

# PRIORITIZED HIV PREVENTION SERVICES FOR KEY POPULATIONS IN BANGLADESH

*Save the Children in Bangladesh is a Principal Recipient of the Global Fund 'FR grant' (December 2017 to November 2020)*

## BACKGROUND

Although national HIV prevalence is <0.1% in general population and <1% among key populations (KP), Bangladesh is one of the four countries in the region where the epidemic continues to increase. Until 2017, the cumulative number of detected HIV cases were 5586 with 865 new recorded cases (the estimate range of people living with HIV is 10,000-14,000).

Save the Children, in a leading role in the national HIV and AIDS response in Bangladesh, has managed five HIV grants of the Global Fund in two modalities – Management Agency (March 2004 - Nov 2009) and Principal Recipient (December 2009- Nov 2020).

The present grant aims high impact & cost effective intervention with the consideration of districts prioritization and the epidemiological trend and other contextual factors. According to the new size estimation study, the program covers 9,500 people who inject drugs (PWID) and 18,500 female sex workers (FSWs) which are 28% and 38% respectively of the country target according to the NSP [NASC].

## Goal:

To minimize the spread of HIV and the impact of AIDS on the individual, family, community and society.

## Objectives:

- To implement HIV prevention services to limit new HIV infections to 802 among key populations (PWID, FSWs, MSM, MSWs and hijra) by the end of 2020;
- To complement treatment, care and support services provided by the GoB to PLHIV so as to enhance uptake of testing to 60% and treatment to 55% by the end of 2020; and
- To ensure an effective national HIV/AIDS response by establishing a functional health information system with 100% reporting from all implementing entities and with enhanced capacity of personnel in selected public health facilities providing HIV services by the end of 2020.

## Factsheet

- **Name of the project:** Prioritized HIV prevention services for Key Populations in Bangladesh
- **Life of Project:** December 2017 – November 2020
- **Donor:** The Global Fund
- **Principal Recipients (PR):** Save the Children is one of the three PRs and responsible for implementing interventions targeting FSW and their clients, PWID and their partners and supplements to treatment, care and support program for people living with HIV under government health sector program. PR icddr,b implements interventions targeting MSM and Hijra. PR AIDS/STD Program (ASP), Directorate General of Health Services is responsible for implementing the national HIV MIS, performing monitoring visits to HIV programs, conducting higher level advocacy to create an enabling environment, and capacity building of implementers.
- **Sub Recipients (SRs):** Save the Children's SRs are CARE Bangladesh, Light House and Ashar Alo Society, and –
- **Sub Sub-Recipients (SSRs):** Ashokta Punorbashan Shangstha (APOSH), Mukto Akash Bangladesh (MAB), Sylhet Jubo Academy (SJA), Nari Mukti Sangha (NMS), Confidential Approach to AIDS Prevention (CAAP).

## PROGRAMS

### Comprehensive prevention programs for PWID and their partners

- Harm reduction services to 9,500 PWID through 21 DICs;
- Provide HIV testing services for 90% of targeted PWID (100% PWID in Dhaka);
- Exchange Needle/syringes to reduce sharing practice;
- Provide Oral Substitution Therapy (OST) to reduce the dependence on injectable drugs.
- Establish linkage of diagnosed HIV positive cases with Comprehensive DICs (CDICs) and also to selected government facilities to ensure antiretroviral therapy (ART);
- Conduct Peer education through one-to-one and group discussion;
- Distribute Condom for 'dual protection': STI prevention and birth control;
- Provide STI case management, abscess management and limited general health services to PWID and their partners; and
- Refer complicated STI, refer presumptive TB patients to DOT center.

### Comprehensive prevention programs for FSWs and their clients

- Essential services to 18,500 FSWs in 12 districts through 29 DICs;
- Provide HIV testing services for 97% of targeted FSWs;
- Establish linkage of diagnosed HIV positive cases for antiretroviral therapy (ART) at government facilities
- Conduct Peer education through one-to-one and in group for risk reduction;

- Distribute and social marketing of condom;
- Provide STI cases management services for FSWs and their clients and limited general health support for FSWs;
- Refer complicated STI, maternal & child health care, EPI, TB and legal aid support;
- Establish 'Community Squad' to address gender based violence (GBV) and operate 24/7 HOTLINE number;
- Training on income generating activities for alternative livelihood and empowerment
- Patronize Community DIC run by FSWs for livelihood support.

### Treatment, care & support (TCS) for people living with HIV:

- Strengthen ART center of Infectious Disease Hospital, Dhaka and also to set-up and functionalize ART re-fill centers in selected other nine districts.
- Organize "uthan boithak" at local level to create demand for HTS & ART and to sensitize the local community
- Provide HIV Testing Services (HTS) to family members of people living with HIV
- Facilitate linkage, enrolment & retention of people living with HIV in chronic HIV care
- Provide ART to stable patient
- Provide treatment and nutrition support to people living with HIV, home based care and burial support
- Organize caregiver and leadership training for PLHIV and their family members
- Assist hospital authority to Monitor ART re-fill centers
- Strengthening capacity of PLHIV Network

## LESSONS LEARNT

- A significant portion of key population is still out of the service coverage nationally that can reverse/lessening the impact of our current efforts;
- Proactively explore the funding opportunity of government health sector program to increase the service coverage;
- Challenge remains to ensure uninterrupted Treatment, Care and Support (TCS) program for people living with HIV under the Government health sector program;
- PMTCT services is to be integrated as part of service package for women in special population group and Pilot PMTCT for general population may be initiated using MaMoni-HSS platform;
- Service delivery model is to be developed for reaching out Adolescent FSWs.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- TCS services including ART provided to people living with HIV from 2008 to 2014. NASP started procuring of ARV drugs from 2012 and took full responsibility of TCS from mid-2015.
- Active syphilis declined among most at risk populations in Dhaka i.e. among PWID from 9.3% to 4.3% and among street based FSW from 34% to 4.6% in 2011<sup>4</sup>;
- Use of sterile injecting equipment by PWID increased from 33.6% to 83.6% (2006-7, 2015)<sup>3</sup>;
- Condom use has increased in PWID within the last 12 months from 39% to 75.4% (2004-2012)<sup>5</sup>;
- Condom use has increased in FSWs in sex with new clients from 66.7% to 73.7% (2006-7, 2015)<sup>3</sup>;
- Condom use has increased among the younger clients of hotel based female sex workers from 14.1% to 48.3%<sup>6</sup>;
- HIV/AIDS knowledge has increased from 19% among ever-married women in 1996-97 to 70% in 2011. Among currently married men, it has grown from 33% in 1996-97 to 88% in 2011<sup>7</sup>;
- 22% male and 13% female aged 15–24 who correctly identify ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV and who reject major misconceptions about HIV transmission (End line Survey, 2008: UNGASS indicator #13)<sup>8</sup>; and
- The guardians, teachers and religious leaders are increasingly supportive of teaching HIV related lessons in the classroom. According to the Baseline Survey (2005), 60% guardians supported sex education for their children in the classroom, according to the End Line Survey (2008) this increased to 80%<sup>8</sup>.

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