

Justice and Care

Protecting factory workers in **Bangladesh** and supporting cross border survivors of trafficking to return home and rebuild their lives



Summary

An estimated 1.5 million people in Bangladesh are enslaved (Global Slavery Index 2018) and Bangladesh is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking (US TIP Report 2017).

This project is a strategically targeted intervention to prevent human trafficking and slavery, to protect and rehabilitate victims and to create lasting systemic improvement in how governments and stakeholders approach this crime.

The problem

The Global Slavery Index estimates that over 1.5 million people live in Modern Slavery in Bangladesh. Legislation exists to protect victims and prosecute traffickers but is poorly implemented, leading to low numbers of rescues, arrests and convictions - in 2017, the government reported 778 trafficking cases, and just 1 conviction. Failure to investigate crimes, falling convictions and poor provision of aftercare and rehabilitation services for victims led to Bangladesh being categorized in the Tier 2 Watch List category in the 2017 US TIP Report, indicating that the government does not yet meet the minimum standards for the eradication of trafficking.

The partner

Justice and Care pioneered its approach to fighting trafficking in India, one of the most difficult and strategic locations to fight trafficking. It has a multi discipline approach responsive to prosecution, rescue and rehabilitation, as well as partnering with government to bring about long term changes in policy and public service response.

It established operations in Bangladesh in 2017.

The philanthropic solution

This project will work to prevent trafficking of some of the most vulnerable in Bangladesh, through a unique program of awareness training delivered directly to garment factory workers (where traffickers are known to recruit) and training to the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) to identify and intercept trafficking victims before they cross the border.

In tandem with this the project will support the safe and timely repatriation of 190 survivors from India to Bangladesh and equip them through skills training to rebuild their lives. Survivors will receive a holistic package of care to ensure their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community, and to prevent them from being re-trafficked.

In addition Justice and Care will drive institutional change by organizing bilateral meetings between the Indian and Bangladeshi repatriation taskforces to improve cooperation and coordination; by convening and training district level police forces and by capturing the voice of survivors to raise awareness and shape policy on human trafficking through the survivor perspective.

The evidence

This is a new approach in Bangladesh, but Justice and Care has a precedent for effective work in the context. Justice and Care established the Bangladesh team in 2017 and have already repatriated 115 survivors. This represents 1/3 of all trafficking victims rehabilitated per year nationwide. We have built strong relationships with the Police and BSF, and helped Khulna Division police rescue 15 cross border trafficking victims as part of the first INGO –Police partnership in the region.

During 2018 it piloted the training of Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) in identifying and intercepting trafficking victims. Amongst the divisions of police in Jessore that were trained, the number of trafficking victims intercepted went from zero the previous year to 77 following the training, of whom 33 were minors. The majority of these children turned out to be the subject of missing persons reports filed by their families in police stations across Bangladesh and without the training provided to the BGB they might never have been intercepted.

Justice and Care have also been invited to sit on the technical committee drafting the National Plan of Action for combating trafficking in persons in Bangladesh, allowing it to help drive systemic improvements in the national response to slavery and trafficking.

The impact

4,800 vulnerable women in Bangladesh reporting improved trafficking-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviors
450 of Bangladesh Border Guards reporting improved knowledge and confidence in identifying and appropriately supporting trafficking victims
80 victims of trafficking leave the 'at risk' category (i.e. safe and rehabilitated) by end year 3 of the project
Greater than 20% increase in number of children intercepted by BGB and referred as trafficking victims



All programmatic data provided by Justice and Care. The UBS Optimus Foundation is a grant-making foundation that offers UBS clients a platform to use their wealth to drive positive social and environmental change. The Foundation selects programs that improve children's health, education and protection, ones that have the potential to be transformative, scalable and sustainable as well as programs tackling environmental and climate issues.

This document is for informational and educational purposes only and has no regard to the specific objectives, financial situation or particular needs of any specific recipient. It is not intended as a promotion of any UBS services nor an offer or a solicitation of an offer to sell or buy any product or other specific service. UBS Optimus Foundation does not provide investment, legal or tax advice. It strongly recommends to all persons considering the information herein to obtain appropriate independent legal, tax and other professional advice.

© UBS 2023. All rights reserved. The key symbol and UBS are among the registered and unregistered trademarks of UBS Group AG. IS2201907; Exp. 4/30/2023

UBS AG
UBS Optimus Foundation
P.O. Box
8098 Zurich

ubs.com/optimus