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SAMPLE PROPOSAL · 2010

Project Shurokkha: Grassroots Mobilization and Community-Led Action Against Domestic Violence in Gaibandha

A comprehensive community-driven initiative to prevent domestic violence, shift social norms, and strengthen local support networks across selected sub-districts of Gaibandha.

Executive Summary

Domestic violence remains a pervasive human rights violation and a critical public health crisis in rural Bangladesh, with the Gaibandha district recording disproportionately high rates of both physical and psychological abuse against women and girls. Often normalized as a private family matter, domestic violence perpetuates cycles of intergenerational trauma and severely curtails women's socio-economic participation. Project Shurokkha ('Protection') is designed as a grassroots intervention to dismantle the structural acceptance of domestic violence by mobilizing communities from the family unit to the broader societal level. Over a 12-month implementation period, the project will establish Village Watch Committees, train local community and religious leaders as change agents, execute dynamic awareness campaigns, and create confidential referral pathways for survivors. By addressing patriarchal norms at their root and empowering local actors to intervene safely and effectively, Project Shurokkha aims to foster a secure, equitable environment where women can live free from violence and fear.

Background and Context

Gaibandha is one of the most vulnerable districts in northern Bangladesh, characterized by high poverty rates, frequent river erosion, and deeply entrenched patriarchal structures. In these rural settings, severe socio-economic distress often exacerbates household tensions, manifesting as high incidents of intimate partner violence and domestic abuse. Despite the enactment of supportive national legislation such as the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act of 2010, implementation at the grassroots level remains weak due to a lack of awareness, police apathy, and social pressure on survivors to remain silent and reconcile with abusers. Formal legal and medical support services are frequently inaccessible to rural women due to transportation barriers, financial constraints, and severe social stigma. Consequently, community-based approaches that engage both men and women, while transforming local social norms, are urgently required to bridge the gap between formal legal protections and the everyday realities of rural households.

Problem Statement

Women and girls in the targeted sub-districts of Gaibandha face escalating rates of domestic violence that threaten their physical safety, mental well-being, and social standing. The core problem is twofold: first, deeply ingrained societal beliefs normalize male dominance and female subordination, framing domestic violence as an acceptable method of household discipline rather than a punishable crime. Second, the absence of organized, trusted local support systems leaves victims isolated, without access to emergency shelter, legal aid, or psychosocial counseling. When survivors do attempt to seek help, they frequently encounter victim-blaming attitudes from traditional arbitration panels (shalish) and local gatekeepers. Without a concerted effort to shift community attitudes, build local capacity for peaceful conflict resolution, and establish robust survivor-centric referral networks, the cycle of domestic violence will continue to unchecked, costing lives and stunting community development.

Goal

To significantly reduce the prevalence of domestic violence and transform social attitudes regarding gender-based violence from the family to the societal level across targeted communities in the Gaibandha district.

Objectives

- To raise critical awareness regarding the root causes, legal consequences, and health impacts of domestic violence among 10,000 community members, including men, women, and youth, within 12 months.
- To train and mobilize 150 local change agents—comprising religious leaders, teachers, local elected representatives, and youth volunteers—to actively intervene in and prevent domestic violence.
- To establish and operationalize 10 Village Watch Committees and survivor support desks capable of providing immediate crisis response and safe referral pathways.
- To facilitate accessible legal aid, mediation, and basic psychosocial counseling for at least 150 survivors of domestic violence.

Project Description

Project Shurokkha employs a holistic, multi-layered socio-ecological model to address domestic violence simultaneously at the individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels. Recognizing that sustainable behavior change cannot be achieved through punitive measures alone, the project combines intensive community education with the creation of localized support and accountability structures. The intervention begins with comprehensive baseline mapping to identify high-risk pockets within the target unions of Gaibandha. We will then engage trusted community pillars—such as Imams, school headmasters, union parishad members, and respected elders—ensuring that the message of non-violence is legitimized through local cultural and religious values. Simultaneously, we will organize courtyard meetings, youth-led street theater performances, and mobile awareness caravans to demystify the Domestic Violence Act and promote gender-equitable attitudes. Crucially, the project creates safe spaces for women to voice their concerns through Village Watch Committees, which will serve as early-warning and rapid-response mechanisms at the village level, bridging the gap between survivors and formal legal, medical, and psychosocial services.

Key Activities

- Conduct a baseline survey in 10 target villages to assess the prevalence, drivers, and local perceptions of domestic violence.
- Form and train 10 Village Watch Committees (VWCs), equipping local volunteers with basic counseling, crisis management, and referral protocols.
- Organize 4 multi-stakeholder capacity-building workshops for 150 local leaders, religious figures, and law enforcement personnel on gender sensitivity and legal frameworks.
- Facilitate 60 courtyard sessions and community dialogue meetings targeting households to discuss gender roles, communication, and conflict resolution.
- Deploy 12 youth-led street theater performances and cultural events in public marketplaces and school grounds to engage the wider public.
- Establish a mobile-based confidential helpline and referral desk to connect survivors with emergency medical care, legal aid, and counseling services.
- Distribute information, education, and communication (IEC) materials, including comic-style booklets and posters in local Bengali dialects.

Expected Outcomes

- A measurable 25% increase in community awareness regarding domestic violence laws and survivor rights across the targeted unions.
- 150 local leaders and volunteers actively serving as frontline monitors and advocates against domestic violence in their respective neighborhoods.
- 10 functional Village Watch Committees operating effectively to mediate household disputes safely and refer severe cases to formal authorities.
- At least 150 survivors receiving timely legal, medical, or psychosocial support, resulting in improved safety and mental well-being.
- Enhanced institutional coordination between local government bodies, police, and NGO service providers in Gaibandha.

Timeline

Project Shurokkha will be executed over a 12-month period, divided into four key phases:

Month 1–2: Project startup, baseline survey, community mapping, recruitment of field staff, and stakeholder orientation.

Month 3–5: Formation of Village Watch Committees, capacity-building workshops for community leaders, and design/printing of IEC materials.

Month 6–9: Rollout of community mobilization activities, including courtyard sessions, street theater, and operation of the helpline and support desks. **Month 10–12:** Intensified case management, peer support group meetings, mid-term/final project evaluation, and sustainability handover workshops.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The project will maintain a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework to track progress against stated objectives and ensure accountability to donors, partners, and beneficiaries. A dedicated M&E Officer will design digital data collection tools (using KoboToolbox or ODK) to capture quantitative metrics, such as the number of awareness sessions held, participants reached, and cases referred. Qualitative data will be gathered through monthly focus group discussions with Village Watch Committees and semi-structured interviews with survivors (ensuring strict confidentiality and informed consent). Quarterly progress reviews will be conducted with project staff and community stakeholders to analyze bottlenecks, adapt strategies to emerging field realities, and report achievements against indicators. A comprehensive independent end-line evaluation will be commissioned in Month 12 to measure overall impact and inform future programming.

Risks and Mitigation

Potential Risk 1: Backlash from abusive partners or conservative community members against project staff or participating women. Mitigation: We will engage men and traditional gatekeepers from the project's inception, framing gender equality around family well-being and Islamic/cultural values of compassion rather than confrontation. Potential Risk 2: Reluctance of survivors to report abuse due to social stigma, fear of reprisal, or distrust of formal institutions. Mitigation: Village Watch Committees will operate through trusted, locally respected members, and all support services will maintain absolute confidentiality with mobile-based crisis intervention. Potential Risk 3: Political instability, hartals, or seasonal flooding in Gaibandha disrupting field activities. Mitigation: The project team will work closely with local volunteers to reschedule activities flexibly and utilize local community networks to maintain momentum.

Sustainability

Sustainability is embedded in the core design of Project Shurokkha by shifting ownership from the NGO to the community itself. Rather than creating parallel structures, the project strengthens existing community assets, such as school management committees, religious networks, and local Union Parishad standing committees on women and children's affairs. By training 150 local leaders and equipping Village Watch Committees with the knowledge and motivation to act independently, the project ensures that monitoring and grassroots advocacy will persist long after external funding concludes. Furthermore, formalizing linkages between these local committees and government social welfare offices in Gaibandha guarantees that survivors will continue to have access to institutional safety nets beyond the project lifecycle.

Project Management

The project will be implemented by an experienced team based in our Gaibandha field office, drawing upon our organization's decade-long track record in women's empowerment and human rights advocacy in northern Bangladesh. The Project Manager will oversee day-to-day operations, budget management, and donor reporting, supported by a Field Coordinator who will directly supervise community mobilizers and volunteers. Financial management will adhere to transparent accounting standards, with monthly reconciliation reports submitted to the central finance department. Technical guidance and safeguarding oversight will be provided by our headquarters-based Gender Justice and Diversity Advisor, ensuring that all activities adhere to best practices in survivor safety, child protection, and do-no-harm principles.

Budget Overview

Personnel Costs (Project Manager, Field Coordinator, Mobilizers)	\$18,500
Community Mobilization & Training (VWC formation, leader workshops, street theater)	\$8,200
Survivor Support Services (Legal aid fees, emergency transport, medical coordination)	\$6,500
IEC Materials & Public Awareness Campaigns (Printing, mobile helpline operations)	\$3,800
Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting (Baseline/endline surveys, data tools, travel)	\$3,000
Administrative, Office Operations & Audit Costs (Field office rent, utilities, coordination)	\$5,000
Total Requested Grant	\$45,000

Conclusion

Domestic violence is not an inevitable aspect of family life; it is a preventable injustice that stunts the potential of entire societies. Project Shurokkha offers a grounded, community-centric pathway to address this crisis at its roots in the Gaibandha district. By empowering local leaders, educating households, and establishing reliable support networks, this project bridges the gap between isolation and empowerment. With the generous support of our donors, Project Shurokkha will transform cultural norms, protect vulnerable women and girls, and build a safer, more resilient community where human rights are upheld for all.



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