A Partners Consultation on Cross Border Trafficking in West Bengal and Launch of Missing Child Alert Project by Plan India and GNK and Child Protection Resource Centre of CINI

Friday, June 14, 2013, Kolkata: Child in Need Institute (CINI) will be working on a project of Missing Children Alert (MCA) in partnership with Plan India and GNK. This Anti Trafficking Project will be launched in 10 districts (Darjeeling, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Malda, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Nadia, and Murshidabad) in West Bengal. This Project has a link with the South Asian Initiative to end Violence Against Children, (SEIVAC).

‘Cross Border Trafficking’ of children is a multidimensional issue linked with migration, forced labour, absolute poverty, livelihood, sexual exploitation, paedophilia, sex tourism and so on. This implies that a multilateral approach and involvement of different experts with coordinated efforts is required to address the issue holistically. A stop to any form of trafficking would be a distant reality unless this ambition turns into an achievement. The MCA project is therefore an opportunity to bring all important actors together with one goal.

Missing Child Alert is a sub-regional programme that aims to be a technologically equipped, institutionalised regional system of alert that can prevent, rescue and repatriate children, who are vulnerable to or/and victim of cross border trafficking from Bangladesh, Nepal to India.

The Programme is linked with the SAARC initiative to address cross border child trafficking in South Asia, led by Plan India. Being a new and ambitious concept within the region, MCA is regarded as a pilot project. The project implementation period is planned for 36 months, commencing from January 2012 to December 2014. The project holds all potential for expansion in other SAARC countries.

The Missing Child Alert project is inspired by the American Amber Alert system, also adopted by several European countries. In the context of South Asia, the challenges associated with the development of such a system are manifold; poor accessibility, illiteracy, unawareness, high population, difficult terrain at borders, lack of coordination among State departments etc. The Feasibility Study, carried out between July and November 2012, has recommended Plan to take these challenges into serious consideration. Fortunately, the study has also highlighted promising ways of addressing these challenges and recommends opportunities to collaborate with key stakeholders, such as SAIEVAC, for example. In order to capture the breadth and length of the whole

For any media related queries, contact Sreoshi Ghose at 9830489225.
The long term MCA project is divided into three phases:


During this phase, Plan aims to assess the current child protection and anti-child trafficking initiatives and roles and responsibilities of multilateral stakeholders. Within the given social, legal, political and economic environment, Plan and its partners will work toward creating a conducive environment for a multi stakeholder and long term initiative to develop a sustainable and child friendly Missing Child Alert system. This calls for greater clarity on the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders within the proposed system, a strong commitment and ownership by the Governments of Bangladesh, India and Nepal as well as more clarity about the most appropriate technical solution. It is also important that communities, including children, are not only aware of human trafficking and the associated risks but that they also contribute to the development of an alert system while working to strengthen their resilience at family and community level. Rather than reinventing the wheel, a starting point for the development of a technology enabled system is that it builds upon already existing systems in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. Collaboration with State, non-State and corporate experts to analyse opportunities for technical solutions and development of a demonstrative model will also be characteristic of this first phase.


During this phase, the Missing Child Alert system will be adjusted based on findings from a thorough evaluation that will be carried out during the final quarter of 2014. The MCA system will then be established and tested in specific project areas for a two year period. During this time, its functioning will be closely monitored to ensure that it operates as it should and that it contributes to keeping children safe. Another rigorous multi stakeholder evaluation will take place at the end of this phase.

The Scaling up Phase (Jan 2017 onwards):

This phase aims at institutionalisation and sustainability of the Missing Child Alert system. It is expected that State parties and regional mechanisms, such as SAIEVAC, lead the process with secured resources. Plan will take a leading role in helping other countries assess whether the MCA system designed for Bangladesh, India and Nepal could be a suitable anti-trafficking instrument.

For any media related queries, contact Sreoshi Ghose at 9830489225.
there as well. Plan will work with Plan offices interested in the system to share lessons learned and assist where possible to scale the system up within the region and beyond.

The project locations of Missing Children Alert project are:

- Bangladesh: Jessore and Satkhire District
- India: States of West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh
- Nepal: Morang, Makawanpur and Banke districts

**CINI has been working on Protection for the last 25 years.** The various initiatives by CINI are:

1. **Community Based Safety Net Mechanism to Prevent Trafficking:** CINI’s approach to child Trafficking calls for a preventive approach by setting a community based safety net mechanism to ensure protection of the child by involving the principles of participation, non discrimination and Best Interest Principle of a child. This is ensured through creating a Child and Women Friendly communities where different government (School, ICDS functionaries, PHCs) and non government agencies (CBOs, SHGs) play the pivotal role of “duty bearers” while CINI plays the active role of facilitation and service providers to meet different entitlements of the vulnerable and “at risk” children. Here, stakeholder plays its crucial role to ensure entitlement of a child.

2. **Rescue of the Trafficked survivors:** CINI plays effective role in the rescue of the trafficked survivors through CHILDLINE. CINI runs CHILDLINE in 5 districts namely Kolkata, Murshidabad, Uttar Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and South 24 Pargana. Tracking the homes of the trafficked survivors and conducting the home visits is done by CINI-CHILDLINE. Based upon the individual care plan of each child, he/she is rehabilitated in the family.

3. **Rehabilitation of the trafficked survivors:** After rescue, the trafficked survivors are provided shelter in the short stay home run by CINI in Kolkata and North Bengal. Here quality and standardized care is provided to them by providing them proper clothing, health, nutrition, cultural therapy (dance, art therapy) and recreational facilities. Here Psycho social counseling is also provided to the trafficked survivors.

4. **Effective Restoration:** After conducting home visits through CINI-CHILDLINE if the house conditions are found to be congenial then the child is finally restored in the home. CINI believes in institutionalization being the last resort for the child, home is the safest place.

---

For any media related queries, contact Sreoshi Ghose at 9830489225.

5. **Reintegration**: Post-restoration follow up is done by CHILDLINE through following restorative practice as well as through community safety net mechanism process which prevents retrafficking. Networking with likeminded organizations also forms an important component in this phase.

**Statistics of Trafficked Children Rescued and Rehabilitated by CINI from April 2012-March 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>No. of Trafficked survivors</th>
<th>No. of Children rehabilitated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Short stay Home for girls, Kolkata</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Short stay Home for girls, Kolkata</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>CINI North Bengal</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Diamond Harbour</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Uttar Dinajpur</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For any media related queries, contact Sreoshi Ghose at 9830489225.