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BEST PRACTICES IN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION IN EUROPE & EURASIA

Executive Summary

January 2009

This report was produced for review by the Social Transition Team, Office of Democracy, Governance, and Social Transition of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/E&E/DGST). It was prepared under the SOCIAL Task Order of the Advancing Basic Education (ABE-BE) IQC by Creative Associates International, Inc., and the Aguirre Division of JBS International, Inc. Its author is Stephen Warnath, NEXUS Institute.

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The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Acknowledgements

This study was possible because of the commitment of USAID's Europe and Eurasia Bureau to support research designed to improve responses by the United States and other countries to trafficking in persons. Several individuals at USAID in particular need to be acknowledged. I would like to thank Catherine Cozzarelli of USAID's Europe and Eurasia Bureau for her leadership and support on this research. Before she departed USAID, Ruth Pojman, who now works on the issue of human trafficking for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, provided material and input for which I am very appreciative. Glenn Rogers is to be commended for having the vision to recognize the importance of investing in research to inform and improve the practices of anti-trafficking work in the region. In the E&E region there are many people working in the USAID missions who care deeply about this issue, and this research reflects their desire to address it more effectively.

Creative Associates International and the Aguirre Division of JBS International, Inc. provided the opportunity to conduct this research. Throughout this process, I received much appreciated support and input from Deepika Chawla and Sylvia Ellison of Creative Associates and Christine Allison of Aguirre. They have been a pleasure to work with throughout this process.

Ruth Rosenberg wrote the companion report to this one ("Best Practices for Programming to Protect and Assist Victims of Trafficking in Europe and Eurasia"). Ruth is an accomplished researcher and has contributed much toward understanding the issue of trafficking in persons and the responses to it. I am pleased to have had a chance to work with her.

At the NEXUS Institute, I am fortunate to work with Rebecca Surtees. As Senior Researcher at NEXUS, Rebecca has completed as much research on the issue of human trafficking in this region as anyone, especially primary research based on the perspectives and experiences of victims of trafficking. This report, which relies upon portions of that body of work, reflects Rebecca's findings.

Finally, I would like to thank all who have supported the NEXUS Institute and our work to improve laws, policies, and practice to combat human trafficking around the world.

Stephen Warnath
Executive Director
NEXUS Institute

Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by USAID's Europe & Eurasia (E&E) Bureau to examine best practices in activities designed to prevent trafficking in persons (TIP) in the countries of the E&E region. The purpose of this report is to assist the E&E Bureau to improve anti-trafficking in persons programs in terms of effectiveness and impact, thereby reducing the incidence of TIP. USAID seeks to determine the strengths and weaknesses of program approaches to date and discover where anti-TIP efforts can be integrated into other relevant USAID programming.

To achieve this goal, this report highlights TIP best practices and lessons learned that were extracted from the available project-specific literature, primarily documents produced in conjunction with USAID-supported projects and supplemented by a larger review of the literature relevant to anti-trafficking prevention strategies and methods. (A complete listing of sources is found in Annex A: References.) This report builds upon the work of a 2004 assessment entitled "Best Practices to Prevent Trafficking in Persons in Europe and Eurasia" by Ruth Rosenberg.¹ A companion report ("Best Practices for Programming to Protect and Assist Victims of Trafficking in Europe and Eurasia") reviews protection and assistance programs for TIP victims in the E&E region.

This report covers the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.²

Methodology & Limitations

The literature reviewed in preparation for this report was extensive, including a review of international governmental and non-governmental reports, newspaper articles, and academic publications. Publications and websites of USAID and other U.S. Government agencies, as well as their implementing partners, were searched for applicable material. The websites of a number of NGO service providers and international organizations, including those based or working in the region, were reviewed. Finally, the global resource center on anti-trafficking issues at the NEXUS Institute was utilized. This library and resource center contains over 2,000 counter-trafficking documents, among them project descriptions; research reports and studies; relevant laws, policies and programs; and articles on trafficking and anti-trafficking work, including many published by NGO service providers located in the E&E region.

Despite the extensive literature review, this report was necessarily limited in time and scope. No field research was undertaken, and limited budgetary resources permitted no first-hand verification of the data presented in the literature. Further, the lack of project evaluations hinders the author's ability to compare the efficacy of TIP prevention activities or to identify "best practices" in any way other than preliminary. Gaps in the coverage of TIP in the E&E literature also exist, and there are few programs designed to prevent certain forms of trafficking (e.g., labor trafficking).

¹ Rosenberg, Ruth. "Best Practices for Programming to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in Europe and Eurasia." USAID/Development Alternatives, Inc., September 2004.

² For simplicity of language, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be referred to as Bosnia or BiH.

Analysis of Prevention Programs

In general, prevention activities may be understood to include any intervention aimed at reducing or eliminating the likelihood of human trafficking and re-trafficking. Prevention programs are typically divided into four categories:

- Changing the overall context or environment (social, cultural, economic, political/legal) in which TIP occurs;
- Addressing one or more variables associated with an individual (a “potential victim”) that may contribute to a heightened risk or vulnerability (e.g., lack of information, family crisis, economic problems);
- Targeting the criminals and establishing deterrence in the form of an effective justice system; and
- Increasing the ability of officials and others to identify potential TIP cases prior to the occurrence of TIP exploitation and to enable appropriate intervention (e.g., at border crossings).

In order to more thoroughly understand prevention programs, it is useful to analyze them within the more specific subcategories of awareness raising, employment, income-generation, empowerment, crisis prevention and violence mitigation, safe migration, demand reduction, protection as prevention, and deterrence through criminalization. Various prevention programs may fall under multiple categories and activities, or methods utilized within categories may serve multiple purposes.

In each of these areas, USAID Missions and other donors have funded programs, the vast majority of which use awareness raising, employment, and empowerment activities as the anchors of their efforts. Examples of prevention initiatives implemented by TIP prevention projects in the E&E region are presented in the body of this report. The outcomes of TIP prevention projects have been successful by some measures – potential victims of trafficking (VoTs) are more aware of situations from which they could be trafficked, and in many countries where awareness campaigns have been conducted the general population is more aware of the existence and risks of TIP. The evidence for success in other kinds of prevention programs, however, and of long-term TIP prevention is rarely available.

Conclusions

Building upon prevention efforts initiated approximately ten years ago, USAID projects have grown significantly in reach and breadth in countries of the E&E region. Reports document a number of positive changes in attitudes and behaviors in the lives of many participants in anti-TIP programs. Determining the effectiveness of prevention programs, however, has remained problematic. It is not possible, at least based upon a document review, to assess comparative effectiveness of specific programs or approaches to reducing TIP in the region.

The context of risk and vulnerability in which TIP flourishes – and that prevention work seeks to alter – is complicated. The breadth, pervasiveness, and in many cases intransigence of factors contributing to the existence of TIP present a serious test for all prevention activities. Unfortunately, the design and implementation of TIP prevention initiatives rarely address this complexity. And because so little empirical work has been done regarding these factors, many assumptions have emerged to fill the void.

Accordingly, the key challenge for improving prevention efforts is two-fold: 1) insufficient data on the root causes, contributing factors, vulnerabilities, and risks that may lead to TIP in general and to the diverse manifestations of TIP in different countries and communities; and 2) insufficient data on the prevention of trafficking as a result of TIP prevention programming. Improvement in prevention results

should follow from increasing this understanding and from testing the current assumptions about the relationship between activity and outcomes upon which prevention measures rest.

Recommendations

The full analysis and discussion that form the basis of the recommendations presented comprise the main body of this report.

1. Donors and TIP prevention program implementers should **strengthen the understanding of underlying contributing factors in order to improve TIP prevention programming.**

- a. Analyze what type of data needs to be collected – and how it can be collected across the region – to form the basis of reliable empirical findings about root causes, contributing factors, risks, and vulnerabilities linked to TIP.
- b. Ascertain what factors work to counter vulnerabilities and risk of potential victims of TIP. Analyze what differentiates the circumstances of similarly situated individuals, some who are eventually trafficked and some who are not.

2. Donors and TIP prevention program implementers should **refine the link between project activities and TIP prevention outcomes.**

- a. Gather new data for prevention results assessments.
- b. Develop long term frameworks within which individual TIP projects are located to permit determination of prevention results. Strategies should be developed, including post-project evaluation methods, to compensate for existing structural impediments (e.g., short-term, incremental projects).
- c. Incorporate into future TIP projects data collection procedures that will permit evaluation by independent evaluators and researchers at points in time after the completion of the project.
- d. Design research projects to answer questions specific to establishing the link between TIP prevention activities and prevention results.
- e. Require monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to be an integral component of TIP prevention projects.
- f. Develop baselines and outcome indicators that are specific, meaningful, and measurable.
- g. Utilize impact evaluations to illustrate positive and negative results as well as intended and unintended consequences.
- h. Fund the budget requirements for projects to implement sound M&E.
- i. Develop incentives for TIP prevention project applicants and/or implementers to initiate stronger outcome indicators for their respective projects to supplement and link to output measures.

j. Supplement internal evaluation of TIP prevention projects with external evaluation work. Self-evaluation by project implementers, although useful for project management purposes and for donors as part of a larger evaluation approach, is not a substitute for objective assessments by experienced researchers and evaluators.

3. Donors and TIP prevention program implementing organizations should work together to **refine their ability to target prevention programs to at-risk groups.**

- a. With more precision, identify and disaggregate groups at risk of being potential victims of TIP.
- b. Address all forms of trafficking in persons in implementation of TIP prevention strategies.
- c. Identify all populations underserved by TIP prevention projects for each country in the E&E region.
- d. Incorporate neglected at-risk groups into TIP prevention strategy development and program design. Strategies and projects should be adapted for and tailored to these groups in order to achieve maximum effectiveness.
- e. Extend TIP prevention efforts more systematically to reach at-risk populations in rural communities.
- f. Examine opportunities to partner/collaborate with prevention-related projects provided by governments and NGOs, especially to expand ability to reach underserved populations and/or communities with TIP prevention efforts.

4. Donors and TIP prevention program implementing organizations should **prioritize TIP awareness-raising projects that emphasize prevention.**

- a. For projects in countries reporting extremely high levels of TIP awareness (i.e., awareness saturation) among their populations, examine whether adjustments should be undertaken to improve prevention effectiveness rather than continuing the status quo of message saturation.
- b. Emphasize TIP awareness projects that demonstrate over time prevention results instead of information “campaigns” with general messages (with the exception of outreach to areas that still have little prior knowledge of TIP).
- c. Avoid sensationalized, alarmist, or frightening awareness messages. Scare tactics about TIP do not appear to resonate with intended recipients of those messages.
- d. Examine whether messages that provide ways for the individuals to protect themselves from falling victims to TIP lead to better prevention results than general messages.
- e. Determine more precisely how different groups take in, process, digest, and act upon messages. Generic messages have dubious prevention value.
- f. Magnify the impact of awareness/prevention messages by tailoring them more precisely to narrowly targeted audiences.

- g. Test prevention messages for effectiveness with minors of different age-groups. Assume that anti-TIP messages created for adults will not resonate effectively with children.
- h. Revisit awareness messages for men; consider specifically whether adjustments are necessary due to resistance to the “victim” label for VoTs.
- i. Consider whether experts in advertising and media message content can contribute to the development of awareness messages and strategies by TIP prevention projects.
- j. Examine whether there are lessons to be learned from those experienced with awareness campaigns designed to change behavior or attitudes for issues such as domestic violence or HIV/AIDS.
- k. To the extent appropriate and ethical, seek to include participation of former VoTs to elicit their first-hand perspectives in the design of TIP prevention projects.

5. Donors and TIP prevention program implementing organizations should **tighten the link between employment-based, income-generating, and empowerment prevention activities and long-term prevention results.**

- a. Monitor job placement over time for graduates of economic-based courses. If necessary, continue documenting beyond initial job placement to evaluate prevention impact associated with sustained local employment. Only over time (at least one year after the conclusion of the project) can prevention results be assessed.
- b. Examine the effectiveness of achieving TIP prevention arising from skills training and empowerment programs within the context of local employment and economic conditions in each country of the E&E region. Review, for example, the extent to which graduates of these programs from economically suppressed areas ultimately migrate to other countries seeking employment and what happens to graduates who stay but do not find jobs.
- c. Conduct further research regarding tailoring the design of income-generating projects to serve TIP prevention objectives most effectively.

6. Donors and TIP prevention program implementing organizations should **ensure that safe migration projects supported by anti-TIP grants and contracts are tailored specifically to maximize the achievement of TIP prevention objectives.**

- a. Data gathering and analysis of safe migration TIP prevention projects need to be strengthened to begin to identify factors and circumstances (apart from the criminal intervention of a trafficker) of program participants that differentiate an individual who migrates successfully from one who is trafficked. To start, data should be collected from assisted VoTs about whether they participated in safe migration projects prior to being trafficked and why, from their perspective, the content of those projects failed to prevent them from being trafficked.
- b. Examine whether cooperative partnerships can be developed between NGOs in countries of origin and those in countries of destination in order to vet jobs in destination countries. Consideration could also be given to whether job vetting is a prevention approach for which government-NGO collaborations could be developed.

7. Donors and TIP prevention program implementing organizations should **include demand reduction approaches** that demonstrate effective TIP prevention results as part of comprehensive TIP prevention strategy.

- a. Address demand reduction as part of comprehensive TIP prevention strategies.
- b. Conduct the first analysis of the effectiveness of demand as a prevention method for different forms of TIP.

8. Donors and TIP prevention program implementing organizations should **consider TIP prevention impact of gender-based factors**.

- a. Determine if gender stereotypes about who is likely to be a TIP victim and preconceptions hamper TIP prevention efforts.