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CASE STUDY

New Law Targets Trafficking

In Mozambique, USAID supported collaborative drafting of a law to protect victims and prosecute offenders.



USAID/Mozambique

An NGO network carried out a communications campaign to solicit public comment on the law and mobilize support.

CHALLENGE

Many of the countries most severely affected by human trafficking lack a legal framework to effectively address the problem. Mozambique is both a source and destination country for trafficking victims. Women and children are trafficked across the border to South Africa, where they are forced to work on farms or are sold as concubines to miners. Orphans transported to Tanzania and Malawi are forced into servitude. Girls from Zimbabwe are trafficked into Mozambique for sexual exploitation and domestic labor. Yet despite the gravity of the situation, until 2008 Mozambique had no legislation prohibiting trafficking or providing protection for its victims.

INITIATIVE

In 2005, USAID began facilitating the passage of anti-trafficking legislation through the Women's Legal Rights Initiative. The project partnered with the Ministry of Justice and a local NGO network to draft a bill while leading outreach and advocacy efforts in support of its passage. Early in the process, a memorandum of understanding secured the ministry's commitment and formalized a working relationship between government and civil society. The bill, drafted by experts, was reviewed through a collaborative process, incorporating input from a working group of government and NGO stakeholders. Meanwhile, the NGO network carried out a public awareness campaign to educate Mozambicans about trafficking in persons and solicit their comments on the final draft. The NGOs held meetings with legislators and organized regional and provincial forums. In a town known to be a border crossing for human traffickers, activists staged a demonstration in favor of children's rights that drew further attention to the issue.

RESULTS

In April 2008, the National Assembly unanimously passed legislation to punish traffickers and protect victims and witnesses of human trafficking. The collaborative drafting process ensured broad support and paved the way for smoother implementation.

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New Law Targets Trafficking *(Cont'd.)*

Comprehensive services for victims included health assistance, skills training, counseling, and social activities.

The awareness campaign brought a traditionally taboo topic to light, increasing public understanding and support.