



# Community Based Model For Fighting Slavery

## About Free the Slaves

Our mission is to liberate slaves and change the systems that allow slavery to persist. Free the Slaves works with local partners to implement effective approaches to ending slavery in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Senegal, Haiti, India and Nepal. We have developed a community-based model for fighting slavery that permits rigorous testing. Results to date are very encouraging. We are continuing to acquire and disseminate lessons learned that will advance the anti-slavery movement.

## 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. Asia has the most slaves, followed by sub-Saharan Africa. Slavery is concentrated in sectors with high levels of manual labor, such as agriculture, mining and fishing.

## Factors Leading to Slavery

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

Most Salient Vulnerabilities Leading to Slavery	
<b>Lack of Awareness of Rights</b>	In many cases, people do not know their basic rights. They accept the condition of forced labor 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.
<b>Lack of Awareness of Risks</b>	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.
<b>Absence or Weakness of Protective Organizations</b>	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.
<b>Household Insecurity</b>	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.
<b>Inadequate Legal Protection</b>	Poor and marginalized groups and communities are also the ones least likely to be protected by the law. Weak laws and lack of law 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.
<b>Survivor Vulnerability</b>	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.

# Community Based Model for Fighting Slavery

Free the Slaves has developed a causal model that captures the logic by which we attempt to 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. The detailed multi-step model and table of indicators to measure progress can be seen in the appendixes of this report. Below is a simplified explanation.

## Four Step Model for Fighting Slavery

**1. Contextual Research:** We undertake research to define the vulnerabilities and pathways leading to slavery, and needed interventions.

**2. Capacity Building:** We provide training, technical assistance and grants to strengthen local organizations and agencies to achieve sustainable solutions. Our partners may include:

- Non-governmental organizations that serve at-risk communities.
- Government agencies responsible for essential services and/or legal protection.
- Media that benefit from training on how to report about slavery.
- Advocacy coalitions that seek reform of laws or more effective enforcement.
- International organizations, including donors and international NGOs.

**3. Fostering Community Resistance and Resilience:** In concert with local partners, we implement programs to reduce community vulnerabilities. The outcomes we expect are:

- Behavior change from education and participatory exercises; these yield changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices that protect against slavery.
- Launching or strengthening community-based organizations. Our partners and we encourage the creation of village and neighborhood committees that mobilize action against slavery. They educate neighbors, look out for traffickers, pursue suspected cases of slavery, and advocate for better services.
- Household security is advanced by helping communities access legitimate sources of credit, schools, health care and employment.
- Survivor security is advanced by ensuring former slaves receive needed shelter, counseling, medical care, vocational training and follow-up.
- Legal and police protection are strengthened through training, legal services for survivors, media reporting on police protection, and political advocacy.

**4. Sustained Reduction in Slavery:** Enhanced community resistance and resilience lead to long-term reductions in slavery. Specifically, we expect to observe the following:

- Liberation of slaves through direct action by newly empowered individuals and communities or through rescues and raids undertaken by NGOs and police.
- Reintegration of freed slaves, who, through survivor services, acquire the wherewithal to claim a life in freedom.
- Reduction in the number of people newly entering slavery.
- Decline in the prevalence of slavery in formerly vulnerable communities.