

## **BANDHU : A Brief**

Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu) started its journey in 1996. It is formally registered with Ministry of Social welfare and NGO Affairs Bureau since July 1997. All activities of the organization are in line with the guidance provided by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) and Ministry of Social Welfare (MOSW) of the Government of Bangladesh.

The principles, activities and approaches of Bandhu correspond to national priorities for health care interventions and directly linked with current National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS response. Bandhu's activities have significantly contributed to attaining Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by the government, particularly Goals 1, 3 and 6.

**Mission:** Bandhu Social Welfare Society works toward the well-being of sexual minorities by facilitating sexual and reproductive health services and supporting human rights, dignity and livelihoods of their choices.

**Vision:** Bandhu Social Welfare Society envisions a Bangladesh where every person, irrespective of their gender and sexuality, is able to lead a quality life with dignity, human rights and social justice.

Bandhu is now aligning its 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan (2017-2021) to ensure that its program interventions on health and health rights, implemented through 37 well-equipped field health centers in 22 districts and 25 partner CBOs across the country, can add significant value to national response on health for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly 1, 3, 5, 16 and 17.

For coordinating the national response to HIV/AIDS prevention among all KP/MARP, the National AIDS/STD Program (NASP) of the MOHFW provides leadership. Bandhu is providing supports to government's response to health care needs of gender diversified population like other NGOs who cover other specific vulnerable groups of women, migrants, youth, children etc.

Gender diversity population are also the part of Key Population (KP) and termed as vulnerable group needing focus for making Bangladesh free of AIDS and included in the program structure of the Bangladesh Country Coordinating Mechanism (BCCM), which is chaired by the Honorable Health Minister. As a civil society group and a non-profit organization, Bandhu works towards promoting their health and social services as they are clustered within Most-at-risk population (MARP) for HIV/AIDS like migrant workers, sex workers, youth, children, transgender/hijra etc. Government also implements programs for this populace in other parts of the country (in non-overlapping manner).

Over the last 20 years Bandhu has expanded its work in the area of Sexual and Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS and health rights and complementing and contributing to the national response in these areas which are under government focus.

### **Main Features of Bandhu's Approach**

- All its work is implemented within the framework of health as a human right of every citizen that is clearly laid down in the National Health Policy.

- All activities are implemented in close coordination with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Welfare, City Corporations, National Human Rights Commission, Civil society, Law enforcement agencies and Media for preventing violations of gender variance/diversity population so that they can access to health and social services. In coordination with the central and district level

authorities, Bandhu pledges to continue to work within the framework of the National Health Policy towards contributing to SDGs in terms of improving options and access to health and social services of gender variance/diversity population who are also the citizens of the country.

The activities and services are being implemented countrywide through 36 field offices well equipped with clinical facilities in 22 districts and 25 partner CBOs across the country. Its activities are grounded at the grassroots level, involving CBOs and Bandhu's service model recognized as a best practice model by UNAIDS and Amfar Foundation USA. Bandhu today with support from different donors and development partners has scaled up essential Sexual Health and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) activities including legal support, advocacy and policy development programs that work on addressing the social, religious, cultural and legal impediments of sexual and gender diversity communities in terms of their rights and freedom.

### **The Focus Area of Work**

## The Networking

Bandhu has also extended its network to regional and international arena and is now considered as one of the largest programs in regional and international showground in terms of addressing broad range of sexual and gender diversity population. These networking with different forums and platforms and its active involvement in the activities and initiatives have collectively contributed to make the organization more visible in the areas it works. Bandhu is now the secretariat of South Asia Gender Diversity Network and is also an integral part of number of regional and International initiatives such as AIDS Society of Asia and the Pacific (ASAP), International AIDS Society, MSM Global Forum (MSMGF), Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM), Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW), South Asia Human Rights Commission of Marginalized Sexualities and Genders (SAHRA) etc. Apart from this, BSWS is an active member of STI/AIDS Network of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Human Rights Forum, SRHR and Advocacy Forum.

The organization is systematically organized and delivers its services through eight integrated departments i.e. Prevention & Care, Policy Advocacy & Communication, Training & Social Awareness, Monitoring & Evaluation and Research, Finance, Administration and Human Resources, Public Relation & Resource Mobilization, Internal Audit. This framework is being managed from Central Office in Dhaka. The Executive Director is the chief executive and is assisted by Director-Programs and Director - Finance & Admin along with senior management team who are the heads of the each department.

## The organizational structure

### Bandhu Program Innovation: Plans and afterwards

Bandhu plans to solicit supports from its development partners and donors to implement the following program interventions:

- Integrating Care and Support services for gender diversity population with existing preventive intervention.
- Setting up a dedicated care and support center for gender diversified populatoin and Hijra PLHIV.
- Livelihood initiative for the project participants to uphold their rights and develop linkage with corporate conglomerates and financial institution and carry out more advocacy activities with them regarding job placement of the community and financial aid for their own business enterprises.
- Work with religious leaders is a factor in implementing program activities. Bandhu needs to focus more on the sensitizing the religious stalwarts and gatekeepers for implementing activities more effectively.
- Sensitization and targeted campaign on Legal & Human Rights Issues and strengthen the collaboration and coordination with Human Rights organizations, National Human Rights Commission, National Law Commission of Bangladesh.
- Advocacy and dialogue with different media particularly with the gatekeepers to address the legal and human rights issues of sexual and gender diversity population in Bangladesh
- Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and Gender education for the community & youth
- Scale up the networking initiatives with community focused national and international forums and platforms.
- Scale up the involvement of media personnel in program activities with a view to enhance their knowledge and understanding about the equal needs of sexual and gender diversity population for supportive social, policy and legal environment to respond more effectively to sexual health and basic human rights.
- Scale up the interventions for Young and Adolescent to enhance their right knowledge and understanding on SRHR issues and HIV so as to reduce their existing vulnerabilities.