

Sensitization Programme on Roles and Responsibilities of Law Enforcement Agencies in Human Rights and Public Health including HIV Prevention

Chottogram Railway Police, Pahartoli

Final Report



Jointly Organized by

Law Enforcement and HIV Network (LEAHN)

Community Forum of Bangladesh

UNAIDS Bangladesh

Background

Law Enforcement and HIV Network (LEAHN), Community Forum of Bangladesh and UNAIDS jointly organized a sensitization program on 'Roles and Responsibilities of Law Enforcement Agencies in Human Rights and Public Health including HIV Prevention' with Chottogram Railway Police, Pahartoli. The program was held on 25 July 2019 at the hallroom of Chottogram Railway Police line, Pahartoli. Altogether, about 60 law enforcement personnel of different level joined the program which was chaired by Ms. Shehela Pervin, Superintendent of Police (Admin & Finance), Railway Police Headquarter and Country Focal Point of LEAHN in Bangladesh.

Mr. Nawroze Hasan Talukder, Superintendent of Bangladesh police was present as the chief guest in the program.

Opening Remarks

Ms. Farhana Zarif Kanta, Director- Policy Advocacy & Human Rights of Bandhu Social Welfare Society welcomed everyone to the sensitization program. In her speech, she mentioned that Bangladesh Police is the major non-military civilian law enforcement authority in the country, therefore, police's role is extremely vital not only in law enforcement but also in other sectors including public health. The major objective of the program is to create a bridge between law enforcement and public health interventions including HIV prevention. After that, few verses from the holy Quran was recited by police personnel.

Welcome Speech

SK. Shariful Islam, Superintendent of Police, Railway Police

Mr. Shariful welcomed all on behalf of Railway police and mentioned that this type of program helps to remind law enforcement authority to consider other aspects while performing their duties. He also highlighted that public health intervention such as HIV prevention is an important issue especially considering influx of 14 lakhs Rohingya people. He also focused on complying with human rights issues upheld by the United Nations (UN), Bangladesh being a signatory country. In the end, he hoped that the participants will be highly benefitted from today's program.

Speech by Mr. Shale Ahmed, Convener, Community Forum and Executive Director, Bandhu Social Welfare Society

Mr. Shale started by describing the background of creation of Community Forum (CF) which was launched 5 years back with the aim to work together. He mentioned that as per Ministry of Health directives, CF constitutes high risk groups. He also highlighted that prevention of HIV largely depends

on properly addressing human rights issues; therefore, joint efforts by public health interventions and law enforcement authority can propel progress towards ending AIDS by 2030 in the country.

Presentation on Current HIV/AIDS Scenario at National and Regional Level and Expectations from Law Enforcement Agencies by Dr. Saima Khan, UNAIDS Country Manager

In her presentation, Dr. Saima provided a comparative scenario of global, regional and national level situation of HIV and AIDS. Highlighting the increasing trend of HIV infection among key populations, she showed that Bangladesh is one of the seven countries in Asia and the Pacific where HIV infection is on the rise. Describing the international targets of 90-90-90 to end AIDS by 2030, she mentioned that Bangladesh is one of the 198 UN member states who made the commitment. She also highlighted Bangladesh’s commitment to get to 3 ‘zero’s- zero new infection, zero discrimination and zero AIDS related death.

She also highlighted that police have a strong role to play as punitive and discriminatory legal provisions and violence are major concern in HIV prevention. As a result, HIV and human rights agenda became prominent worldwide. Therefore, police need to see through different lenses while dealing with HIV prevention interventions and key populations so that they don’t become hidden and out of reach for service delivery.



Question/ Answer Session

The question/ answer session comprised of several questions from the participants. The questions include:

Questions	Answers
Whether HIV spreads through mosquito bite?	No.
Do we have medication facility in the country as per world standard?	Yes, we have 10 world standard medication facilities from where the patients receive medicines now.
Is there any help line system for	At the moment no.

inquiry about HIV?	
What are the symptoms of this disease? Does it spread through breast feeding?	The major symptom includes declining disease resistance ability of the body. Previously there was 15-20% probability to spread through breast feeding but it has now come down to 1-2%.
What is the probability of increasing prevalence from Rohingya people?	The possibility and scope of spreading HIV from Rohingya is less here.

Speech by Dr. Rahat Ara Noor, UNFPA

In her speech, Dr. Rahat clarified about the key populations related to HIV including sex workers, hijra, people who inject drugs, male who have sex with male etc. She also asked the audience if they had seen any HIV positive person or are they being able to identify them. She further clarified that sex workers can also be victims of rape if it happens without consent. Same thing happens even in marital relationship. She therefore urged that if sex work is not out of legal purview, their human rights need to be ensured. She also highlighted the need to provide necessary health services for avoiding unexpected pregnancy, HIV infection, Gonorrhoea etc.



Words from Representatives of Community Forum

Ms. Anannya Hijra, President, ChadaKalo

Ms. Anannya mentioned that this program is a great opportunity to have a close interaction with law enforcement authority for them which is rare but extremely positive. She also mentioned that hijras being extremely marginalized community and excluded from most of the facilities and opportunities in the society should be treated with sympathy. She therefore, requested the law enforcement authority to be kind and understanding towards them.

Ms. Aleya Akter Lily, General Secretary, Sex Workers Network of Bangladesh

Ms. Lily mentioned that sex workers are neglected from all quarters of the society though they are not dependent on others financially. She also mentioned that there are 11 brothels in the country along with hotel and street-based sex workers who are being constantly mistreated by various quarters by different means. She highlighted that nobody comes to this trade voluntarily and sex workers are deprived of 5 basic rights described in the constitution. Sex workers cannot also be buried in the locality after death. She therefore requested law enforcement authority to uphold human rights principles while dealing with them as they are the citizen of the country like others.

Shahed Ibne Obaed, President, Network of People Who Use Drugs

Mr. Shahed mentioned that though there are contradiction between the law and drug use, people who inject drugs are not out of society. He therefore, requested the law enforcement authority to uphold human rights principles within the purview of the law.

Speech by the Special Guest

Dr. G.M Tayeb Ali, Deputy Civil Surgeon, Chottogram

Dr. Tayeb mentioned that health related targets are well articulated under SDG goal 3 which we all need to keep working to achieve. He also mentioned that HIV prevention comes under public health which is a huge area of work. He then gave an example of an MDR TB patient in Anwara, Chattogram who refused to get treated despite knowing about his illness. The authority then took the help of local police station to get that person under control and treatment which is a great example of law enforcement and public health working together. In the end, he thanked LEAHN, UNAIDS and Community forum for organizing such an effective sensitization program.

Speech by the Chief Guest

Mr. Nawroze Hasan Talukder, Superintendent of Bangladesh Police

In his speech, Mr. Nawroze highlighted that we should not criminalize anyone for having HIV and AIDS as it can happen in many ways. Instead we need to take measures for rehabilitation and ensure due human rights. He appreciated the idea and principles of law enforcement and public health working together. However, he mentioned that sometimes police are forced to take actions due to legal bindings. In the end, he thanked the organizers to engage him in the program and selecting the audience.

Finally, crests were given to the following persons by the Superintendent of Police. The recipients include:

- Dr. Tayeb Ali, Deputy Civil Surgeon, Chattogram;
- Dr. Saima Khan, UNAIDS Country Manager;
- Dr. Rahat Ara Noor, Project Technical Officer, HIV and STI, UNFPA;
- Mr. Shale Ahmed, Executive Director, Bandhu Social Welfare Society;

Closing Remarks

Ms. Shehela Pervin, Superintendent of Police (Admin & Finance), Railway Police Headquarter & Country Focal Point of LEAHN Bangladesh

In the closing remarks, Ms. Shehela inquired how many of the participants knew about HIV and law enforcement authorities' role before and after the program by asking them to raise their hands. She also stressed on changing mind sets and become more positive. In the end, she thanked all for their support to organize such a meaningful event.



Ms. Shehela Pervin, Superintendent of Police (Admin & Finance), Railway Police Headquarter & Country Focal Point of LEAHN Bangladesh.

Way Forward

The speakers had really appreciated this type of sensitization programs and suggested to do similar programs in other divisions including Rajshahi, Sylhet and Khulna in the country.