

CSOs and NGOs working for Human Rights – Sexual Orientation and Health ¹



Name of Organisation: Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Bangladesh, 1996

Website of Organisation: <http://www.bandhu-bd.org/>

Facebook of Organisation: <https://www.facebook.com/bandhubsws/>

Organisation of DTP Alumni Y/N: Yes

Bandhu Social Welfare Society (BSWS) was formed in 1996 to address the concerns of human rights abuse and denial of sexual health rights, and provide a rights-based approach to health and social services for the most stigmatized and vulnerable populations in Bangladesh, MSM (men who have sex with men) in particular kothis/hijras and their partners.

BSWS was registered in 1997; it started out with a staff of two and a small programme in Central Dhaka which was supported by the Royal Norwegian Embassy. Over the years it has emerged as a national community led organization currently providing social and health services to a broad range of Sexual Minority Populations in 21 districts in Bangladesh.

BSWS was formed as a result of research conducted on sexual and reproductive health needs of MSM in Bangladesh (which was conducted in Dhaka from October 1996 – March 1997). The findings identified social exclusion, marginalization, and stigmatization of MSM population along with other risky sexual health practices associated with STI and HIV infection.

A core objective of BSWS' work with MSM and Hijras/TG is to advocate and provide an environment where the respect and dignity of all Sexual Minority Populations is assured.

BSWS Goals:

Goal-1: Enhanced coverage and comprehensive services of sexual & reproductive health and rights including HIV for sexual minority communities and their partners

Goal-2 : Reduced physical, social, psychological and legal harassment and stigma of sexual minority communities

Goal-3 : Enhance decision making ability of the sexual minority communities in programme and policy issues

Goal-4 : Improved livelihood options for the sexual minority communities

Goal-5 : Enhanced capacity and sustainability of the BSWS

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¹ The Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) is an NGO affiliated with the Faculty of Law at UNSW in Sydney. Since 1990, it has provided training to over 2600 human rights defenders and community advocates. These individuals work for a wide range of organisations working to promote shared values of human rights – in different ways. This profile is part of a series developed by DTP (www.dtp.unsw.edu.au) to illustrate the richness and diversity of the organisations working to promote human rights more broadly.