



EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND PREVENTION FOR THOSE CHILDREN AT RISK OF TRAFFICKING LIVING IN THE BROTHELS OF BIHAR: INDIA

THE PROBLEM

The India-Nepal border is one of the largest corridors for human trafficking in the world. While the international community pays little notice, the problem has reached endemic proportions with an estimate of nearly 200,000 Nepalis having already been trafficked into India.

The vast majority of these victims are women and children who are subjected to forced labor, prostitution, and sexual abuse.

The porous, 400 mile-long border between southern Nepal and Bihar, India's poorest state, is an ideal environment for traffickers to operate within. Each year an estimated 7,000-10,000 women and children are trafficked through Bihar, many ending up in de facto slavery in Bihar itself. With nearly a quarter of those trafficked below the age of 16, the situation is particularly grave for children.

Increasing the alarm has been the spike in the trafficking of women and children since the devastating, April 2015 earthquake in Nepal. The Indian government's agency charged with protecting its border (Sashastra Seema Bal) has reported a "massive spurt" in the forced movement of women and children from Nepal along the Bihar border.

While exact numbers are impossible to attain, it is clear that an already appalling situation has been made even worse by this natural tragedy.

There are numerous causes for this problem on both sides of the border, but the primary reason is that Nepal is an agrarian country which lacks sufficient infrastructure and economic opportunities to support its population of nearly 23 million people. About 90% of its inhabitants rely on subsistence agriculture to survive. More than half of Nepal's women are illiterate, poorly-educated and, therefore, easily targeted by traffickers.

In view of the rising scale of the problem of cross-border trafficking and the human rights abuses it spawns, Children on the Edge has initiated a programme to address the problem of trafficking on Bihar's front lines.

Children at school in the heart of one of Bihar's red light area, April 2015



ACTIVITIES

Partnering with local organisation Tatvasi Samaj Nyas (TSN), Children on the Edge is in the process of establishing education centres in the heart of two of Bihar's most renowned red light areas.

These centres are both places of schooling as well as life lines to the children being raised in these sprawling communities. Surrounded by dozens of brothels, the centres offer children living in these communities a chance at education that they would otherwise have no means of receiving.

Each centre is open six days a week and provides classes in reading, writing, hygiene, and social studies to over 30 children at each location. The centres also pay special attention to creative activities such as art, singing/dance, and games as these can be critical outlets for children living in situations of duress.

Vitaly, the centres also serve as places of safety and security for children who would otherwise face the harsh realities of the sexual exploitation and abuse around them alone.

Teachers work with the students to identify situations of potential abuse as well as emphasising the rights and life possibilities that each child possess. The aim of the programme is to not only to provide these children with security and support, but also to pave the way for them to find a life beyond the confines of the red light district.

To this end, TSN and Children on the Edge are also working to incorporate skills training for the older students in the programme. Planned training activities include tailoring and agricultural skills. In this way, students, especially girls, are given a potential means to break away from the expectation that they will continue their lives in the prostitution industry.

Operating in such an environment undoubtedly requires time and resolve. The trafficking and prostitution industry in Bihar is well connected and established. However, Children on the Edge believes it has found the right partner in TSN to make a meaningful difference in the life of hundreds of these children living in Bihar's brothels.

Children on the Edge will use its experience of working in situations of poverty and human trafficking to provide assistance on best practice and project delivery. The partnership will run for an initial year with a view to extending further depending on the 12 month review.

OUR PARTNER

TSN was founded for the expressed purpose to fight human trafficking in all its forms in the Indian state of Bihar. The organisation currently works in 9 districts in Bihar State with the most rampant levels of human trafficking. As a the sole partner for the *ChildLine* help hotline and referral network in northern Bihar, TSN receives numerous requests to intervene in cases of abuse and trafficking involving children. For girls in severe circumstances of abuse, TSN also takes in young women and provides them with safety, shelter, education and skills training at its residential facility.

The organisation is also active on other fronts. They regularly run workshops about how to prevent and stop human trafficking for other NGOs and government officials. They conduct awareness and advocacy campaigns to raise the issue of human trafficking in Bihar (which is often considered a taboo subject) and pressure the government into greater activity. Furthermore, TSN works closely with local communities to create Community Vigilance Committees (CVCs) which serve to inform TSN and local authorities about trafficking activities in their areas. Based on this information, TSN, on several occasions, also push legal cases against known traffickers into the courts.

Given the magnitude of the issue of human trafficking in Bihar, TSN is a small organisation standing against a great tide of exploitation and abuse. In spite of the scale of the problem, Children on the Edge sincerely believes it can make a profound difference in the life of hundreds of Bihar's most vulnerable children through our joint efforts with TSN.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Initial 12 months:

Item	Cost (£)	Description
Red light area Intervention Supervisor salary x 2	2,925.90	2 x supervisors in Bihar district
Teacher salary x 2	1,950.79	2 x teachers
Travel costs	487.65	Local transport for the Intervention Supervisors
Communication	365.75	Mobile phone and internet
Rent	487.67	2 x rented buildings for use as schools in the red light area in Bihar
Education materials	1,219.17	Inc. books, sports equipment, writing materials, first aid boxes, mats and whiteboards.
Regional Management and Monitoring	600	Support and Guidance from COTE Asia office
TOTAL	8036.93	

A contribution to the above budget would make an enormous difference to the lives of the children who truly are living on the edge, forgotten and ignored by international media. If you would like a more detailed budget or any more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch.