# KOLKATA MARY WARD SOCIAL CENTRE

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| **Project title** | Leadership and Empowerment of Survivors (LES) |
| **Supported By** | STIFTUNG Calcutta Rescue- Switzerland |
| **Reporting period** | July 2025 to December 2025 |
| **Type of Report** | 6 Months Narrative Report |
| **Project Timeline** | July 2025 to June 2026 |

## 1. Introduction:

The Leadership and Empowerment of Survivors project is implemented by Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre with the aim of empowering survivors of violence, trafficking, child marriage, and abuse (domestic/mental/physical and sexual) through education, counselling, leadership development, and livelihood support. The project focuses on restoring dignity, strengthening resilience, and enabling survivors to rebuild their lives with confidence and independence thus reducing the chances of re-abuse/ re-trafficking.

During the reporting period (July–December 2025), the project addressed critical protection, psychosocial, educational, and at risk of survivors through structured interventions at the community level.

## 2. Objectives of the Project

- To empower survivors through counselling, capacity building, and leadership development
- To prevent child marriage, trafficking, abuse, and exploitation
- To promote education/ skill development and mainstreaming of survivors and their children and adolescents
- To support survivors with sustainable livelihood opportunities
- To strengthen community awareness and survivor leadership
- To empower the survivors leaders to help support the project team to create a safety net in the community to combat trafficking and abuse.

## 3. Activities in 6 months July 2025 to December'2025

During the six-month period, the following key activities were conducted:

| SL NO. | Activity Name | No. of activity | No. of participants | Details |
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| **1.** | Formation of ELS Group | 2 | 20 | Two groups were formed where all the participants introduced themselves and they were made to introduce about the group, its aims and purposes. Introduction was |

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| | | | | made on KMWSC and the Leadership and Empowerment of the Survivors project. |
| 2. | Survivor Group Meetings | 14 | 20 | • Survivor's group meeting are held at the awareness centre on issues such as child marriage, child labour, trafficking, cybercrime, the POCSO Act, children in need of care and protection, and children in conflict with law. |
| 3 | Survivor Group Counseling | 6 | 20 | • Survivor group counselling sessions focus on emotional and psychological wellbeing.<br>• Counselling topics include management of emotions, empathy, self-care, managing over thinking, reconnecting with self, and coping with stress, anger, and emotional pain.<br>• Guidance is also provided on building stability and balance in daily life. |
| 4 | Capacity Building Training of Survivors | 2 | 20 | • The Healing Journey (Emotional Resilience): Capacity building addresses the psychological "stasis" caused by trauma. Resilience training helps survivors decouple their personal identity from past abuse, providing them with the emotional tools to prevent trauma from spilling over into their current lives and interpersonal relationships.<br>• Legal Empowerment: Training focuses on navigating the legal landscape, specifically the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006) and the POCSO Act. This ensures survivors understand that their experiences were violations of human rights and learn how to access the justice system for protection.<br>• Safety & Prevention (Trafficking & Sexual Abuse): This module equips participants with the ability to identify "grooming" tactics and trafficking "red flags." By understanding the mechanics of exploitation, survivors are transformed from vulnerable individuals into vigilant guardians who can protect themselves and their communities from future threats. |
| 5 | Awareness session school/college | 3 | 335 | To strengthen schools as the building foundations of society, awareness programs are conducted to educate students on critical social issues. The following points outline the core focus areas of these sessions:<br><br>• **Prevention of Child Marriage:** Educating students on the legal age of marriage and the long-term health and social consequences of early marriage to |

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| | | | | help them advocate for their own futures.<br>• **Child Abuse Awareness:** Providing a safe space for students to understand the different forms of abuse and teaching them how to identify and report "bad touches" or unsafe environments.<br>• **Cybercrime & Digital Safety:** Equipping the younger generation with knowledge on safe internet practices, privacy settings, and how to protect themselves against online grooming, bullying, and financial fraud.<br>• **Understanding the POCSO Act:** Simplifying the legal protections provided under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, ensuring students know their rights and the mechanisms available for seeking justice. |
| 6 | Capacity building training on Livelihood Support | 4 | 20 | • Scented **Candle Making:** This teaches them about colour theory, fragrance mixing, and the technical aspects of wax moulding.<br>• Paper **Bag Production:** An eco-friendly skill that taps into the high demand for sustainable packaging in local markets and retail shops. |
| 7 | Community Awareness | 2 | 175 | To enhance community safety, we must prioritize digital literacy and vigilance through the community awareness. Below listed topic discussed in 2 community awareness.<br><br>• **Educating Individuals:** aware community members to identify and avoid suspicious links and never share sensitive information like OTPs with strangers.<br>• **Encouraging Parental Involvement:** Urging parents to implement parental controls and maintain open dialogues with their children regarding online "stranger danger."<br>• **Addressing Cyber bullying:** aware the youth that online harassment is a punishable offense and providing them with clear channels for reporting incidents.<br>• **Preventing Exploitation:** Raising awareness about the deceptive tactics used by predators—such as fake profiles and grooming—to shield victims from the devastating consequences of sextortion and blackmail. |

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| 8. | Workshop with government stakeholders | 1 | 45 | Awareness and Sensitization Programme for Government Stakeholders on Preventing Human Trafficking, Child Marriage, and Child Abuse |

**SPECIAL DAYS:-**

Celebrating Special day with the survivors is a powerful psychosocial, rights-based, and recovery-oriented practice that supports healing, dignity, and long-term reintegration.

- The **World against Trafficking Day**, celebrated on July 31st, serves as a significant state-level convergence program organized in collaboration with the **WBPCR**. This initiative brings together a wide network of stakeholders—including the local police, BSF, DCPO, DSWO, GP members, school teachers, Asha workers, and SHGs—to create a unified front against exploitation. A central feature of the program is the active participation of survivors, who join children's groups and community leaders to strengthen the local "safety net." By focusing on critical issues such as human trafficking, child marriage, child abuse, and cybercrime, the event fosters a multi-sectoral approach to community vigilance, ensuring that every level of society is equipped to identify risks and protect vulnerable individuals.

- **INDEPENDENCE DAY**–Independence Day was celebrated at Basirhat along with the survivors where flag hoisting was done along with a short cultural program.

- **CHILDREN'S DAY**- On 14$^{th}$ of November Children's Day was celebrated with all the survivors. The celebration of this day served as a dose of entertainment for the children.

- **CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**– On the auspicious day of 25$^{th}$ December Christmas has been celebrated with fun and enthusiasm. Survivors enjoyed a lot by participating in various games and activities. Cakes were distributed among them. All of them shared gifts with each other.

## 4. Rescue and Protection Interventions:

- Successfully intervened in **15 missing cases**
- Prevented **3 cases of child marriage**
- Rescued **1 survivor from trafficking** in coordination with relevant authorities and stakeholders

## 5. Achievement:

- Facilitated registration for **3 Lakshmi Bhandar** beneficiaries
- Assisted in obtaining **3 Aadhaar cards**
- Supported the opening of **1 bank account**
- 10 survivors developed kitchen garden at their homes

- 4 training was given on paper bag making
- 2 survivors are studying in college
- One survivor is independently making candles at her home and earning an income, contributing to her livelihood and economic empowerment.

## 6. Monitoring visit:-

During the six-month reporting period, a total of **11 monitoring visits** were conducted by the office administrative staff to review project implementation, assess progress, and ensure effective delivery of project activities.

## 7. Home visit:-

During the reporting period, a total of **65 home visits** were conducted jointly by field staff and office administrative staff to assess beneficiaries' wellbeing, provide follow-up support, and monitors ongoing interventions.

## CASE STUDIES IN DETAILS:

**Case Study 1:**
**Name: Suraiya Khatun**

Suraiya Khatun is a 17-year-old girl from Goaldaha village. She is currently studying in Class XII. She lives with her parents and elder brother in a modest household. Suraiya did not own a mobile phone of her own; instead, she occasionally used her mother's phone to communicate.

Through her mother's phone, she came into contact with a boy. Over time, they started talking regularly, and eventually, the boy proposed to her. Trusting him, Suraiya accepted his proposal, and a romantic relationship developed between them.

One day, the boy convinced Suraiya to leave her home and come to live with him. He promised her a happy and comfortable life together, telling her that they would have a joyful future. Innocent and emotionally vulnerable, Suraiya believed him. Without informing anyone at home, she left the house pretending she was going to visit her aunt.

Her family soon realized she was missing and began to search for her. They asked neighbors and relatives but found no clues. Distressed and unsure of what to do next, her family approached the Swarupnagar Police Station and lodged a missing person report.

The police began an investigation and tried to trace her whereabouts, but initial efforts were unsuccessful. A few days later, the family received a sudden phone call from an unknown number. It was Suraiya, crying uncontrollably. She informed them that she was currently in Barasat, locked inside a room, and feared that she would soon be moved to another unknown location. Before they could ask further questions or get more details, the call was abruptly disconnected, and they couldn't reach her again.

After receiving the distress call from Suraiya, her family immediately went back to Swarupnagar Police Station and informed the officers about the call and the details she had shared. Acting promptly on this lead, the police began tracing her location. Based on the

information, they were able to rescue Suraiya from Barasat and immediately presented her before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC).

Following standard procedures for minor survivors of trafficking, Suraiya was placed in a government shelter home, where she remained for 15 days under care and observation. After completing necessary procedures and assessments, she was allowed to return to her family and is currently living safely at home.

After her rescue, Suraiya shared the harrowing details of her ordeal. The boy she trusted—the one she was in a relationship with—had betrayed her by selling her to another person. She was then confined in a locked room, where she was kept against her will, physically abused, and often deprived of food. She was not allowed to go outside and lived in fear, pain, and isolation.

One day, a man entered the room, and Suraiya bravely seized the opportunity to secretly use his phone to call her family. That call became the turning point in her rescue.
Suraiya further revealed that she was being subjected to daily sexual violence, with 2–3 men exploiting her every day. There were also discussions among her captors about moving her to another location soon—possibly to be trafficked further.

Thanks to her courage and presence of mind to make that one call, Suraiya was rescued in time. She is now safe, living at home with her family, and receiving ongoing support to heal from the trauma.

**Case Study 2:**

**Name:** Ferdousi Khatun

**Age:** 17 years

**Location:** Bazitpur Village, Baduria, North 24 Parganas

Ferdousi Khatun is a 17-year-old girl from Bazitpur village, under the Baduria Police Station in North 24 Parganas. She lives with her parents, including her father, Abdul Razzak Gazi, in a household struggling with significant financial hardship.

Ferdousi's ordeal began when she was only 13 years old and studying in Class VII. At that young age, she met a boy from a neighbouring village, and a romantic relationship developed. Lacking the maturity to understand the consequences of her actions, Ferdousi decided to marry the boy without informing her family. Because she married against her parents' wishes, her family severed all ties with her, leaving her without a support system.

Initially, her married life seemed stable, but the situation soon took a dark turn. Her husband began associating with a group of friends who engaged in heavy substance abuse. Under the influence of drugs and alcohol, he started subjecting Ferdousi to severe physical and mental torture. Despite the pain, Ferdousi felt she had no choice but to remain silent, as she felt she could not return to her parents after defying them.

The abuse escalated after the birth of their son. Her husband and mother-in-law began demanding money from her impoverished parents. When she refused to ask her parents for money, the violence became more frequent; she was often beaten and deprived of food. Most horrifyingly, her husband began bringing his friends to their home to consume drugs. He allowed and encouraged his friends to sexually abuse Ferdousi in exchange for free drugs.

Unable to endure the systematic exploitation and fearing for her child's future, Ferdousi showed immense bravery by fleeing the house with her young son. She returned to her father's house, seeking refuge. Although her family's financial condition is very poor, she has started working as a bidi worker to provide for her son and raise him on her own.

Due to her extreme poverty and the lack of resources to navigate the legal system, Ferdousi has not been able to file a formal case or complete a legal divorce. However, she has taken a significant step toward healing by becoming a member of the **Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre's Survivor Group**. Now 17, Ferdousi is fighting to rebuild her life, find justice, and ensure a better future for her child despite the immense trauma she has survived.

As part of KMWSC's livelihood capacity-building initiative, she received hands-on training in candle making and paper bag making. Through this training, she developed practical skills that enabled her to start earning independently. With regular practice and guidance, she began producing quality items on her own.

The products prepared by her were provided an opportunity for market linkage through the Christmas Stall organized by KMWSC, where the candles and paper bags were successfully sold. The income generated from the stall helped her meet her personal needs and contributed to her financial independence.

Beyond the financial benefit, this experience significantly enhanced her self-confidence, morale, and sense of self-reliance. Earning through her own skills motivated her to believe in her abilities and strengthened her determination to stand on her own feet. The livelihood support not only improved her economic condition but also played a crucial role in her emotional empowerment and social dignity.

## Photo Gallery
























CHILD ABUSE
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Leadership and Empowerment Program for Survivors
SCHOOL


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