direction requires time and adequate funding. Naree Maitree dissolved CBCPS despite having demands in the community due to fund crisis and for other issues related to management, weakness in planning which gave rise to displeasure among the CBCPC members and the local community and undermined the sustainability objectives. Out of the three CBCPCs formed they have only one existing with ad hoc participation.



ii. The child protection objective gets affected if the CBCPC includes members with vested and conflicting interests and have difficult members. Some of the members in phased out groups had political agendas and tried to influence decision making in the committee especially in channeling resources to beneficiaries and creating vote banks.

iii. It was challenging to ensure the female members' attendance at the coordination meetings. Also, the government officials have difficulty in attending external meetings as they work under time pressure.

iv. Members in the CBCPC groups were not given proper training on how to engage in mediation, handle complaints of sexual assault or attempt to rape. It is important to note that a rape is a criminal offense where mediation or compromise is not allowed.

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