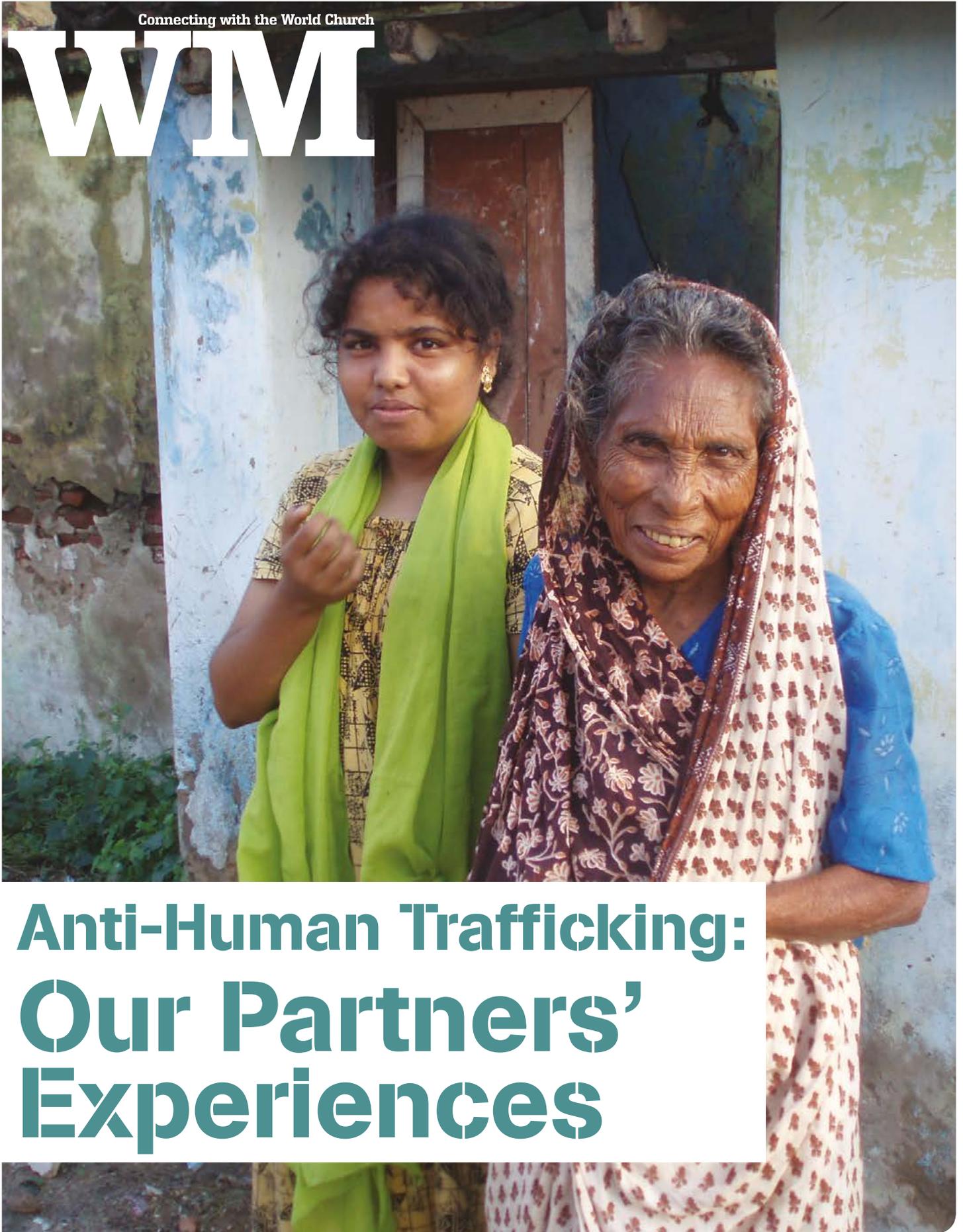


Connecting with the World Church

WMI



Anti-Human Trafficking: Our Partners' Experiences



With special thanks to our partners

Africa

Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana
Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Blantyre, Malawi
Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi
Igreja Evangélica de Cristo em Moçambique, Mozambique
Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

Asia

Church of Bangladesh
The Church of Christ in Thailand
Church of North India
Church of Pakistan
Church of South India
The United Mission to Nepal

Caribbean

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago

Europe

Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren
Eglise Protestante unie de France
Chiesa Valdese, Italy
Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Netherlands

Middle East

Synod of the Nile of the Evangelical Church of Egypt





1. Executive Summary

In 2007 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland recognised human trafficking as a form of modern day slavery. Since then various cross-council reports have been published and work has been undertaken by the Scottish Churches Anti Human Trafficking Group (SCAHTG), which raised the question, 'is there anything that Scottish Churches can do to support partner churches in those countries where there is a higher risk of people being targeted by traffickers?' The World Mission Council (WMC) is in a unique position within the church to engage with our partners outside Scotland and better understand their contribution to the global aim ending human trafficking. In response to a deliverance from the 2014 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the WMC wrote to all of our partners to ask about their experiences of human trafficking, and to enquire how the Church of Scotland might partner with them in their efforts to put an end to this crime.

Rooted in the Church's theological understanding of the value of every individual person made in the image of God, this report recognises that human trafficking is contrary to the will of God. Beginning by defining human trafficking and investigating the patterns of movement of trafficked persons, the report is then split into four regional sections: Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Europe. Within each section our partners' voices are heard, their experiences are shared through case studies, and we learn about the anti-human trafficking work they are undertaking. This work falls into two categories: prevention and response.

This report argues that by joining together in a global network we can strengthen and support each other's work through information sharing, and prayerful support, as well as raising awareness in our own countries through sharing resources. We can also learn from each other how to effectively support victims of human trafficking. Furthermore, the experiences of our partners and their responses point candidly to the root causes of human trafficking: poverty, lack of education, conflict and gender inequality. Together we can work to combat global poverty, war, conflict, and migration issues that are influencing the increase of human trafficking across our world.

2. The Church of Scotland and Human Trafficking

“ ‘Is there anything that Scottish Churches can do to support partner churches in those countries where there is a higher risk of people being targeted by traffickers?’



Human trafficking was recognised by the Church of Scotland as ‘a form of modern slavery in which people, most often women and girls, are forced, threatened, coerced or deceived for the purposes of labour exploitation, commercial sex exploitation and servitude’ in the 2007 joint report to the General Assembly, *To Be Silent is to be Unfaithful*. This report provided a solid theological framework which continues to underpin the Church of Scotland’s anti-human trafficking work. Valuable resources for congregations were produced including a cross-council pack by the Guild, and the Church and Society and World Mission Councils to raise awareness of human trafficking by sharing the stories of people across the world, and providing contextual bible studies and worship resources. The ACTS Anti-Human Trafficking Working Group, formed in June 2011, was established to enable churches in Scotland to work ecumenically to address human trafficking. Tasked with assisting the Church and Society Council to respond to a deliverance regarding human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, it produced a report, *Human Trafficking and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games*, which showed an increasing awareness of Scotland as a destination country for the trafficking of persons and was a practical attempt to begin to tackle human trafficking at home.

The Scottish Churches Anti-Trafficking Group report identified several areas for potential work in the future, which included working collaboratively with international and ecumenical partners with the aim of learning from one another in order to take an effective stand against this global crime. Recognising human trafficking as a complex problem that effects almost every country in the world and the advantage of developing a strong global network the group asked, ‘Is there anything that Scottish Churches can do to support partner churches in those countries where there is a higher risk of people being targeted by traffickers?’

The World Mission Council, as it seeks to attentively accompany partner churches throughout the world, is in a unique position to learn about what partners outside Scotland are doing as they contribute to this global aim to put an end to human trafficking. Responding to the following deliverance from the 2014 General Assembly, a letter was sent to our partner churches in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the Middle East:





‘Engage with the Church and Society Council, the Guild, the Scottish Churches Anti-Human Trafficking Group and international partners to develop strategies that aim to reduce human trafficking.’

Recognising that many of our partners are engaged in work regarding human trafficking, this letter invited them to share information about their experience of human trafficking in their contexts, as well as any strategies, projects and programmes they are involved with. They were also asked if there were any actions being taken to reduce or prevent human trafficking, and how the Church of Scotland might be able to support them in their work. The purpose of this is to begin to develop an international network so that churches across the world, in source, transit and destination countries, can begin to work together to develop strategies that aim to reduce human trafficking.

This report is a culmination of the responses that the World Mission Council received from partners around the world. Whereas the primary focus of *To Be Silent is to be Unfaithful and Human Trafficking and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games* is Scotland as a destination country, this report will concentrate on the experience of human trafficking from an international perspective. While there will be reference to statistics to provide an element of context, it is important to assert that behind every number is a human being; a child of God, who has been called to live life in fullness. As the 2014 report stated:

... each number represents one life, one woman, one man, one child, for whom life has become less than that, a travesty of life, from whom dignity has been taken as she or he is held captive and violated both spiritually and physically. When any person is treated as a commodity, all of humanity is diminished.

3. What is Human Trafficking?

“ ... human trafficking is affecting the lives of hundreds of men, women and children across the world on an unimaginable scale.



Human trafficking is a base crime, which is contrary to the will of God. Acknowledged as modern day slavery, human trafficking is affecting the lives of hundreds of men, women and children across the world on an unimaginable scale. It is defined by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as:

[T]he recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.¹

From this we can discern that there are three aspects to human trafficking which must be understood in order to develop strategies that aim to reduce this crime: the act of trafficking, the means of trafficking and the purpose of trafficking, which is always exploitation.



“ *The majority of our partners who responded unsurprisingly identified sexual exploitation and forced labour, particularly of children, as the main areas of concern, but trafficking for forced marriage were also mentioned.*

Forms of Trafficking

The purpose of human trafficking takes many forms including sexual exploitation, forced labour, the removal of organs, and other forms including trafficking for committing crime, for begging, for pornography (including internet pornography), forced marriage, benefit fraud, baby selling, illegal adoption, armed combat and for rituals.² The majority of our partners who responded unsurprisingly identified sexual exploitation and forced labour, particularly of children, as the main areas of concern, but trafficking for forced marriage was also mentioned.

Sexual exploitation is the most widely recognised form of human trafficking making up the largest category of detected trafficking cases in 2011 (53%).³ People who are trafficked for this reason are either abducted and sold, or deceived into consenting by the promise of a better life. Once they have been trapped they will then be held and exploited in slavery-like conditions.⁴ While sexual exploitation accounts for the largest category of detected trafficking cases, there is an ever growing trend of forced labour cases.⁵ An estimated 21 million people are victims of forced labour worldwide (11.4 million women and girls and 9.5 million men and boys).⁶ With domestic work, agriculture, construction, manufacturing and entertainment among the sectors most concerned, migrant workers and indigenous people are particularly vulnerable to this aspect of human trafficking.⁷

Trafficking Routes and Movement of People

With an estimated 2.5 million victims of trafficking at any given time, it is a worldwide problem as almost every country is a place of origin, transit or destination. The UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014 has revealed that the majority of trafficking is intraregional, with victims often being trafficking from poor countries to wealthier countries in the region.⁸ Transregional hubs are often found in the rich countries of the Middle East, Western Europe and North America and often involve the flow of persons from the global south; mainly East and South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa.⁹ The UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014 revealed statistics that show there are 510 known trafficking flows; and that victims from 152 different countries have been identified in 124 countries in the world, but this is only scratching the surface.

Statistics are useful insofar as they give us a general picture of the patterns and the scale of human trafficking around the world. They can also point us towards trafficking routes, and by raising awareness and being vigilant we can begin to detect trafficked persons in our communities and support them. What data does not do is reveal the human faces that lie behind these numbers and percentages, for behind every figure is a child, a woman or a man made in the image of God who has been denied the right to live life in fullness. Nor does data reveal the root causes of human trafficking, why people are vulnerable to traffickers, how particular cultures and presumed privileges support the work of the traffickers and how we, as Christians, can respond positively to challenge these realities. By listening to the experiences of our partners around the world, sharing them, and learning from one another, together we will be able to address this inhumane crime.



4. Human Trafficking in Africa

There is little data about human trafficking from Africa, but it is known that sub-Saharan Africa has the largest percentage of child trafficking in the world, with boys and girls being almost equally detected. Adult men make up 6% of detected adult victims; women are the main victims of exploitation. While sub-Saharan Africa is primarily a destination of domestic and intraregional trafficking, a large number of West Africans have been detected in Western Europe and similarly large numbers of East Africans in the Middle East. The response from our partners in Africa reflects these UN discoveries as their primary concern is for children and women. Our partner churches in Africa are engaging in anti-human trafficking work, particularly with regard to domestic and intraregional trafficking within their own countries and synods. They identify poverty and lack of education as key challenges in the fight against human trafficking.



MALAWI

In Malawi the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre recognise human trafficking as a serious internal problem in the country. With incidents of human trafficking taking place within and across the borders of Malawi, the country is a source, a transit and a destination for men, women and children who are subjected to forced labour and trafficking for sexual exploitation. The CCAP Synod of Livingstonia highlights poverty as the key factor, particularly in rural areas where Malawians, particularly women and girls, living on less than one dollar a day are vulnerable to traffickers who lure them with promises of material growth and lucrative jobs, only to find themselves gang raped, drugged in the sex trade or forced to work in domestic servitude or agricultural labour.

“ ... women and girls, living on less than one dollar a day are vulnerable to traffickers who lure them with promises of material growth and lucrative jobs

There are recorded cases of girls as young as 13 being trafficked within the country to Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu. Promised jobs as waitresses, they are forced into prostitution in brothels, which are on the increase in Ndirande and Bangwe in Blantyre, and Chiputula in Mzuzu. Child sex tourism is thriving along Malawi's lakeshore and Tanzanian, Nigerian and Malawian women are being exploited around the district borders of Karonga, Dedza and Mchinji. In response, the Church and Society Programme of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia is implementing two projects that include anti-trafficking initiatives in the border districts of Karonga (Malawi-Tanzania) and Mzimba (Malawi-Zambia). In Mzimba, the Church is implementing a child centred development programme, supported by Transform Aid Australia, which focuses on child

protection, development, participation and survival. Through establishing aware communities through education and empowerment, as well as providing access to paralegal services, they are able to identify cases of abuse and violations targeting children, including trafficking, for the purposes of labour and sexual exploitations.

These initiatives have not only helped support victims who have been trafficked within Malawi, but have also prevented Malawians from being trafficked. Church and Society has played an important role in the prevention of trafficking for early marriage. One girl who had been trafficked to Zambia from Edingeni, Malawi was detected and rescued by Church and Society staff and partners. They also prevented a young girl who had been sold for a 'dowry' of cattle, being taken to South Africa after being alerted by the community. Staff members were able to talk to her parents and provide psycho-social support for the girl as a way of helping her through this psychological trauma.

SOUTH AFRICA

Working across South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) also recognises poverty as a key factor in the trafficking of people across Africa. In 2014 the General Assembly of the UPCSA instructed the Church and Society Committee to address human trafficking, which is of growing concern. With movement from rural areas into cities, as well as from economically struggling countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe and Mozambique to South Africa, the most common forms of human trafficking include prostitution, sexual abuse, child labour and forced labour. The Church and Society Committee is in the process of developing a strategy to deal with these violations of human rights for the whole denomination.

Work has already begun in the Synod of Zambia, which has embarked on a campaign to sensitise people against human trafficking and workshops have already been held in one Presbytery, which they plan to roll out to the others. Focusing on the movement of young people from rural areas with the promise of better lives, they aim to educate people about the dangers of human trafficking.



GHANA

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (EPC,G) is advocating for rigorous anti-trafficking policies, and educating and empowering vulnerable communities while providing support for victims. Poverty and desperation play a major role in the trafficking of children in Ghana, a country where unemployment is widespread and approximately 40% of the population live below the poverty line. One of the biggest challenges in Ghana is the trafficking of children, particularly within the fishing industry. Trafficked from their home villages these children are exploited by fishermen who are desperate to feed their families and eke out a living along the banks of Lake Volta. Fishermen have reported that fish stocks are decreasing, making it difficult to survive by fishing alone.

“ *Poverty and desperation play a major role in the trafficking of children in Ghana.* ”

Recent research shows that there are currently 49,000 children in child labour on Lake Volta, 21,000 of who are considered to be in hazardous child labour. The children work long hours and live in meagre conditions. It is thought that the depletion of stocks is the key reason why children are needed in the fishing industry. In addition to being cheap labour, the small nimble fingers of children are useful in releasing fish from ever smaller nets. Another task the trafficked children frequently undertake is diving to disentangle the fish nets from the numerous tree stumps that are scattered though out the lake. As nets are dragged along the bottom of the lake they tend to get stuck. Diving is a dangerous job that can have dire consequences for the children, ranging from catching water borne diseases such as bilharzia and guinea worm to death by drowning.

Ghana was the first country to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and has used it as a guiding factor to create child right policies. The work of the Government, the Church and various NGOs is to ensure that children in Ghana receive recognition and enjoy these rights. Ghana has increased its law enforcement efforts by prosecuting and convicting an increasing number of traffickers, including the first convictions relating to forced child labour in the Lake Volta fishing industry. NGOs have created the Send No Child Campaign to spread awareness about the issue of child trafficking in Ghana by reaching out to Church leaders. The EPC,G believes that if ministers use their sermons to condemn sending children to Lake Volta, instruct members to report absent children suspected of being trafficked to the Police and Social Welfare, and teach congregations about the reality of life by the lake, they can prevent children from being trafficked. They are actively trying to raise awareness by holding press conferences and showing short documentaries during awareness-raising programmes for the public.



5. Human Trafficking in Asia



“ Women and girls make up the majority of victims, while the trafficking of males is lower than the global average.

While Asia is often associated with ‘sex tourism’ and trafficking for sexual exploitation, evidence suggests that, in terms of victims who have been found, more have actually been exploited for forced labour. Women and girls make up the majority of victims, while the trafficking of males is lower than the global average. As with our African partners, our partners in Asia are working within their own countries and communities to address the immediate problem of human trafficking. They also identify poverty, tradition and a lack of education as key challenges in the fight against human trafficking.



BANGLADESH

The Church of Bangladesh has encountered a wide range of human trafficking including that for forced labour, sexual exploitation and the trafficking of children to be trained as jockeys for camel racing. The Church of Bangladesh Social Development Programme (CBSDP), which has two projects that have been running for a number of years in Old Dhaka and Keranigonj. Our Mission Partner in Bangladesh, Pat Jamison has included stories about the Church of Bangladesh's anti-human trafficking work in her partner plan letters for some time and also has been doing awareness raising work.¹⁰

Keranigonj is a slum area where unemployment is high. Many families do not have regular salaries, so are quick to accept the trafficker's promises of work and good salaries. Many people discover the work is very different when they arrive at their destination and women are often forced into prostitution. Many are forced, drugged and kidnapped to other areas of Bangladesh particularly from rural areas to Dhaka or to other counties. For many who escape the traffickers, their return to Bangladesh is difficult, particularly as families are not quick to accept them. This happened to Rabeya who was trafficked to Saudi Arabia several years ago and forced into sex work. She managed to escape and return home; however, her family did not accept her. She joined a tailoring project run by CBSDP, and now earns her living making garments.

“ *For many who escape the traffickers, their return to Bangladesh is difficult, particularly as families are not quick to accept them.*

Camel racing in Saudi Arabia is a booming business and the CBSDP has helped children like Rasel, a 13 year old from Keranigonj who was trafficked to be trained as a jockey. Along with the help of other NGOs the CBSDP tracked the case. Eventually the King, under a great deal of pressure returned 500 young boys to their homes in Bangladesh who had been forced to train as jockeys after a great deal of pressure. Rasel was one of those boys returned. His family are deeply grateful to CBSDP for their help in making his return possible.



NEPAL

The problem of human trafficking has been growing in Nepal, largely due to poverty and associated factors including lack of awareness. Every year 5000-7000 women and children are trafficked into India for sexual exploitation and thousands of Nepali children are trafficked into India to work in carpet factories, potato farms, forced beggary and domestic child

“ Churches have become more aware of vulnerable persons.

labour. Our partner, the United Mission to Nepal (UMN), implemented an anti-human trafficking project in five districts of Nepal between 2011 to 2014 in partnership with Geneva Global, which aimed to reduce human trafficking by targeting the women and children who are most at risk with a focus on preventive activities including awareness, skill training and income generation schemes. This successful project recognised the importance of empowering and mobilising Nepalese people by creating women and Kishori (adolescent girl) groups to help implement the project. Through education, literacy, training and legal programmes, as well as the creation of alternative employment and self-employment opportunities for the poor and marginalised women and girls, the project sought to reduce their vulnerability to trafficking.

Archana's Story

Education is playing a vital role in Nepalese communities and statistics reveal that the project has been a success with a steady rise of people being aware of the type of individual who is vulnerable to human trafficking. Churches have also become more aware of vulnerable persons. Twelve year old Archana Rai from Khadgabhanjya benefited from this new rise of awareness. The daughter of alcoholics, her future looked bleak as child marriage and sending daughters away to work are common practices in her community. The Chandi Child Club noticed she was absent for a long time, so they visited her house and talked with her parents. It was really hard to convince them, but after multiple visits and lots of discussion, her parents agreed to send her to school. The Child Club decided to provide all the schooling materials necessary for her study. Now she has been re-admitted and is coming to school regularly. She says, 'I am saved, unlike my cousin-sisters, who are away from home and working for their living.'

THAILAND

The Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT) has a dedicated member of staff supported by the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ who addresses issues of human trafficking and child protection. A strategic plan is being developed which focuses on three main areas: data collection, working collaboratively in Thailand, and working with partners. Their vision is to become a depository of reliable information which will be made available to partners. There are many NGOs and missionaries in Thailand, but rather than working together they often compete for the same funding. While many Christian NGOs are providing restorative ministries, which the church supports, many victims are returning to their previous work because the minimum wage is so low. Poverty is a key factor driving people into the hands of traffickers and once the NGOs stop their work there is often nowhere for victims to go, and frequently those who return to their homes will go 'missing'.

As in many other parts of the world cultural norms and expectations play a role in the spread of human trafficking. There are certain taboos in Thailand including a refusal to talk about the trafficking of men. It is difficult to address forced labour for example, because it largely affects Burmese people known locally as the 'boat people', and is therefore not seen to be a Thai problem. Similarly there is a reluctance to talk about young boys as victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation due to stigma surrounding homosexuality despite these victims predominantly being heterosexual males. Urban Light in Shanghai is the only group working with boys in Thailand. It is a safe house for boys that can hold 25, but often turns away 2-3 boys a day. They don't 'rescue' people, rather they are approached. These are two areas which CCT wishes to raise awareness of within congregations in Thailand.

6. Human Trafficking in the Caribbean



Countries and islands in the Caribbean are source, transit and destination countries for adults and children who are trafficked for sexual exploitation and domestic labour. Raids in Trinidad and Tobago reveal that many of the victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation come from South America and have little or no English. Our partners in the Caribbean are focusing on education and awareness-raising using a variety of creative methods including presentations, documentaries, popular music, drama and art. They are working together under the leadership of the Council for World Mission Caribbean Region, and their work reveals the strengths of a collaborative approach in addressing the problems of human trafficking.

JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

The Council for World Mission Caribbean Region (the Cayman Islands, Guyana and Jamaica) roundtable meeting in 2013 highlighted a shared concern about human trafficking which impacts the life of Caribbean nationals. Following this meeting, over 80 people gathered together for a Regional Assembly on Human Trafficking in 2014. Bringing together ecumenical partners, stakeholders in the fight against human trafficking in Jamaica, and our partners the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) and the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT), this event showed a commitment to address this crime. Space was made for the sharing of victim's experiences as well as bible studies, prayer sessions, and a dramatic production 'Where is Melissa?' developed by a member of the UCJCI.

Those who attended the meeting were charged with the task of going back to their congregations and communities to help increase awareness of human trafficking on an individual and congregational level. Since then, these individuals have been giving talks in schools, as well as sharing information with professional organisations. Resources have been produced including posters and leaflets, and a PowerPoint presentation that is being used in a variety of places. A documentary has been made to communicate with congregations and wider society and was shown in January 2015. There is now enough material for two further documentaries. Complementary bible studies are being developed to be used alongside these documentaries.

Future plans include holding a youth forum on human trafficking in 2015. It is hoped that one of the outcomes of this event will be the creation of more cultural expressions to increase public awareness including songs, dub-poetry, drama, and dance. All of these efforts are intended to help people to understand this modern day slavery. The hope is that congregations will develop initiatives to help their young people understand their own vulnerability, and so that adults will be more vigilant and potentially provide useful information to the police. Recognising that the public constitutes both potential victims as well as perpetrators it is also anticipated that the broadcasting of this information will lead to an increased vulnerability of perpetrators to discovery, and dissuasion of those who may be within the church who are engaged in this practice.



7. Human Trafficking in Europe



“ The richer countries in Western and South Europe are generally destinations for victims trafficked from other regions and for European victims trafficked from Central Europe.

Trafficking victims in Western and Central Europe are most often adult women trafficked for sexual exploitation. Countries in Central Europe tend to be origin areas for cross-border trafficking into the rest of Europe. The richer countries in Western and South Europe are generally destinations for victims trafficked from other regions and for European victims trafficked from Central Europe. While sexual exploitation is high, there are also considerable levels of labour trafficking.¹¹ Trafficking in Eastern Europe tends to be intraregional, with few victims trafficked from other regions. Sexual exploitation is also high, but research shows more forced labour than in Western and Central Europe. It is evident from the responses of our partners that the churches in Europe are working together across borders to reduce trafficking and to identify and support victims. Many are complementing their work with trafficking victims in their own countries by working in partnership with the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), which aims not only to monitor the movement of people into Europe, but also to advocate at an EU level to make movement across borders safe, so that fewer people fall into the hands of traffickers.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren (ECCB) has been involved in anti-human trafficking work since 2009, when together with the German and Austrian churches they issued a joint statement about the necessity of a fight against the sexual exploitation of women and children around their common borders. The Synod of ECCB subsequently instructed the Diaconia (Social Services) of the church to work in this area, and the Centre for Nationwide Programmes and Services of Diaconia was created in 2011. The ECCB realised that there were several organisations in the Czech Republic working with victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, but there was no organisation working with victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, so the centre chose to concentrate fully on the latter. This work is supported by German and Swiss organisations including Kirchen helfen Kirchen (KHK) and Swiss Church Aid (HEKS).

The ECCB's main programme No to the Violence has two projects. The first is a three year project called Diaconia Against Trafficking in Human Beings and Working Exploitation (2013-2015) funded by Swiss Church Aid (HEKS), which is intended for migrants as well as Czech nationals who are victims of human trafficking. It includes street work and shelter for men and couples. Social counselling is provided for clients in the shelter as well as those who are at risk of exploitation. The second project is called Prevention of Trafficking and Exploitation in the EU and is financed by Kirchen Helfen Kirchen (KHK). This project raises awareness of human trafficking and labour exploitation among potential migrant workers. This preventative campaign takes place in countries of origin, for example Romania and Bulgaria, using e-learning tools, leaflets and brochures. In addition to these two projects they work closely with ECCB congregations to provide long-term assistance to migrants, as well as working with undocumented migrants in the Detention Centre, where they organise sewing workshops. These projects have helped many people like Peter.

Peter's Story

Peter grew up in an orphanage, but once he turned 18 he ended up living on the streets of Prague having no place to call home and no prospects. An unknown man approached Peter and his friend, offering them a good job in the UK, but once they arrived he took their papers and forced them to work in his house and in the fields with no pay. After some time Peter escaped and sought help. He was taken to a British charity, identified as a victim of trafficking and provided social services. The ECCB's Diaconie Centre was contacted and Peter was admitted to its asylum house. An individual plan was created for him to help him reintegrate into society.

THE NETHERLANDS

The Protestant Church in the Netherlands is part of a project called Safe Passage, together with the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and other European churches, which focuses on how legal ways to enter Europe could reduce the numbers of trafficking victims. Safe Passage is an initiative by churches across Europe, coordinated by CCME, which aims to make safe passage a reality for migrants and refugees trying to reach the EU through its Southern borders (Mediterranean, Turkey, Ceuta/Melilla). In the longer term it aims to change European asylum and migration policy so that refugee and migrants no longer have to resort to perilous journeys across EU borders. It is a three year project that began in July 2014 that will monitor border procedures at the EU southern borders as well as 'search and rescue' operations in the Mediterranean. It will communicate with the general public about the situation, and advocate on an EU level for legal pathways for people to enter the EU. Several European partners are involved in this initiative including the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy and the Swiss Federation of Protestant Churches. The project remains open for further participating churches from across Europe.



8. Conclusion: Poverty, Gender Inequality, Education and Building a Global Network

The experiences of our partners around the world reveal that human trafficking is having an adverse effect on a wide variety of communities. However, the enthusiastic and informative response that we received from our partners shows that Christian churches and communities are actively responding to this serious affront to human dignity and freedom. While each context is different, and the experiences of individual victims unique, there are striking similarities, which cannot be ignored. These relate to the root causes of human trafficking: poverty, gender inequality, and lack of education. Similarly, the organised Christian responses in countries where our partners are working are based on the same principles and largely on the same methods. The commonalities of this criminal enterprise have been identified, as well as the similarity of approaches which enable us to join together to work in partnership, creating a global network of support and information sharing. The experience of the ECCB working together with the German and Swiss churches reveals the strengths in this united approach. Each of us has something to offer the other as we begin to develop strategies that will put an end to this modern form of slavery.

Poverty stands out as a key influencing factor in the trafficking of human beings, affecting the lives of the victims and in some cases being identified as a reason behind the actions of some of the traffickers.¹² Almost all of our partners made reference to the poverty faced by those who are most vulnerable to being manipulated and abused by traffickers either as individuals or in allowing their children to be taken. This is particularly true of our partners in Africa and Asia; however, while our partners in the Caribbean and Europe do not explicitly mention poverty, it is implicit in their stories. Another cause, which has been identified and is not disconnected from poverty, is a lack of awareness and education around trafficking. Traffickers abuse traditional cultures and practices, which make it easier for them to traffick children; they rely on a lack of knowledge about work permits and visas making it easy to manipulate and terrify women and men; they rely on a lack of understanding of the law, particularly in foreign countries, so that victims fear escaping and seeking safety from the authorities. The work of St Andrews Church in Malta with refugees braving the Mediterranean supports research which shows that, for many, war and conflict leads them to desperation, paying huge sums of money to traffickers who promise them safety in foreign lands.

“Poverty stands out as a key influencing factor in the trafficking of human beings, affecting the lives of the victims and in some cases being identified as a reason behind the actions of some of the traffickers.”

Gender inequality plays a significant role in the success of human trafficking as deeply rooted inequalities in communities and societies put women and girls at significant risk of trafficking. While we continue to live in a world where men and women are not viewed as equal; indeed where some men and some women are viewed as inferior, people will continue being sold into modern day slavery. We must assert the value of every human being as equal, made in the image of God. The value of a human being is not monetary. There has been tremendous work with women and children, but we must also engage with men to re-empower them so that they understand that it is unacceptable to give their wives, daughters, nieces over



“ *Gender inequality plays a significant role in the success of human trafficking* ”

to traffickers. They too have an important role to play in the prevention of trafficking as global trends and the experiences shared reveal that more often than not traffickers are male. We can learn from the example of the ECCB who identified a need among men who are being trafficked, but we must also look at the conditions that make human trafficking possible and allow it to flourish.

The purpose of human trafficking comes in many forms and the responses of our partners focus on the most commonly detected: sexual exploitation and forced labour. Interestingly their responses reflect the UN report with regard to the purpose of trafficking and the gender of victims of trafficking with children and women being recognised as the most vulnerable.¹³ Many of our partners are responding in similar ways with the education of communities through awareness raising being a primary strategy for almost all. This takes a variety of forms: using church services to educate communities in Africa; using documentaries and the arts across the Caribbean; mobilising women’s groups in Nepal. There is also a commitment to help facilitate other economic enterprises which aim to lift vulnerable people out of the poverty that makes them more susceptible to traffickers’ ploys. For those who are victims of human trafficking our partners are responding with Christian love and a commitment to justice, providing them with safe havens in the Czech Republic, where they are also given support to reintegrate into society, or working with local NGOs and authorities to advocate for their freedom as seen in Malawi and Bangladesh.

Our European and Caribbean partners have demonstrated the strength of working together in partnership to address human trafficking. Evidence shows that human traffickers do not have any regard for borders, with hundreds of victims being moved intraregionally or transregionally. Nor should the Christian community be limited by the borders of our individual countries. The earth is the Lord’s and all human beings are the children of God. If we are to take this seriously as Christians then we must look beyond our borders at the full humanity of every person who has fallen victim to human trafficking and work together to ensure the freedom of all. When we stand together as a global Christian community we can learn from one another, support each other prayerfully and practically, and develop strategies together to confront this modern form of slavery.

Our partners have all revealed a Christian understanding of God’s will for all to live life in fullness as a child of God. Each expressed horror at this modern day slavery, which denies thousands the freedom and dignity that God desires for every human being. None can be accused of not combining their Christian understanding that human trafficking is an affront to God with practical action, for each is working within their own means to address the situation. For some of our partner churches this involves working with local NGOs and other organisations, such as the United Mission to Nepal and the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. For others it involves working with neighbouring countries such as the ECCB. For all, it is about human beings, the children of God who they minister to, who are suffering and vulnerable. By joining together in a global network we can strengthen and support each other’s work through information sharing, and prayerful support. We can raise awareness in our own countries through shared resources. We can learn from each other how to effectively support victims of human trafficking. Together we can fight the wider battle of global poverty, war and conflict, and migration issues that are influencing the increase of human trafficking across our world.



Endnotes

1 UNODC, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons*, Article 3, paragraph (a), 2000. <<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/what-is-human-trafficking.html>> <accessed 27/11/14>

2 Ibid

3 Ibid 33

4 <http://www.ungift.org/knowledgehub/about/trafficking-for-sexual-exploitation.html>

5 UNODC, *Protocol to Prevent*, 34

6 <<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>> <accessed 27/11/14>

7 < http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/comment-analysis/WCMS_181922/lang--en/index.htm> <accessed 27/11/14>

8 UNODC, *Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014*, 7. <http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/GLOTIP_2014_full_report.pdf>

9 Ibid

10 Pat Jamison is an ecumenically appointed Mission Partner of the Methodist Church in Britain and the Church of Scotland.

11 UNODC, *Trafficking in Persons*, 59.

12 The Presbyterian Church in Ghana recognised that the traffickers on Lake Volta are suffering severe hardship themselves. While this does not excuse the trafficking of children, it does bring us a small step closer to understanding one of the reasons behind trafficking in this instance.

13 UNODC, *Trafficking in Persons*, 5.

