



IOM International Organization for Migration
Международна организация по миграция МОМ

FINAL REPORT TO USAID

A MULTI-AGENCY MODEL OF COOPERATION FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN BULGARIA - CA NO. 183-A-00-03-00103-00

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EXECUTIVE

In the period September 2003 - April 2008, IOM Bulgaria implemented the USAID funded project "A Multiagency Model of Cooperation for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Bulgaria". The project focused on building the Government of Bulgaria's (GOB) capacity in creating and strengthening its institutions tasked with combating human trafficking, as well as enhancing these institutions' partnership with civil society. The principal Bulgarian institution, tasked with coordinating the efforts of governmental agencies and civil society organizations working in the field of counter-trafficking (CT) is the National Counter Trafficking Commission. The program tasks included providing technical assistance to the nascent National CT Commission, training its personnel and principal counterparts, refurbishing and equipping its offices, development of its website, support to the development and implementation of the National CT Action Plans, support to the Local CT commissions and civil society development and networking on all levels stimulating the formation of a national CT network of relevant stakeholders. In the framework of this project IOM Bulgaria provided 17 small grants to community-based projects targeting at-risk groups. The tasks helped raise awareness and improve conditions within the communities, address root causes, conduct prevention and outreach activities amongst targeted at risk groups and integration of those at greatest risk for being trafficked; provide equal opportunities for women and children through vocational education; encourage cultural and communal activities; keep children in school, thus less vulnerable to traffickers. The tasks were as follows:

- **Task One:** Capacity-building assistance to the GOB in implementing the Anti-trafficking legislation.
- **Task Two:** Providing small grants to indigenous organizations for community-based work addressing root the causes of trafficking in persons.

The project engaged stake holders from government, civil society and professional circles and established a national CT network that not only contributed substantially to the implementation of the annual National CT Action Plans, but also helped institutionalize successfully the multi-agency model of cooperation for combating trafficking in human beings in Bulgaria both at national and local levels in line with the Bulgarian CT legislation.

PROJECT COURSE OF DEVELOPMENT

Trafficking in human beings poses a problem of serious proportions in the Balkans, including Bulgaria. According to the 2007 U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, Bulgaria is a country of origin and transit and to a lesser extent a country of destination for trafficking in persons. The report notes the increased number of Bulgarian victims trafficked abroad, primarily for the purpose of sexual exploitation but also for labour purposes, and remarks critically on the delay in formally implementing the National Anti-trafficking Strategy due to staffing problems at the National Commission. The report outlines the considerable rise in convictions, as well as the continued efforts in protection and prevention. The report rates Bulgaria as a Tier 2 Country noting that the GOB does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so.

The adoption of the Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Act in May 2003 and the relevant secondary counter-trafficking (CT) legislation in March 2004 established the legal framework for preventing and protecting victims of trafficking. This legislation created the national institutional framework for addressing this problem by mandating the establishment of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings hereinafter referred to as "National CT Commission" and the Local Commissions for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, hereinafter referred to as Local Commissions (LCs).

The National CT Commission, constituted in December 2004, drafted an annual Action Plan (AP) for 2005. The Council of Ministers approved the plan. The AP envisaged initiatives in the fields of trafficking prevention, institution building, victims' assistance, including the establishment of shelters and centres for victims' support, as well as development of a consolidated statistical database. These initiatives failed to receive financial or administrative support.

The Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Act also envisages the establishment of LCs with a mandate to organize and coordinate the activities of institutions, agencies and organizations on the local level and to pursue the implementation of the National AP on the local and regional level. The LCs have responsibility for carrying out information, awareness raising and educational campaigns on the regional level, as well as developing comprehensive local CT action plans. The formation of these has been substantially delayed and the position of Secretary of the National CT Commission as the key executive post in the state CT Administration remained vacant.

The Government elected in August 2005 was more committed to specific CT actions. It appointed the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Science as Chair of the National CT Commission. The new Commission's Chair swiftly appointed the members of the National Commission and its Secretary who assumed the post on March 1, 2006. In the early summer of 2006 however, the newly-appointed Secretary

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resigned. A second Secretary was appointed in the autumn of 2006 who after five months also resigned. In June 2007 however, yet another Secretary of the National Commission was appointed – a dynamic individual with a solid background in anti-trafficking and an excellent partner of USAID. The new Secretary worked intensely with USAID and IOM to build the capacity of the National CT Commission.

At the end of 2003, shortly after the adoption of the CT legislation, USAID/Bulgaria entered into a Cooperative Agreement (CA) with IOM providing for building the institutional capacities for combating trafficking in humans in Bulgaria. The CA included the following program components:

1. Specialized Trainings for the National Commission;
2. Networking Seminars with the National and Local Commissions;
3. Regional Training; and
4. Pilot Witness Support Scheme.

Due to GOB's inaction in creating the National CT Commission and its local subsidiaries, work under the CA practically did not commence until 2006. At that time, USAID conducted an assessment to examine the changed environment and current needs. Based on that assessment, USAID and IOM agreed to amend the Program Description (PD). Capacity building under the CA was broadened to allow professional groups and government institutions/officials at various levels to benefit from assistance under the program, as well as to include assistance other than training.

The witness protection component of the program was removed since the adoption of the Witness Protection Act in the end of 2004 created a specific institutional framework for this activity. However, in the first phase of the project IOM lead an inter institutional dialogue on this issue that culminated in a high profile seminar with participation of all national and international partners on Witness Protection to exchange best practice and explore sustainability of various models of witness protection, thus stimulating the development of the Bulgarian framework. High level professionals from the US, UK, IOM presented their models and in-house expertise. This seminar was one of the highlights of the first phase of the project that contributed to the formation of the Bulgarian institutional and legal framework in the Witness protection field.

Two new components were added to the activity, one concerning the refurbishment of a shelter for child-victims of trafficking and the other addressing root causes of trafficking through a small grants scheme. The components under the PD revised in the summer of 2006 were as follows:

1. Capacity-building assistance to the GOB in implementing the Anti-trafficking legislation.
2. Refurbishing and equipping a shelter for children, pregnant women and women with children who have been victims of trafficking.
3. Providing small grants to indigenous organizations for community-based work addressing root causes of trafficking in persons.

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At that time shelters for children did not exist in Bulgaria. However, shortly after the GOB opened three crisis centres for children. At the same time the Regional Governor's Office in the Bulgarian town of Bourgas, where IOM intended to establish a shelter, presented various unreasonable demands during negotiations. The difficult negotiations raised doubts as to the shelter's sustainability after USAID graduation. Therefore, IOM and the USAID Mission determined to cancel the second component of the Project and direct resources to the first component while allowing for support for already existing shelters and crisis centres with a view to raising their prospects of sustainability. Thus, the main effort under the proposed revised Program Description (PD) was directed toward capacity building of the National and Local Commissions. The components under the PD revised in the summer of 2007 were as follows:

- **Task One:** Capacity-building assistance to the GOB in implementing the Anti-trafficking legislation.
- **Task Two:** Providing small grants to indigenous organizations for community-based work addressing root causes of trafficking in persons.

A root cause for trafficking is often the lack of viable economic alternatives in certain disadvantaged communities. Thus, the large number of minorities who become victims of trafficking poses a particular concern in Bulgaria. IOM statistics report that in 2004, 81.8% of victims of trafficking for delinquency and begging were Roma. For victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, minorities also comprise a significant share, with 42.6% in 2004. Roma made up 33.6% of trafficking victims for sexual exploitation, Turks were 7.4%, and Pomaks were 1.6%. The availability of alternatives in these communities could greatly assist in addressing the root causes of trafficking on human beings.

The Small Grants Program under this activity was specifically designed to help address this problem. It aimed at engaging local capacities at the grass roots and municipal level to respond to communities at risk needs.

The Small Grants Program provided the opportunity to substantially expand the partnership network with proactive responses in a coordinated fashion, stimulating civil society and local government engagement. The envisaged top-down and bottom-up approach was highly appropriate and lead to successful implementation and enforcement of the National CT legislation which was the project's overall objective. This winning strategy was pursued successfully and helped accomplish the projects' objectives and tasks.

RESULTS

Task One: Capacity-building assistance to the GOB in implementing the Anti-trafficking legislation.

The assistance under this area of involvement was directed at three target groups:

1. National CT Commission and its Secretariat
2. Local Commissions and Other Local Capacities
3. Capacity building and training for other CT Professionals including representatives of local victims' support centres

1. Support to the National CT institutions as per Bulgarian legislation.

IOM Bulgaria directed its work towards developing the National CT Commission's institutional capacity by providing assistance to the members of the Commission and to its Secretariat. This assistance included relevant, customized training and technical assistance to develop working practices and interaction protocols with various bodies, including regional networking and international cooperation.

IOM Bulgaria supported the awareness-raising activities of the National CT Commission with strong focus on prevention as well as various outreach activities. In doing this, IOM Bulgaria transferred expertise and built the capacity of the National and Local CT Commissions. Through trainings and high level networking events for the National and Local Commissions, through specialized trainings for specialists from the psycho-social and health fields including civil society, IOM built models of cooperation at both national and local levels and developed a strong network between key CT state institutions and civil society.

To ensure the effective functioning of local government entities that combat and prevent trafficking in persons, IOM Bulgaria provided technical assistance, transfer and exchange of know-how, expertise, working practices and networking activities to local administrations, NGOs and service providers to strengthen national CT response.

1.1 IOM Bulgaria assisted the National CT Commission and its Secretariat to form a National Expert Group as an advisory body to assist coordination among various CT stakeholders.

The National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings principal task is to coordinate the activities of the various stakeholders in the area of combating trafficking in persons. Therefore, it was important that the National CT Commission constitutes itself as the focal point for regular meetings between representatives of the various entities working in this area, both governmental and non-governmental. IOM used its extensive experience in the CT area to help the Secretariat of the National CT Commission in establishing a National CT Expert Group with representatives of eleven

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state institutions to act as an advisory committee to the Secretariat of the National Commission. IOM Bulgaria helped the Secretariat of the National Commission identify the relevant CT stakeholders and ensure their involvement in the Group's efforts. Furthermore, IOM provided the National CT Commission with expert and logistical assistance in conducting regular meetings of the Expert group under the auspices of the National Commission's Secretariat. This facilitated the integration of the Commission team into the CT community. The National CT Expert group became the vehicle, within the framework of which the National CT Commission is now able to establish protocols of interaction with the other governmental bodies (such as the Ministry of Interior, the Child Protection Agency, the Prosecution Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, etc.), as well as with civil society. The regular meetings of the Group were institutionalized, thus providing a sustainable mechanism for involving the different stakeholders in the formulation of the national CT policy. The National CT Expert Group cooperation mechanism was organized in close cooperation with the US Department of Justice and US Embassy, which has experience in this area through its work in organizing a bi-monthly meeting of international donors and non-governmental organizations working in the field of combating trafficking in human beings. As soon as the National CT Commission Secretariat settled in, the Commission took on this coordination role, which reinforced coordination role of the National CT Commission.

Tangible Results:

- National CT Expert Group established with IOM Bulgaria assistance;
- Three high-level networking events with the National CT Commission and its Expert Group were conducted;
- The National annual CT Action Plans (2006, 2007, 2008) were developed and reviewed; IOM and its partners assisted immensely with the implementation, extending its capacities and expertise;

1.2 Transfer of know-how, exchange of expertise to the National CT Expert group.

In May 2007, in order to support the Commission's institutional capacity, IOM Bulgaria provided assistance to the USAID Participant Training Program - World Learning (WL) Bulgaria to organize a 10-day study tour for the National Commission's Expert group (representatives of eleven key state institutions) in one source-country - Ukraine and one destination-country - Italy. IOM Italy and IOM Ukraine supported the tour in the respective countries by providing all programmatic and logistics support. Members of the Expert group and IOM Bulgaria representatives had the opportunity to meet key CT professionals in both countries and to become with the national policies in the field of prevention, assistance and combating trafficking in human beings. The group studied effective anti-trafficking practices in coordination between the government and NGOs, as well as details regarding international cooperation. Using Italian and Ukrainian examples and taking advantage of the unique opportunity to spend several days focused on these issues, the group, facilitated by the IOM Bulgaria team, developed a Plan of Action for 2007 to improve Bulgaria's national anti-trafficking efforts.

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OUR SUCCESS

In May 2007 IOM Bulgaria, together with World Learning Bulgaria, organized an anti-trafficking study tour for key state officials. These officials represented various state institutions, which have responsibilities for combating human trafficking. The communication and collaboration among these institutions is essential for the success of anti-trafficking work in Bulgaria.

Tangible Results:

- 10-days study tour in one source and one destination country;
- Development of the National Anti-trafficking Action Plan for 2007;
- Institutionalization of the working group as an advisory body to the National CT Commission;

1.3 Assistance and guidance to the National CT Commission in developing the National Program for Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Victim's Protection 2007 and in its implementation.

OUR SUCCESS

As a consequence of the thorough and consistent work of IOM Bulgaria with the National CT Commission and the representatives of all state entities working in the field of combating trafficking in human beings, at the end of September 2007 the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria adopted the National Program for Prevention and Counteraction of Trafficking in Human Beings and Protection of the Victims for 2007. This program envisaged: establishment of local commissions for combating trafficking in persons in Varna, Bourgas, Pazarjik and Sliven; establishment of centres for protection and assistance of victims under their jurisdiction; establishment of a crisis centre in Sofia for the temporary accommodation of children, who are victims of human trafficking; conduct of national CT prevention program and public awareness raising activities. The Program contained a series of measures and activities, aimed at focused work with the at-risk social groups in order to prevent and combat trafficking. In the field of victims' protection, the program envisages the creation of conditions for sustainable recovery and reintegration. The document clearly stated the responsible institutions and the relevant partners for each measure. The program featured a number of activities for raising awareness about the problems of human trafficking; creating mechanisms for reducing human trafficking and creation of social intolerance to this phenomenon. The program included activities for educating magistrates in the field of prevention and combating human trafficking and a number of qualification courses for employees of the Ministry of the Interior who work in this field and other CT professionals. Establishing a network of partners at the international level for collaboration also constituted part of the Program, as well as preparing draft amendments to the Penal

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*Code for criminalizing the deliberate use of services from victims of trafficking.
At the end of 2007 after intensive and fruitful dialogue between the National CT Expert Group, the representatives of the civil sector, and the municipalities, and with the professional support of IOM Bulgaria, the implementation of the 2007 CT Program was reviewed and additional recommendations for the 2008 National CT Program were developed.*

Tangible Results:

- National CT Program for 2007 reviewed and implemented;
- National CT Program for 2008 developed and under implementation;

1.4 Assistance in developing the process of granting special and general status of protection of victims of trafficking, including granting long-term residence permits for foreign victims of trafficking.

IOM Bulgaria in close cooperation with the Secretariat of the National CT Commission identified whether procedures were currently in place for granting special and general status of protection for victims of trafficking, including procedures for granting long term residence permits for foreign victims of trafficking. IOM used its extensive network of Missions worldwide to collect best international practices and regulations on these processes. IOM supported the National CT Commission in identifying possible shortcomings in the Bulgarian practice in this area and improving these practices in line with international standards.

Tangible Results:

- Procedures in place for granting special and general status of protection for victims of trafficking, including granting long term residence permits for foreign victims of trafficking;

1.5 Renovating and equipping the premises of the National CT Commission.

As part of IOM Bulgaria capacity-building assistance to Bulgarian institutions, IOM refurbished completely the offices of the National CT Commission so that this institution can have a home corresponding to its important functions and status. IOM, in cooperation with representatives of the National CT Commission, systematically monitored the renovation progress to ensure that materials used match the highest standard of quality and reliability and that all operations comply with statutory requirements. In its effort to create good work environment for the National CT Commission, IOM Bulgaria also purchased complete set of office equipment for the premises, including computers and multimedia equipment.

The launching event was part of the GOB and IOM Bulgaria ten-day first of its kind initiative "Human Traffic: Time for Action" connected to the European Anti-trafficking Day and part of the Public Communication Strategy of the National CT Commission developed under this project.

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OUR SUCCESS



On October 24, 2007, the Bulgarian National Counter-Trafficking Commission launched its new offices at an Official Inauguration with a press conference and a ribbon cutting ceremony. The ceremony took place at the new offices of the National CT Commission refurbished and equipped entirely with the support of IOM Bulgaria under the framework of the USAID project. The press conference was honoured by the Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the National

Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Bulgaria, the U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria, the Chief of IOM Bulgaria Mission and the Executive Secretary of the National CT Commission who addressed the journalists and national and international partners that joined us in this high profile event.



BEFORE



AFTER

Tangible Results:

- Refurbishing and equipping the offices of the National CT Commission that bear the USAID and IOM logos;
- Inauguration of the seat of the National CT Commission that contributed immensely to the execution of its functions and for raising its profile;

1.6 Technical assistance to the public outreach activity of the National CT Commission by organizing public forums, awareness events, publishing information materials and encouraging various forms of media coverage of issues related to the CT activities.

1.6.1 IOM Bulgaria encouraged the National CT Commission to develop a Media and Public Communication Strategy.

For the success of the National CT Commission's work, it was very important that from the outset that it appreciates the importance public outreach. IOM Bulgaria supported the development of a Public Communications Strategy for the National CT Commission. The strategy was developed in a series of facilitated meetings including the National Commission's Executive Secretary, IOM, USAID representatives and other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and media professionals.

Tangible Results:

- National CT Commission Public Communication Strategy initiated;
- CT media network stimulated;
- Forward plan of joint public awareness activities developed;
- Joint info materials published for relevant CT public and media events;

1.6.2 Implementation of the Public Communication Strategy.

After assisting the National CT Commission with the development of the Public Communications Strategy, IOM supported the implementation of the Strategy. Assistance included: development of the website of the National CT Commission, facilitating the National Commission's contacts with the media, conducting media events in the form of specialized media seminars, press-conferences and media hours after newsworthy IOM Bulgaria and National CT Commission events. IOM Bulgaria through its extensive network mobilized not only national but also regional media to ensure nation-wide coverage of CT activities. Additionally, IOM assisted the National Commission in producing and distributing outreach materials aimed at prevention of trafficking in persons. Gradually, with the development of the National CT Commission's communication strategy, IOM put more responsibility on the National CT Commission for designing, planning and organizing of media related events, including CT prevention activities.

As part of the Public Communications Strategy the National CT Commission together with the Ministry of interior and IOM Bulgaria organized a ten-day initiative in the whole country connected with the European day for combating trafficking in human beings. IOM Bulgaria conducted a series of public awareness events in the cities of Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Pazardjik, Russe, Burgas and around the country in conjunction with IOM Info centres and the IOM Bulgaria partnership network created under this project. This successful partnership lead to a natural continuation and a new sixteen-day initiative in the whole country connected with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women that was organized again jointly by IOM Bulgaria, the National CT Commission and the Ministry of Interior. IOM Bulgaria partnership network conducted a series of public awareness events round the country – press conferences, film projections, round tables and open discussions that enjoyed public and media interest.

OUR SUCCESS



The National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings together with the Ministry of Interior and IOM Bulgaria organized a press conference and a roundtable "Human Trafficking - Time for action" with reference to the European day for combating trafficking in human beings. This event marked the beginning of a ten-day initiative in the entire

country, organized jointly by IOM Bulgaria, the National CT Commission and the Ministry of Interior. US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy Ms. Colleen P. Graffy attended and made an official address. IOM Bulgaria conducted a series of public awareness events in the cities of Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Pazardjik, Russe, Burgas and around the country in conjunction with IOM Bulgaria partners.

Tangible Results:

- Prevention strategy developed;
- Information materials (such as brochures, posters) on the prevention of trafficking on behalf of the National Commission developed and publicized;
- Fifteen Media events organized in the whole country – USAID and IOM role featured;
- IOM and the National CT Commission conducted jointly EU CT day, the Bulgarian CT 10 days campaign and the anti-violence campaign (connected with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women). The initiatives had country wide coverage.

1.6.3 Development of the National CT Commission's website.

IOM Bulgaria organized the development of the website of the National CT Commission. Through its extensive network of Missions worldwide IOM Bulgaria collected studies and analyzed best practices for the development of similar websites as an outreach and communication tool. Furthermore, IOM developed the technical specification of the website (structure and scope of work). Following the National Commission's approval of the concept and technical specifications of the website, IOM commissioned its production and transferred ownership over the product, intellectual property rights included, to the National Commission. The sustainability of this product is guaranteed by hosting and future maintenance provided by the GOB at the Council of Ministers' server.

OUR SUCCESS

At the end of August, 2007 IOM Bulgaria in collaboration with the National Anti-trafficking Commission completed the development of the specification (structure and scope of work) for building the National Commission's website as an integral part of its communication strategy. During September, IOM initiated a process for identification and negotiations with potential companies, working in the field of web design. In addition to the website development, IOM used its extensive network of Missions worldwide, to



compile a number of useful resources and reference materials, such as best practices and documented case studies, related to combating human trafficking on a global scale, to be published on the National CT Commission's website. An on-line Question&Answer section and a link to IOM Bulgaria CT hot-line were also included.

On February 5, 2008 the National CT Commission in cooperation with IOM Bulgaria launched its new bi-lingual website at <http://www.antitraffic.government.bg/> with a press-conference. USAID and IOM support was featured, the website also carries the logos of both organizations.

Tangible Results:

- A website of the National CT Commission on-line with best international practices <http://www.antitraffic.government.bg/> - linked also to other relevant CT websites; IOM and USAID logos featured;

2 Assistance to Local Commissions and Other Local Capacities.

2.1 Assisting the establishment of the Local Commissions.

In order to institutionalize counter-trafficking work on local level, it was necessary to identify as soon as possible the most appropriate locations to host the Local Commissions. For this reason, IOM Bulgaria, through the National CT Expert groups' meetings, as well as through its ongoing contacts and consultations with members of the National CT Commission and its Secretariat emphasized and built awareness of the need to promptly establish the Local Commissions. A thorough assessment of local needs and situation analysis was conducted to reach agreement on the Local Commissions locations.

As a consequence of IOM Bulgaria's dedicated work with the local entities, which according to the law are represented at the local commissions, at the end of 2007 four Local Commissions were designated and officially inaugurated after the local elections. IOM and its local partners helped with the establishment of these commissions.

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To date, IOM Bulgaria has developed effective models of inter-agency cooperation in Burgas, Varna, Sliven and Pazardjik. IOM Bulgaria facilitated the transfer of the best practices in these localities to the newly created local commissions.

OUR SUCCESS

In order to institutionalize counter-trafficking work on the local level and encourage the establishment of Local Commissions, IOM Bulgaria organized a series of coordination meetings with regard to the creation of Local CT Commissions, for the National CT Commission Executive Secretary with the Mayors and Deputy Mayors of the municipalities of Veliko Turnovo, Varna, Bourgas, Stara Zagora, Pazardjik and Sliven, as well as with representatives of the local administration and police. During the meetings, the municipalities reconfirmed their willingness to establish Local Commissions and received assurances of the National Commission's and IOM's full support. IOM built on previous CT activities in these localities thus ensuring synergy at the local and national levels. Strong networking with the newly formed Local Commissions enabled them to integrate in the National CT partnership network.

Tangible Results:

- Establishment of four local commissions;
- Transfer of know-how and expertise to local commissions;
- Networking on local and national levels;

2.2 Training Local Commissions' members.

In order to jump-start the work of the newly established local commissions, IOM Bulgaria conducted local CT trainings for their members. In addition to the local commissions' members, IOM involved other CT professionals in these trainings, such as representatives of law enforcement and judicial authorities working in the field of CT, civil society representatives (under task two), workers in the psycho-social field, etc. The trainings were conducted in close cooperation with the IOM regional CT centres, US Department of Justice and with the participation of representatives of the National Commission's Secretariat.

Tangible Results:

- Four local trainings for Local Commissions' members;
- Networking with IOM regional CT Centers for exchange of expertise; transfer of know-how; conduct of joint events to help raising the profile and work of the local commissions;

2.3 Technical assistance to the Local Commissions to develop Local Counter-trafficking Action Plans.

IOM Bulgaria provided guidance in the process of development and implementation of the Local CT Action Plans. IOM Bulgaria Regional Information Consultancy Centres were closely involved in this process in order to transfer their expertise to the local

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commissions. Strong networking at the local level occurred involving all IOM Partners and CT professionals to assist with the institutionalization and recognition of the Local Commissions.

Tangible Results:

- Local CT Plans developed in line with the National Program for Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Victim's Protection 2007;
- Conduct of joint events and prevention campaigns.

2.4 Technical assistance to the Local Commissions to establish protocols of interaction with each other, as well as with governmental bodies, local authorities, and the civil society.

IOM Bulgaria assisted the Local CT Commissions to integrate into the CT community. This included introducing the National CT Commission and its Secretariat to respective local partners and promoting and helping organize joint meetings and regular follow-up contacts to ensure a continuing relationship. In order to bolster regional relations between CT professionals and help the National CT Commission identify areas of regional concern, IOM Bulgaria in collaboration with the National CT Commission organized regional trainings and workshops for local commissions, local CT professionals and representatives of the National Commission. The regional events further assisted the National Commission and its Secretariat in developing the National CT Strategy that adequately addressed not only national but also regional needs.

3 Capacity building and training for other CT Professionals including representatives of local victims' support centres.

IOM Bulgaria also built the capacity of and transferred know-how to different professional groups and government institutions and officials. To this end, these professionals were included in the trainings and events for the National and Local Commissions. A special focus of CT professionals' participation in the above initiatives was the objective to improve the interaction of the targeted institutions and individuals with the National and Local Commissions.

In addition to this specialized trainings were conducted for social service providers and other social workers, child protection specialists, crisis centres professionals to enhance standards of protection and care for victims of trafficking with special focus on child protection.

OUR SUCCESS



During the whole project duration IOM Bulgaria continued to build the capacity of and the transfer of know-how to different CT professional groups and government institutions to improve the interaction of the targeted institutions and individuals in line with the National Program for Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Victim's Protection.

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IOM Bulgaria in collaboration with the Agency for Social Assistance, the National Investigation Service, the National CT Commission and the Agency for Child Protection conducted CT trainings for social workers and social service providers from the regions of Burgas, Varna, Sliven, Stara Zagora, Veliko Turnovo, Pazardjik and South-West Bulgaria and representatives of all victims' support centres. The trainings took place in October-December, 2007. In summary, all participants were trained on how to implement the Bulgarian counter-traffic legislation in line with the European legislation based on IOM experience and know how in the field of CT. Overall, the trainings proved a very successful and timely effort, coming at a moment when the National CT Commission had started gathering momentum and work experience in the implementation of its functions in the context of the Bulgarian CT legislation.

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Task Two: Providing small grants to indigenous organizations for community-based work addressing root causes of trafficking in persons.

The Small Grants Program implemented by IOM Bulgaria under the framework of this USAID project provided the opportunity to substantially expand the partnership network with proactive responses in a coordinated fashion, stimulating civil society and local government engagement. The 17 approved projects helped improve conditions within the communities and integrate those at greatest risk for being trafficked; provide equal opportunities for women and children through vocational education; encourage cultural and communal activities; and keep children in school, thereby making them less vulnerable to traffickers. Four small grant projects were in conformity with the capacity building objectives – Task One and IOM Bulgaria in cooperation with USAID made a decision to subcontract the applying entities for the proposed activities through Task One.

A call for proposals in two waves was announced at the end of 2006 and till the end of February 2007 a total of 75 applications were received. Among the applicant organizations were representatives of NGOs, community centres and municipalities. All awarded grants were in line with the following criteria:

- The applicants had to be legal entities such as: municipalities, schools, local agencies, NGOs, etc. with the capacity to enter into agreements for the purpose of implementation and reporting of small projects targeting communities at risk;
- The projects addressed the root-causes of trafficking such as unemployment, poverty, lack of opportunities, unawareness of migration realities, etc.;
- Value for money principle was pursued in assessing the projects' impact on targeted groups;
- Multiplication of effort and impact was encouraged;
- A successful project could be considered for follow-up grant;
- Project proposals were within the 10 000 dollars range;

Each grant was approved based on signed partnership agreement, with a concrete contribution from all parties. IOM Bulgaria systematically monitored activity progress of all seventeen grants from the first and second wave in order to ensure relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of all as well as to ensure synergy between them in compliance with the National CT Action plans. The monitoring and evaluation tools used to adjust activity areas and updates of strategy were based on regular reports by awarded entities and monitoring/assessment trips by IOM Bulgaria personnel responsible for managing the grants. Implementation of all small grants projects progressed in line with agreed projects' timeframes.

As a direct result of IOM Bulgaria's comprehensive work the rapport between the CT professional community and the CT state and local authorities and the NGO sector was enhanced bringing more synergy, interaction and improved performance based on mutual recognition and complimentary of effort. IOM Bulgaria activities and USAID

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Small Grants Program contributed to mobilizing local resources for boosting local initiatives and civil society engagement to address community needs and problems. Prominent personalities from all walks of life were involved, thus multiplying impact at the national level. They created specific models of inter-institutional cooperation at the local level that were extended and reinforced by the National CT Commission as working practices.

Under the IOM Bulgaria auspices all awarded grants created a virtual partnership network to enable a better exchange of good practices in the future and present concrete, successful models of inter-institutional cooperation at the local level that could be extended and reinforced by the National CT Commission. This partnership network became a significant partner to IOM Bulgaria and the National CT Commission in their counter-trafficking work positioning the human trafficking in a wider and more comprehensive context linking it to improved capacities in migration management that would contribute substantially to effective combating of human trafficking. In parallel with the process of building interaction between local NGOs and another process has also begun – that of creating trust among NGOs and between NGOs and state/municipal institutions.

The Small Grants Program also contributed to the creation of long-term social capital - the partnership between local authorities, civil society and the private sector which led to joint efforts in seeking sustainable solutions to problems in the area of counter-trafficking.

To bring synergy between all participants in the Small Grants Program IOM, conducted regular training and networking events with all grantees building into the National CT network. Common themes for all grantees were identified and pursued in all grants such as youth prevention, child institutions outreach activities, prevention addressing root causes in Roma communities, raising public awareness, alternative employment schemes, cross-sectoral capacity building, cooperation between the NGO, public and private sectors.

OUR SUCCESS



In order to build the Commission's institutional capacity, IOM Bulgaria conducted a major networking event on July, 2007 with the participation of the Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Persons, the National Commission's Expert Group and representatives of all the 17 entities under Task 3 (municipalities, community centers and NGOs). USAID, US DOJ and US embassy (political section) representatives also participated. This workshop informed the National CT commission and the expert group in detail about the results achieved and the continuing work of the organizations awarded grants in the framework of this project in view of building synergy within the CT network. In addition, the entities presented

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concrete, successful models of inter-institutional cooperation on a local level that could be extended and reinforced by the National CT Commission as good working practices under the 2007 National CT program. The grantees presented their activities targeting at-risk groups in the field of prevention, education, and labour orientation for inclusion in the labour market, as well as their efforts to prepare young people leaving institutions for an independent life. Some presenters shared their experience in working with trafficking victims, including the provision of medical assistance to such people.

After intensive and fruitful informal discussions among the expert group, the representatives of the civil sector, and the municipalities, and with the professional support of IOM, additional recommendations for the 2007 National CT Program were developed.



Tangible Results:

- **Exchange of best practices and networking;**
- **Common outputs;**
- **Common themes, mottoes and images;**
- **Joint exhibition;**

Small Grants under Task Two:

1. Organization: Career Development Centre Association, Bourgas “Be Yourself! Prevention of Human Trafficking by Vocational Training”

Project Summary: Socially disadvantaged unemployed representatives from the Roma community in the village of Debelt, Sredets municipality were trained in finishing construction works, esp. plastering and painting. Target group consisted of mainly unemployed and low-qualified Roma youth. Professional realization of these people was pursued at Promet Steel AD, the local metallurgic enterprise. Training guides and a model for replication of the training was elaborated.

Highlights: The project addressed root causes in highly risk community with concentration on victims of trafficking (VoT). An alternative employment scheme was introduced with improved links between the private sector and civil society. Community leaders worked together for community benefit and professional development orientation of the population most at risk;

Budget: \$8 888

Contact details: 29 Tsarigradka str, Burgas, 0889/43-64-21; 056/83-05-33

Contact person: Ms. Katia Bojdermenova

2. Organization: Varna Municipality - Education Directorate “It Depends on You”

Project Summary: The Education Directorate of Varna municipality, in cooperation with Gavrosh Day Care Centre and Nadejda Centre, implemented a series of peer-to-peer trainings for 420 young people aged 14-19 on topics related to the prevention of

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trafficking and counter-trafficking in human beings and especially young people. Parallel trainings of 50 school pedagogical advisors were carried out.

Highlights: A municipal network was set up to provide long-term dissemination of information, discussion and counter-action of human trafficking; transfer of know-how and expertise to Local CT Commission; strong networking with newly formed Local CT Commission occurred; and joint events conducted to help popularize the work of Local CT Commission;

Budget: \$5 950

Contact details: 43 8 Primorski polk Blvd., Varna, 0899/077-897; 052/659-177

Contact person: Ms. Kremena Daskalova

3. Organization: Bis Bard Theatre Formation, Sofia

“My Choice”

Project Summary: Bis Bard Foundation worked with a target group of 150 institutionalized children and youth on the territory of Bratsigovo municipality, to prevent potential inclusion of this at risk group youth in human trafficking schemes. Prevention was done through discussions, trainings, role plays, art workshops, lectures, and awareness raising campaigns.

Highlights: Art performances and establishment of a local CT network were the tangible project results. Joint events and prevention activities with Pazardjk Local CT Commission were conducted; a model for replication of the art performance was elaborated; the whole partnership network under the USAID project attended the performance and participated in the following dialogue with the public;

Budget: \$9 834

Contact details: Iavorov area, block 77, fl.2, apt. 5, Sofia, 0887/859-823; 943-78-62

Contact person: Ms. Animary Dimitrova

4. Organization: Regional Association of School Psychologists and Teachers - Bourgas

“I Choose”

Project Summary: The project aimed to prevent human trafficking among disadvantaged groups of Roma people and especially women on the territory of Gorno Ezerovo, Bourgas municipality. Activities included: information campaigns, CT trainings, and professional trainings for acquiring skills in hairdressing/cosmetics and cooking for young unemployed and low-qualified Roma women.

Highlights: Partnership model between civil society, the local Employment bureau and small businesses in the municipality were created; community leaders worked together for community benefit and professional development orientation; transfer of know-how to Local CT Commission staff; and strong networking occurred involving IOM CT Centre, NGOs, Local CT Commission;

Budget: \$9 300

Contact details: Slaveikov area, block 63, entrance 8, PO Box 7, 0899/84-68-50;

Contact person: Mr. Svetozar Yanev

5. Organization: Dialogue for Tolerance-2006 Foundation, Gotse Delchev, Blagoevgrad district

“Developing Social Skills for Counter Trafficking in People among of Institutionalized Youth”

Project Summary: Groups of teachers and advisory pedagogic staff were trained to work with institutionalized children and youth on the territory of Gotse Delchev municipality, Blagoevgrad district. Parallel trainings were carried out among institutionalized children to help them develop social skills for independent living as well as working and job-finding skills in order to access the local labour market once they leave the institution.

Highlights: The project addressed root causes in an at risk community; employment skills improved the chances of young people falling in to human trafficking;

Budget: \$9 877

Contact details: 4 Peio Yavorov str, Gotse Delchev, 0888/647-716; 0751-61180

Contact person: Mr. Shaban Asan

6. Organization: Chitalishte "Vassil Levski" - village V. Levski, Targovishte municipality

“Preventing Trafficking in People in Small Towns and Villages”

Project Summary: The project addressed the needs of young people, aged 15-24, who are either recent secondary school graduates or unemployed youth living on the territory of two villages (Vassil Levski and Makariopolsko) in Targovishte municipality. A series of computer trainings were delivered to the target youth, a local network of education professionals, chitalishte officers and local authorities were set up to provide long-term counselling and awareness raising on counter-trafficking and prevention.

Highlights: Strong networking at the local level occurred among approximately 30 community centres (chitalishta) in Targovishte municipality; sustainable computer internet centre established in Vasil Levski village, fully equipped under this program – reliable source of CT information;

Budget: \$ 5 300

Contact details: Community centre Vasil Levski, Village Vasil Levski, 0889/27-97-18; 0886/59-82-18

Contact person: Ms. Svetlana Kalcheva

7. Organization: Chamber of Investigators in Bulgaria- Sofia,

“Investigators against Trafficking in Human Beings”

Project Summary: This project “Investigators against Trafficking in Human Beings” worked in the field of prevention and strengthening the fight against trafficking in persons. The project consisted of two activities – an open discussions with questions connected with trafficking in human beings and an informational campaign for groups at risks.

Highlights: The Chamber of Investigators in Bulgaria in partnership with IOM Regional centres conducted public awareness outreach activities with at risk groups - children deprived of parental care from the special assistance schools and from the Community Support Centres; transfer of know-how and expertise to Local Commissions in Sliven and Burgas;

Budget: \$ 10 000

Contact details: 42 G.M.Dimirtov str., Sofia, 98-26-418, 0888/52-23-52

Contact person: Ms. Lidia Georgieva

8. Organization: Community center ELIT- Sofia

“Center for protection and employment”

Project Summary: The project “Centre for Protection and Employment” were on prevention of human trafficking through trainings and employment opportunities, as well as awareness rising among at risk groups of Roma.

Highlights: The project addressed root causes in at risk communities with a concentration on victims of trafficking (VoT); alternative employment schemes in the agricultural field were developed, improved links between private sector and civil society; community leaders worked together for community benefit and professional development orientation; extensive outreach and educational activities were carried out to raise awareness and improve chances for personal realization.

Budget: \$10 000

Contact details: Fakulteta area, Sofia, 822-47-12

Contact person: Ms. Sali Ibrahim

9. Organization: Face To Face Bulgaria

“Pay It Forward”

Project Summary: This project raised awareness on human traffic in four high schools in Sofia and Plovdiv. The project attracted young people from these schools to take part in volunteer work against human trafficking by transferring knowledge to other students via peer-to peer education methodology.

Highlights: The project facilitated the individual growth of targeted students from Sofia and Plovdiv as socially responsible citizens in the local society. They gained experience in volunteer work, communicating and transferring knowledge, information and social skills to their peers from vulnerable groups. Strong networking between IOM, F2F and IOM CT centre; a promotional tool-kit was produced featuring all relevant CT educational materials of IOM and its partners. National dissemination in the school network was ensured with the strong involvement of National CT Commission;

Budget: \$8 783

Contact details: 0888/843-933, v_maggy@abv.bg

Contact person: Ms. Magdalena Vulchanova

10. Organization: Firebird and Light Association, Vratsa

“Increasing Local Capacities Aimed at Anti-Trafficking”

Project Summary: The project combined the efforts of institutions and civil sector resources in the Vratsa District. The goal was to set a socially responsible approach to fighting human trafficking.

Highlights: The project ensured coordinated actions against human trafficking, cooperation between local institutions and civil organizations, and better planned systematic measures for child protection. The project integrated national and regional priorities meeting socially significant needs for protecting human rights. These joint actions for combating trafficking in human beings led to a Partnership Agreement

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signed by 29 local authority institutions and organizations and to an institutionalized local response to trafficking;

Budget: \$9 950

**Contact details: 8 Kiril Buiuklijski” str., entr. A, apt. 6, fl. 2, Vratsa,
jarisvetlina@abv.bg**

Contact person: Ms. Zoya Pehliova

**11. Organization: Non-profit society “Sungurlare Information Business Centre” –
Sungurlare**

“The people of Sungurlare municipality against human trafficking”

Project Summary: The project included an at risk group consisting of low-educated and unemployed young women and men between 16 to 29 years from the Roma groups in Sungurlare and the villages of Grozden, Lozarevo and Chubra. An active information campaign on all aspects of migration and human trafficking was carried out. Active measures were taken to increase the interest of the people from the target group in education and labour.

Highlights: Young men and women were trained in vine-growing; community leaders worked together for community benefit; networking and synergy between the local private sector, career developing organizations, IOM CT Centres and the local community;

Budget: \$9 202

Contact details: 6 Georgi Dimitrov str., Sungurlare, 0888/152-322

Contact person: Ms. Selime Kuz

12. Organization: Ivan Rilsky Association, Balvan Village

“Open your eyes – You Can Get Help!”

Project Summary: CT prevention in the Crisis Centres at the locations - Balvan Ressen, Shemshevo, Mindia.

Highlights: The project contributed immensely for mobilizing local resources and boosting local initiatives; four local CT Prevention Centres established; networking on local level occurred involving all regional CT authorities; and a public awareness campaign.

Budget: \$13 000 (main budget \$10 000 and a \$3 000 follow-up grant)

Contact details: Village Balvan, Veliko Turnovo municipality, 0888283855

Contact person: Ms. Blagovesta Fakirova

13. Organization: Municipality of Pazardjik

Project Ref. no. and Title: 073/02/2007 - “Attention: Trafficking In Human Beings”

Project Summary: The project raised public awareness of the issue of human trafficking and the development of mechanisms to limit its prevalence.

Highlights: The project implemented its objectives through a series of connected activities for a comprehensive impact on the target groups, specifically: creating a centre for information services focusing on the prevention of trafficking in human beings; training on trafficking in human beings prevention for 25 representatives of institutions and young Roma leaders; strong networking between IOM CT Centres and Local CT Commission staff; and joint events conducted to help raising the profile of the Local

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Commission;

Budget: \$9 745

Contact details: 2 Bulgaria Blvd., Pazardjik, 034/ 402 272, 0887/71-50-71

Contact person: Ms. Vyara Novakova

14. Organization: Municipality of Shumen

Project Summary: The project targeted the root causes of trafficking of young people from the at risk social groups. A series of practical training courses and information seminars presented the main risks.

Highlights: 50 illiterate, Roma young girls received basic computer education. Students from 12 high schools based in Shumen prepared presentations on the risks and dangers related to human trafficking; the comprehensive work of Shumen Municipality resulted in the formation of a Local CT Network involving all. The regional CT community ensured the sustainability and an institutional coordinated response.

Budget: \$9 396

Contact details: 17 Slaviansky Blvd, Shumen, s.komatinski@shumen.bg, 054-857-628, 0898-67-45-12

Contact person: Mr. Simeon Komatinski

15. Organization: Municipality of Svilengrad

“There is tomorrow”

Project Summary: The project created a network for human traffic prevention.

Highlights: The project established a consulting office which worked on human traffic prevention and support for the victims of trafficking. The target groups were people from different ethnic and age groups - ten specialists working at the schools and the municipal administration, fifteen representatives from the Roma community, including community leaders and children, and children from the schools in the Svilengrad municipality.

Budget: \$8 142

Contact details: 32 Bulgaria Blvd., Svilengrad, chokorov@yahoo.com, 0379-74329

Contact person: Mr. Dimitur Chokorov

16. Organization: National Oncological Medical Centre - Sofia

“Health Consequences of Human Trafficking and Feasibility Study for their Overcoming”

Project Summary: The project performed a feasibility study of the health consequences from human trafficking and provided assistance in the rehabilitation of the victims and their reintegration into society.

Highlights: Transfer of know-how and expertise to the National CT Commission and National CT Expert group;

Budget: \$6 000

Contact details: 6 Plovdivsko pole str., Sofia, 870-31-28, 0899/490993

Contact person: Mr. Jivko Petrov, nomc@abv.bg

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17. Organization: the Association for Youth Initiatives and Tolerance “Just Friends”, Topolovgrad

Project Summary: The Association for Youth Initiatives and Tolerance: “Just Friends” implemented a summer program that used dynamic methods to educate a group of 25 multi-ethnic youth from grades 8-11 about human trafficking and how to protect themselves against it.

Highlights: The newly formed team of peer educators travelled to schools in Topolovgrad municipality during the course of the school year and presented CT prevention sessions; networking between local civil society and IOM CT centres. A peer-to-peer educational theatre play was elaborated and performed through the school system in the region.

Budget: \$9 250

Contact details: Topolovgrad, 0899/538492

Contact person: Ms. Petya Petkova, petipetkova@abv.bg

LOCAL COMMISSIONS FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

PAZARDJIK

Chair: Mr. Angel Velkov – Deputy Mayor, Pazardjik

Secretary: Ms Tania Giunova

Tel.: 034/ 402-241

2 “Bulgaria Blvd”, floor 9, room 910A

VARNA

Chair: Mr. Kosta Bazitov - Deputy Mayor, Varna

Tel.: 052/ 659-222

43 “Osmi primorski polk” Blvd.

BURGAS

Chair: Mr. Loris Manuelian – Deputy Mayor, Burgas

Secretary: Ms. Silvia Cekova

Tel.: 0885/069-613

26 “Alexandrovska” Str.

SLIVEN

Chair: Ms. Radost Kostova - Deputy Mayor, Sliven

Tel.: 044/ 611-102

1 “Tzar Osvoboditel” Blvd.

CONCLUSION

During the whole project duration with the partnership of USAID and IOM the Government of Bulgaria made substantial progress in the field of counter trafficking. In 2007, the appointment of the new secretary for the National CT Commission, boosted its ability to implement the annual National CT Strategy; to develop and implement a transnational victim referral mechanism; and to maintain and analyze victim data for use in policy development. At the end of 2007 local commissions were established in four towns identified as 'high-risk' for victims of trafficking. IOM Bulgaria and the National CT Commission also launched a public awareness campaign targeted at potential victims. To this aim IOM also extended its CT help line. The coaching and advisory role provided to the National CT Commission under this project was highly visible and recognized.

Under the IOM Bulgaria and USAID Small Grants Program a partnership network was created which will enable a better exchange of good practices in the future. This partnership network became a significant partner to IOM Bulgaria and the National CT Commission in their counter-trafficking work positioning human trafficking in a wider and more comprehensive context and linking it to improved capacities in migration management that would contribute substantially to effective combating of human trafficking.

The national and local partnerships will also serve as a basic implementation tool for future CT projects.

OUR SUCCESS



The largest IOM Bulgaria four-year CT project funded by USAID culminated in a high profile event organized on 08 April 2008. Deputy Prime Minister, US Ambassador, USAID Mission Director and IOM Chief of Mission spoke at the event, which featured an “open lesson” on anti-trafficking with a group of schoolchildren. Different IOM key partners from various state institutions, with responsibilities for combating human trafficking were present at the event along with representatives of the diplomatic corps, the international donor community, civil society partners and the national media.

The event once again highlighted the role of IOM and USAID Bulgaria in the field of counter trafficking that substantially contributed to the formation of the Bulgarian CT system and for the establishment of a national CT network encompassing national and local governments and civil society partners.



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Major Deliverables:

- 50 professionals involved in the work of the National CT Commission, such as: the National CT Commission's members, secretariat and other relevant officials at the central level, trained on implementing CT legislation.
- 10-day study tour to a source and a destination country for the National CT Expert Group;
- The National CT Commission developed and adopted the National Program for Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Victim's Protection for 2007 and 2008.
- The National CT Commission developed a process for granting special and general status of protection for victims of trafficking, including granting long-term residence permit for foreign victims of trafficking.
- National CT Commission Communication Strategy developed.
- National CT Commission launched its website <http://www.antitraffic.government.bg/>;
- 700 professionals, such as: Local Commissions' members, local victims' support centres' personnel and other relevant professionals trained on implementing CT legislation and victims support.
- Four Local Commissions established.
- Local Commissions develop and adopt Local Counter-trafficking Action Plans.
- 17 small grants awarded.;
- 2000 professionals, such as: law enforcement officials, judiciary, psycho-social and other professionals, NGOs and service providers trained on implementing CT legislation and victims support.
- 2750 professionals trained. The human resource factor is the most important condition for the sustainability of the IOM/USAID efforts. The continuation of partnerships and provision of funding for future activities largely depends on the skills and personal motivation of the participants themselves.

The program's two pronged approach to provide capacity building for the National and Local CT institutions on one hand and support community based initiatives on the other hand contributed substantially to the development of the national CT system and to coordinated joint response ensuring implementation of the Bulgarian Anti-Traffic legislation. The established CT partnership network unlocked respective potential, reinforced impact countrywide and ensured implementation of the annual CT Action Plans engaging all relevant stakeholders and capacities. The project framework proved to be an invaluable vehicle for enhanced coordinated performance and joint response in CT in Bulgaria.

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IOM gratefully acknowledges the role of USAID as an outstanding and fully committed partner that contributed immensely to achieving the project's goals and mobilizing political and institutional high level support.

REMAINING CHALLENGES

Further support to the national CT network is needed to continue the momentum in the implementing joint complex tasks in a complimentary manner.

Prevention programs and outreach activities in the most vulnerable socially disadvantaged communities need to continue being developed to address the root causes of trafficking and provide alternative employment and economic opportunities for the population most at risk.

IOM Bulgaria intends to facilitate the development of a child counter-trafficking prevention module for schools in cooperation with national educational authorities, the national counter-trafficking commission and relevant professionals building on various prevention tools developed under the project.

On a number of occasions during the project implementation, including at workshops, formal and informal meetings, labour migration, with its links to labour exploitation and trafficking, has been identified by the different government representatives as one of the prime issues of concern that needs to be specifically addressed in future specialized programs.

IOM Bulgaria will seek every possible funding opportunity to pursue implementation of the above listed initiatives to strengthen the sustainability of the national CT response network.