

Oxfam Canada Projects Supported by Stamp Funds January 2018

In 2017, we raised \$28,000, the most ever, and we again allocated the funds to Oxfam Canada's flagship project in Asia. For a list of all the projects the stamp program has participated in since it began over 30 years ago, see [www. Oxfam.ca/stampoutpoverty](http://www.Oxfam.ca/stampoutpoverty). Over that longer period, the total contributions to projects have exceeded \$400,000.

These projects were selected based on two criteria. First, they are meant to be broadly representative of the types of work Oxfam does in its main areas of interest, such as raising awareness of womens' rights. Second, we support worthy projects that have not had sufficient money earmarked specifically for them by other donors or allocated from general donation revenue.

In most cases, the stamp funds are only a small part of the total Oxfam Canada contribution, and many are funded by other organizations and governments as well. In this way the Oxfam Canada funds have a lot of leverage, being matched in some cases by two or more times as much money from other sources.

Ending Violence Against Women in Asia: \$28,000 (2018)

In South and East Asia, according to the World Health Organization, 37 percent of women are the victims of violence during their lifetime – one of the highest rates in the world. Despite recent social and economic advances in the region, violence against women in many countries has been rising rapidly, taking a huge toll on families, economies and productivity. Such violence takes many forms, but is particularly acute in terms of domestic violence and marital rape; child, early and forced marriage (CEFM); and trafficking in women and girls for sexual slavery, forced labor, or commercial sexual exploitation. Violence against women and girls, including the harmful practice of CEFM, acts as a barrier to participation in economic and community life and threatens social and economic development. By preventing access to economic and decision-making opportunities, violence against women and girls has devastating consequences and is linked to poverty, lack of education, gender inequality, child and maternal mortality, illness, and HIV/AIDS. Violence against women and girls, in whatever form, is a violation of universal human rights.

Among the countries of South and East Asia, the United Nations Development Program's 2014 Gender Inequality Index ranked India as the most problematic at 130th out of 146. India was followed by Pakistan at 121st, Nepal at 113th, Bangladesh at 111th, Indonesia at 110th, and the Philippines at 89th. The violence experienced by women and girls in these six countries is among the worst in the region.

Despite considerable progress in many countries to establish policies and programs to end violence, implementation has been slow. This gap is largely the result of deeply entrenched cultural values, attitudes and practices that are rooted in gender stereotypes and perpetuate exploitation, discrimination and violence against women and girls. There is compelling evidence that the most effective counter-strategies will engage a broad range of social actors, as well as institutional and political leaders, with a view to reducing the social acceptance of violence.

This new flagship global project for Oxfam Canada, called "Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls", aims to reduce violence against women and girls through

coordinated prevention and response initiatives in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines. The total budget is \$20M, including a \$15M contribution from the Government of Canada and \$5M from Oxfam. In the 5 years 2016-2021, we will work with 25 local partner organizations, including women's rights organizations, in each of the six countries to prevent violence by changing local norms and laws, responding to violence by providing women and girl survivors with services and economic opportunities, and strengthening collective efforts and learning across the region. The project will directly reach 220,000 women and girls, men and boys across the six countries, and has three main components:

- Mobilize community leaders and young people to advance the rights of women and girls, and to challenge and change local laws and norms that help to perpetuate violence;
- Empower women and girls affected by violence by providing access to support services and economic opportunities that allow them to thrive free of violence; and,
- Strengthen networks and build knowledge and capacity of institutions and alliances working across the region to end violence and advance the rights of women and girls.

Since beginning the project in June of 2016, Creating Spaces has conducted an in-depth baseline study into violence against women and girls, and child, early and forced marriage in selected target areas in each country. The study gathered a wide range of data from all six countries through household surveys, literature reviews of existing studies and public policies, media monitoring, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and collecting stories directly from women and girls who had experienced violence and/or CEFM. Traditional, community and religious leaders, teachers, media persons and government officials, as well as youth and adolescent groups participated, and household surveys were conducted with male and female members of the communities. The baseline used Survey CTO, a mobile data collection tool that works on or offline, enables real-time monitoring, supports multiple languages and eliminates translation of collected data and uploads data instantly into a database and codes. The project also developed guidelines for ethical data collection, particularly important when working with women and girls who have experienced violence. These findings have been used to design and target specific activities and key influencers to work with in the communities, and together with our 25 local partners, the project is now beginning to be rolled out in the selected areas.

In January 2017, Oxfam country teams started working in close partnership with the 25 local organizations who will be implementing the project, and they have started sharing information about the project at the community level, engaging with key influencers, local institutions and youth groups, as well as women and girls who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing violence.