

Fighting Modern Slavery at Its Source: The Value of a Community-Based Anti-Trafficking Approach

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With tens of millions of people trapped in various forms of modern slavery, throughout the world rescuing individuals one at a time will not rid our planet of this human rights scourge. What's needed is a strategy that liberates large groups of people and slavery-proofs entire

communities to ensure that others do not take the place of those who have been freed.

This is why Free the Slaves has developed a community-based model for fighting slavery. Our strategy is to liberate entire villages in Asia, Africa and the Americas, and to create lasting community resistance and resilience so that residents aren't easy prey for traffickers. The key is understanding vulnerability and how to reduce it.

What is Modern Slavery?

Slavery is any situation in which a person is exploited for the profit of another by force, fraud or coercion; receives no compensation other than the barest subsistence; and, is unable to leave. The U.N. International Labor Organization estimates that 21 million people are in slavery; the Walk Free Global Slavery Index puts the figure at 36 million. Asia has the most slaves, followed by sub-Saharan Africa. Slavery is concentrated in sectors with high levels of manual labour, such as agriculture, mining and fishing.

Slavery is most common among communities of poor people burdened by specific forms of vulnerability:

- **Lack of Awareness of Rights:** In many cases, people do not know their basic rights. They accept the condition of forced labour and exploitation. Debt bondage is a good example. People in debt actually accept the fact that the moneylender has the right to hold them as servants until the debt is paid. They do not know that the moneylender is committing a crime.
- **Lack of Awareness of Risks:** If people don't have access to good information about working conditions, the promise of a job can be highly alluring. The schemes and blandishments of traffickers are made to sound highly attractive and plausible. This can lead to people placing themselves at risk of trafficking.
- **Absence or Weakness of Protective Organizations:** Poor communities often lack effective local organizations that can serve as buffers and protectors and against those perpetrating enslavement. Disorganized communities are especially vulnerable to becoming enslaved.
- **Household Insecurity:** An underlying cause of slavery is the insecurity of families, by which we mean critical deficiencies in income, assets, access to schooling and health, and inadequate shelter. These deficits can lead to exploitation by those who promise to fill the void. People turn to usurious moneylenders in the absence of a legitimate source of credit. Children who are not in school are especially vulnerable to traffickers. A health crisis can drive people into debt and slavery.
- **Inadequate Legal Protection:** Poor and marginalized groups and communities are also the ones least likely to be protected by the law. Weak laws and lack of law

About Free the Slaves:

Free the Slaves liberates slaves, helps them rebuild their lives, and transforms the social, economic and political conditions that allow slavery to persist. We support community-driven interventions in partnership with local groups that help people to sustainable freedom and dismantle a region's system of slavery. We convince governments, international development organizations and businesses to implement key changes required for global eradication. We document and disseminate leading-edge practices to help the anti-slavery movement work more effectively. We raise awareness and promote action by opinion leaders, decision makers and the public. Free the Slaves is showing the world that ending slavery is possible.



enforcement reduce the risk to slaveholders and traffickers. Almost everywhere, the number of successful prosecutions for slavery is a tiny fraction of the number of crimes committed. Restitution to victims is rare. There are few, if any, penalties to companies that tolerate slavery in their supply chains. In such circumstances, there is a huge incentive for slavery since the profits are high and the costs and risks are low.

- **Survivor Vulnerability:** Survivors of slavery are especially vulnerable. They are usually traumatized as a result of physical, psychological and sexual abuse. They may have developed a perceived or real dependence on their traffickers. Survivors are almost invariably impoverished and sometimes without marketable skills. Their families and communities frequently stigmatize them; this is especially true of women and girls victimized by sex trafficking. Survivors are therefore at high risk of becoming re-enslaved.

A Community-Based Solution to Modern Slavery

Free the Slaves has developed a **Community Based Abolition Model** that captures the logic by which we redress key vulnerabilities. All of our programs are carried out with and through local partners. Our basic approach is to create assets that offset vulnerabilities: educate about rights and risks; organize community groups against slavery; strengthen household security; liberate those in slavery; and increase the costs and risks to perpetrators. The model draws from strategies that have been proven to be successful in other international human rights and development efforts.

Our model consists of:

- **Contextual Research:** We undertake research to define the vulnerabilities and pathways leading to slavery, and needed interventions.
- **Capacity Building:** We provide training, technical assistance and grants to strengthen local organizations

and agencies to achieve sustainable solutions.

Our partners include:

- o Non-governmental organizations that serve at-risk communities.
- o Government agencies responsible for essential services and/or legal protection.
- o Media that benefit from training on how to report about slavery.
- o Advocacy coalitions that seek reform of laws or more effective enforcement.
- o International organizations, including donors and international NGOs.
- **Fostering Community Resistance and Resilience:** In concert with local partners, we implement programs to reduce community vulnerabilities. **The outcomes we expect are:**
 - o Behaviour change from education and participatory exercises; these yield changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices that protect against slavery.
 - o Launching or strengthening community-based organizations. Our partners and we encourage the creation of village and neighbourhood committees that mobilize action against slavery. They educate neighbours, look out for traffickers, pursue suspected cases of slavery, and advocate for better services.
 - o Household security is advanced by helping communities to access legitimate sources of credit, schools, health care and employment.
 - o Survivor security is advanced by ensuring former slaves receive needed shelter, counselling, medical care, vocational training and follow-up.
 - o Legal and police protection are strengthened through training, legal services for survivors, media reporting on police protection, and political advocacy.
- **Sustained Reduction in Slavery:** Enhanced community resistance and resilience lead to long-term reductions in slavery. Specifically, we expect to observe the following:
 - o Liberation of slaves through direct action by newly



empowered individuals and communities or through rescues and raids undertaken by NGOs and police.

- o Reintegration of freed slaves, who, through survivor services, acquire the wherewithal to claim a life in freedom.
- o Reduction in the number of people newly entering slavery.
- o Decline in the prevalence of slavery in formerly vulnerable communities.

Free the Slaves is currently in a three-year evaluation to rigorously evaluate our model's effectiveness across different types of communities, countries and forms of slavery. However, we already know that our community-based approach delivers results. We know the Free the Slaves Community-based Abolition Model is effective. Our work has led to the liberation of well over 11,000 slaves. The 2015 data are still being compiled. In 2014, our collaboration with partners reached 1,977 villages, where more than 82,500 people were educated to protect themselves and their families from traffickers. Almost 1,300 government officials were trained on how to fight slavery. The collaboration with partners led to the arrest of 163 alleged traffickers and slave holders. We did this on a budget of about US\$3.2 million.



The Free the Slaves community model alone will not end slavery. While this approach will help to cut-off the supply of vulnerable people into systems of slavery, more is needed. A reduction in the consumer demand for goods made by slaves or with slavery-tainted materials is also necessary, as are improved law enforcement and services for slavery survivors. But a supply-side solution is essential in order to confront modern slavery from multiple directions.

You can learn more about modern slavery, our model and our monitoring and evaluation program at www.freetheslaves.net.

Conduct Contextual Research

SUBJECTS:

- Causes of Slavery
- Interventions Needed

Increase Organizational Capacity

TARGETS:

- NGOs
- Governments
- Media
- Advocacy Coalitions
- International Orgs

Foster Community Resistance and Resilience

OUTCOMES:

- Behavior Change
- Community Based Organizational Capacity Increased
- Household Security Increased
- Survivor Security Increased
- Legal/Police Protection Increased

Sustained Reduction in Slavery

RESULTS

- Slaves Freed
- Freed Slaves Reintegrated
- New Cases of Slavery Decrease
- % of the Population in Slavery Decreases

Our Formula for Freedom