

NEWSLETTER

PROMOTING CHILD RIGHTS

Issue 1, December 2021 - November 2022

Editorial

Our inaugural newsletter is an attempt to share our activities during the first year of the HEROES project. CWCS as one of the consortium partner of HEROES project was entrusted mainly with child rights promotion and protection. The best strategy is awareness raising and information sharing on child rights issues especially to save children from abuse, exploitation and trafficking. In this backdrop, we have developed hashtag **#SaveFACE4Children** to maximize the social media campaign to promote child rights. In addition, we organized stakeholder meetings with various groups who are working directly or indirectly with child rights issues. Our commitment is to save children from sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

After the inception of HEROES project, we have been organizing various stakeholder meeting with INGOs, NGOs, young people, students, faculty members and social workers. In the above meetings, participants discussed about the issues and way forward regarding child rights, child abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

Prof. Ishrat Shamim, Task Leader of HEROES project.

HEROES – Novel Strategies to Fight Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Crimes and Protect their Victims in brief

HEROES is a research oriented project which is funded by the European Commission (EC) Brussels and managed by Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM), Spain. It is a 3 years' project starting from 1 December 2021 which is being implemented by 24 consortium partners from Europe, Latin America and Bangladesh.

It is an ambitious, multi-disciplinary and international project with a victim-centered approach. The Centre for Women and Children Studies is implementing activities related to **Child rights promotion and protection: awareness-raising, education and information.**

The Centre believes that the most effective way for promoting and protection of child rights is by raising awareness, educating and engaging civil society, teachers, parents, children and youth groups, social workers, local leaders, police officials and media groups.



The Newsletter is developed under the project HEROES Novel Strategies to Fight Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Crimes and Protect their Victims. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101021801.

Online Launching of the Red Heart Campaign to Promote Child Rights

The Red Heart Campaign to Promote Child Rights was launched on 30th July 2022 at 6:00 pm (BST) with four guest speakers namely Prof. Ishrat Shamim, Founder President, Centre for Women and Children Studies (CWCS), Bangladesh; Ana Lucila Sandoval Orozco, Senior Researcher, GASS, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain; Guillermo Galarza Abizaid, Vice President, Partnerships and Law Enforcement Training, International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) in Alexandria, VA,

USA; and Muhammad Mahdy Hassan, National Programme Officer (TIP & SOM), UNODC Regional Office for South Asia, Bangladesh. The event well attended by 59 participants from home and abroad.



Prof. Ishrat Shamim expressed that children are to be protected from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation and appropriate measures should be in place. Ana Lucila Sandoval Orozco stated that campaign is one of the activities that we will develop in the project to prevent such crimes. Guillermo Galarza Abizaid felt that we need to educate

children, we need to continue educate parents, we need to raise awareness among policy makers on the issue to protect our children. Muhammad Mahdy Hassan suggested that we need to design our awareness raising messages in a way so that it can be easily used by the care givers, by the adult people, so that everyone can support the children so that children can easily avoid the vulnerability for being the victims of human trafficking.

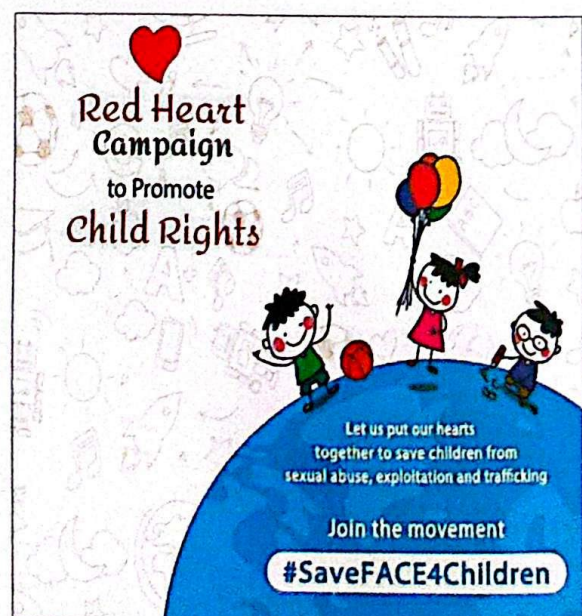
The Red Heart Campaign's Mission is committed to promote child rights and protect children from sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

The Red Heart Campaign's Vision is to have a world free from child sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking where children can grow up happy, healthy and safe.

Participants were requested to:

Join the movement: #SaveFACE4Children

Centre for Women and Children Studies has developed hashtag to maximize the visibility of the Red Heart Campaign to Promote Child Rights to save abused, exploited and trafficked children.



1st Red Heart Campaign Meeting with women rights organizations working at grassroots level

The Centre for Women and Children Studies (CWCS) organized the first Red Heart Campaign meeting with 16 women rights organizations working at grassroots level on 11 August 2022 at CWCS Conference room.



The mission and vision of the Red Heart Campaign to Promote Child Rights to save children from abuse, exploitation and trafficking was disseminated and Campaign badges were distributed.

Many of the women organizations offered to organize campaign meetings with community people at their working areas. They invited Centre for Women and Children Studies to work with them.



1st Stakeholder Meeting to Promote Child Rights of Sexually Abused, Exploited and Trafficked Children with INGOs and NGOs

The Centre for Women and Children Studies (CWCS) organized the 1st Stakeholder Meeting to Promote Child Rights of Sexually Abused, Exploited and Trafficked Children on 30 August 2022 at CWCS Conference Room from 2:00pm-5:00pm. As the most effective way for promoting and protection of child rights is by rising awareness, educating and engaging civil

society, the meeting aimed to involve INGOs and NGOs from home and abroad who work to promote child rights and save children from sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking. The meeting was attended by 25 INGOs and NGOs who are working with child rights in Bangladesh. In addition, HEROES partner organizations from other European countries and the USA also joined the meeting virtually.

Shireen Hasan, Executive Director, CWCS, welcomed the participants and highlighted that presently child abuse, especially online exploitation is a matter of great concern in Bangladesh and we have to work together to prevent and protect children from such abuse and exploitation.



Prof. Ishrat Shamim, President, CWCS chaired the meeting and gave a brief overview of HEROES project being implemented by 24 consortium partners from Europe, Latin America and Bangladesh. It is an ambitious, multi-disciplinary and international project with a victim-centered approach.

Participants gave their short introduction which was followed by the speeches from the 3 Guest speakers:

Ana Lucila Sandoval Orozco, Senior Researcher in GASS, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain elaborated on the HEROES project and introduced the consortium partners from European countries, Latin America and Bangladesh. She briefly discussed about the main objectives of the HEROES project aimed at prevention, investigation, and victim assistance.

Yujin Park, Head, Migration, Protection and Assistance (MPA) Unit, a.i. IOM Bangladesh informed that all over the world, 5 percent of the money allocated for the purpose of

development is spent on the welfare of children. She said that during the pandemic, 85 percent of children in Bangladesh dropped out of school and college. During the pandemic, children depended on the digital world for education and communication which was one of the factors for the increase of child abuse and exploitation online. Therefore, in the coming days, we should work on the online child exploitation and find ways to prevent such crimes.

Guillermo Galarza Abizaid, Vice President, Partnerships and Law Enforcement Training, International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) in Alexandria, VA, USA, informed that ICMEC is making the world safer for children and they want to advocate, train and collaborate to protect the world's children. The issues they address are child sexual abuse material (CSAM), child sex trafficking, abduction, online grooming, online child abuse and commercial sexual exploitation. The **National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)** sends **CyberTipline** Reports. Many countries receive these reports and in Bangladesh 1,743,240 cases were reported which is very alarming. He said that online child sexual exploitation is not a victimless crime as these are violent crimes involving real children; and moreover, these children are re-victimized every time the image of their abuse is viewed and distributed.

Group work and presentations

In the breakup session, participants were divided into two groups to discuss on challenges regarding child sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking and put forward action plans.



Group A discussed on Vulnerability factors leading to Child Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking and Nature of online aspects of child abuse and exploitation. They identified mainly poverty, natural disasters, and lack of family support as vulnerability factors. Regarding online child abuse and exploitation, participants identified the lack of knowledge of children in addition to lack of opportunities to complain in case of online abuse and exploitation.

Group B reviewed the legal remedies and gaps in implementation and also share the good practices in place to save children. Some of these are awareness raising, enactment of the human trafficking law, establishment of the victim support centres, one-stop-crisis centres, setting up of women and child help desks at the police station.

The plenary session was followed by a brief introduction of the Red Heart Campaign to Promote Child Rights and Save Children from Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking by Prof. Ishrat Shamim.

Participants were requested to join the movement **#SaveFACE4Children**. Many participants showed their interest to be volunteers to carry forward the Red Heart Campaign messages in their own community.

2nd Stakeholder Meeting to Promote Child Rights of Sexually Abused, Exploited and Trafficked Children with young men and women

The 2nd Stakeholder Meeting to Promote Child Rights was organized on 11th October 2022 from 2:00pm-5:00pm at CWCS Conference Room with young men and women in the age group of 19-25 who are engaged in various livelihood activities.

Prof. Ishrat Shamim, President, CWCS welcomed the participants and guest speakers. There were 4 guest speakers.

Ana Lucila Sandoval Orozco, Senior Researcher in GASS; Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain presented an Overview of HEROES project.



Zoé Colpaert, HEROES/Europe Program Manager; International Center for Missing and Exploited Children; Alexandria, USA highlighted the Global fight against online child exploitation.

Jana-Isabelle Dilger, Research Analyst – Modern Slavery and THB at Trilateral Research; London, UK presented on Children and young adults recruited for County lines drug trafficking in the UK.

Wahida Banu, Executive Director, Aparajeyo Bangladesh gave an overview of the situation of child exploitation and trafficking in Bangladesh and she shared the experience of street and abandoned children and children in prostitution.

It was followed by breakup sessions into 3 groups to Discuss on Challenges regarding Child Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking and put forward Action Plans.

Group work and presentations

Group A discussed on Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking and identified challenges such as: lack of awareness raising at grassroots level; lack of proper implementation of the laws; and non-cooperation of local government agencies.

Group B discussed Access to Child Protection for Victims and identified challenges such as: victims lack legal assistance; healthcare and psychosocial counseling; separate legal aid unit for child victims which need to be addressed and measures to be taken by government.

Group C discussed on Reintegration of Child Victims and identified challenges such as: lack of shelters at government and private levels;

lack of emotional and social support to victims; and lack of resettlement arrangements.

Brief of the Red Heart Campaign to Promote Child Rights was launched and participants were requested to join our movement **#SaveFACE4Children**.



3rd Stakeholder Meeting to Promote Child Rights of Sexually Abused, Exploited and Trafficked Children with Students and Faculty Members of East West University

The 3rd Stakeholder Meeting to Promote Child Rights was organized with Students and Faculty Members at the East West University Seminar Room on 27th October 2022 from 3:00pm-5:30pm. About 34 students and 5 faculty members attended the meeting.

Prof. Ishrat Shamim, President, CWCS chaired the meeting and welcomed the participants and guests. There were 3 guest speakers:

Ana Lucila Sandoval Orozco, Senior Researcher in GASS, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain gave an Overview of HEROES's project.

Zoé Colpaert, HEROES/Europe Program Manager, International Center for Missing and Exploited Children; Alexandria, USA highlighted the Global fight against online child exploitation.

Dr. Mumita Tanjeela, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology of East West University, Dhaka presented an Overview of the Situation of Child Exploitation and Trafficking in Bangladesh.



Group work and presentations

In the breakup session, participants were divided into 4 groups to discuss on challenges regarding child sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking and put forward action plans.

Group A discussed on the Preventive measures to stop child exploitation. The students identified child labour, drug addiction, and domestic violence as challenges at national level.

Group B discussed on Safety measures against online child exploitation. Students shared that online child exploitation and abuse have increased in recent times because of the easy access of smart mobiles and internet connectivity and the effect of the pandemic on children.

Group C discussed on the Challenges and remedies related to child protection. Children as young as 14 years old are being employed in jobs that are hazardous and risky. There is no protection for these children who are forced to earn a living due to abject poverty of their families.

Group D discussed on Assistance to child victims. Child victims of early marriage is a hidden phenomenon where girl children as young as 12 years old are being exploited by their husbands and in-laws.



A brief introduction of the Red Heart Campaign to Promote Child Rights and Save Children from Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking was presented and participants were requested to join our movement **#SaveFACE4Children**.

Badges and briefs of the Red Heart Campaign were widely distributed among the students. Many students from the Sociology Club volunteered to carry forward the Red Heart Campaign to Promote Child Rights and to join our movement **#SaveFACE4Children**.

4th Stakeholder Meeting to Promote Child Rights of Sexually Abused, Exploited and Trafficked Children with Social Workers

The 4th Stakeholder Meeting to Promote Child Rights was organized with social workers at the CWCS Conference Room on 14th November 2022 from 2:00pm-5:30pm. About 26 social workers attended the meeting from various clubs and organizations who are involved in charitable work.



Prof. Ishrat Shamim, President, CWCS chaired the meeting and welcomed the participants and guests. **Zoe Copaert** joined online as guest speaker.

Zoé Colpaert, HEROES/Europe Program Manager, International Center for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC), USA presented the Global fight against online child exploitation. She highlighted global challenge, technology solutions such as hotlines and portals; and the partnership work of ICMEC in capacity building training and e-learning; and research on child sexual abuse material.



Group work and presentations

After the presentations by guest speaker, there was breakup session into the following 3 groups to discuss on Challenges regarding Child Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking and Put Forward Action Plans:

Group A discussed on the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking and identified poverty, lack of education opportunities and safety measures at the grassroots level. They suggested area-wise meetings, seminars and campaigns, awareness programs in schools and colleges, and increase of education rate.

Group B discussed on Access to Child Protection for Victims and suggested strong education system for providing education for all, promotional campaigns on service providers, and setting up child help desk at sub-district level.

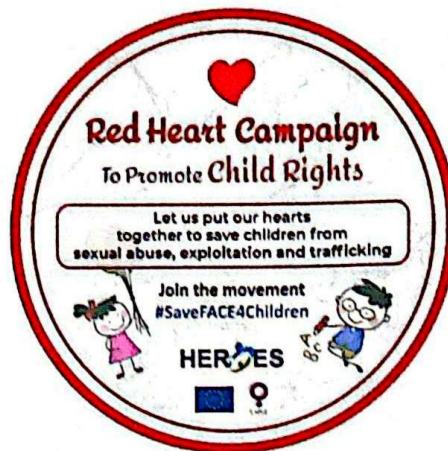
Group C discussed on Reintegration of Child Victims. The participants suggested psychosocial counselling and healthcare services to be provided, child-friendly shelters to be established, and support services to be enhanced for reintegration of child victims.

The groups presented their deliberations in the plenary session followed by a brief introduction of the Red Heart Campaign to Promote Child Rights and participants were requested to join the movement **#SaveFACE4Children**.

Many social workers showed their interest to share and carry forward the Red Heart Campaign messages among their group members.

Demands of participants from the above stakeholders meetings:

- ☒ Proper implementation of the laws and policies on child rights and its promotion through social media.
- ☒ Local community people, local political leaders and social workers to be made aware and motivated to prevent child abuse and exploitation
- ☒ Victims to be provided healthcare and psychosocial counselling in addition to family and community counselling so that they are easily accepted.
- ☒ Victims to be provided shelter facilities and legal assistance by government and NGOs.
- ☒ Mass awareness to be created through social media channels, print and electronic media, courtyard meetings, distribution of IEC materials.
- ☒ Government to provide technical skills training and employment opportunities to vulnerable families for reintegration of victims.
- ☒ Excessive use of Internet by children to be avoided and families to take due attention in this regard.
- ☒ Awareness raising campaign by launching of Meena character or Sisimpur Street which are very popular in Bangladesh for dissemination of knowledge among children about the dangers of online sexual abuse and exploitation.
- ☒ Police protection and improved child friendly services are needed to reduce child marriage, child trafficking and sexual abuse and exploitation both offline and online.



HEROES



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