

SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL INITIATIVE/ EQUITY SUPPORT (SARI/EQUITY)

Over the past decade the movement of individuals, particularly of women and children, across national and international borders has increased in South Asia. These migrants are vulnerable to human rights abuses, especially trafficking for sex trade and domestic violence. NGOs and NGO networks in the region have been active in developing programs to improve the implementation of legal protections for vulnerable populations and to rehabilitate survivors/victims of violence. The South Asia Regional Initiative/Equity Support Program (SARI/Equity) is designed to support and reinforce these initiatives at the regional level by improving the implementation of laws and policies that protect women and children, fostering safe migration, and strengthening the care of survivors/victims of violence. To effect these changes, SARI/Equity works closely with NGOs, other civil society institutions, and governments.

SARI/Equity has successfully used the following mechanisms to achieve results:

Regional Action Forums (RAFTs) have been created as platforms for governments, civil society organizations, and intergovernmental/regional organizations and academics to initiate policy change/reform on commonly identified priority concerns. The RAFTs have produced a regional victim witness protection protocol, minimum standards of care for victims of violence, landmark judgments on violence against women and children, and a resource guide on livelihood option programs.

Grants to community based organizations have enhanced the knowledge and skills of over 8,000 service providers and enabled direct assistance to more than 22,000 women and children affected by violence. Grants to regional networks have assisted in spreading sustainable models of service provision and livelihood options across the region and supported nearly 1000 outreach/advocacy public awareness and education campaigns.

Fellowships have provided professionals from grassroots civil society organizations in the region the opportunity to study the human rights issues with which they deal from a regional perspective in order to acquire new skills in research, program development, and analysis.

Trainings for civil society organizations have been conducted in program strategic development, monitoring and evaluation, social marketing, advocacy, implementing policy change, and network capacity building.

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