

# GLOBAL CAUSES | LOCAL SOLUTIONS

2021 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



# FIGHTING A GLOBAL CRIME **AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

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The year 2021 brought a strategic re-evaluation to the work of Free the Slaves. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to increase social inequity and vulnerability to modern slavery, we reassessed where Free the Slaves could have the greatest impact. After extensive consultations with our supporters, partners, and allies, we've crafted a comprehensive blueprint for the coming decade. This report outlines our new strategic plan and details our programmatic accomplishments in 2021.

In the past year, we've helped build economic resilience for those who are vulnerable to human trafficking and for those who have survived modern slavery and are rebuilding their lives in freedom. We've researched the impact of COVID-19 and provided essential support to prevent the pandemic from driving more people into bondage. We've ensured that the voices of survivor activists help drive the anti-slavery movement, and that government officials are held accountable for their commitments to combat modern slavery at every level.

In the coming years, we will focus more directly on creating systemic change to end the conditions that allow modern slavery to exist. We will stress survivor engagement and leadership to guide and implement our work. We will research the causes of modern slavery and evaluate which solutions are most effective. We will build on our unique position as a founding organization of the modern anti-slavery movement to serve as a convener and connector to strengthen the alliances that make collective action possible.

One of our core principles will not change: our focus on community action and prevention. Modern slavery arises because of economic, social, cultural, and legal conditions that make individuals easy targets for traffickers. These conditions are in part caused by global trends related to poverty, climate change, war and conflict, globalization, migration, and other serious human rights violations, including the violation of social and economic rights, and racial injustice.

Modern slavery is both a cause and a symptom of social and economic inequity. As we work to build a more just and dignified world, we thank you for your continued support of Free the Slaves. We're in this struggle together, and we won't quit until slavery is finally a thing of the past—for everyone, everywhere.



**BUKENI WARUZI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**TIMOTHY PATRICK MCCARTHY**  
BOARD CHAIR

**OUR MISSION** IS TO END THE CONDITIONS THAT ALLOW MODERN SLAVERY TO EXIST.



IN 2021

# FREE THE SLAVES:

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**Liberated** more than 200 individuals from slavery in Ghana and Haiti. Our programs have brought children out of fishing slavery and domestic servitude, and helped them on paths to recovery.



**Provided** COVID-19 relief to more than 1,000 people in India. With livelihoods disrupted, many villagers are desperate for food and especially vulnerable to human traffickers.



**Developed** a new 10-year strategic plan. Our strategy is to help local communities fight global forces that make modern slavery possible.



**Expanded** our organizational presence in seven regions around the world. Our growth has helped spread Free the Slaves training and technical assistance to grassroots organizations in new regions.



**Influenced** U.N. Alliance 8.7 to adopt a new monitoring and accountability framework developed by Free the Slaves. Civil society organizations play a critical role in ensuring governments do their part.



**Convened** 325 anti-slavery organizations, survivors, government agencies, and activists through regional forums. Our expanded Freedom from Slavery Forum program ensures that local and regional voices inform the global discussion.



**Advocated** for an additional civil society seat at Alliance 8.7 representing survivors on the Global Coordinating Group. Those with lived experience are essential experts in leading the anti-slavery movement.



**Adapted** our Community Liberation Toolkit for virtual workshops. Ending modern slavery can't wait until face-to-face training is possible again. Our online workshops keep the movement's momentum going.



**Educated** thousands of people through social media platforms. Increasing public awareness that slavery still exists—but can be overcome—is vital.

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# 2021 | Our 10-Year Strategic Plan

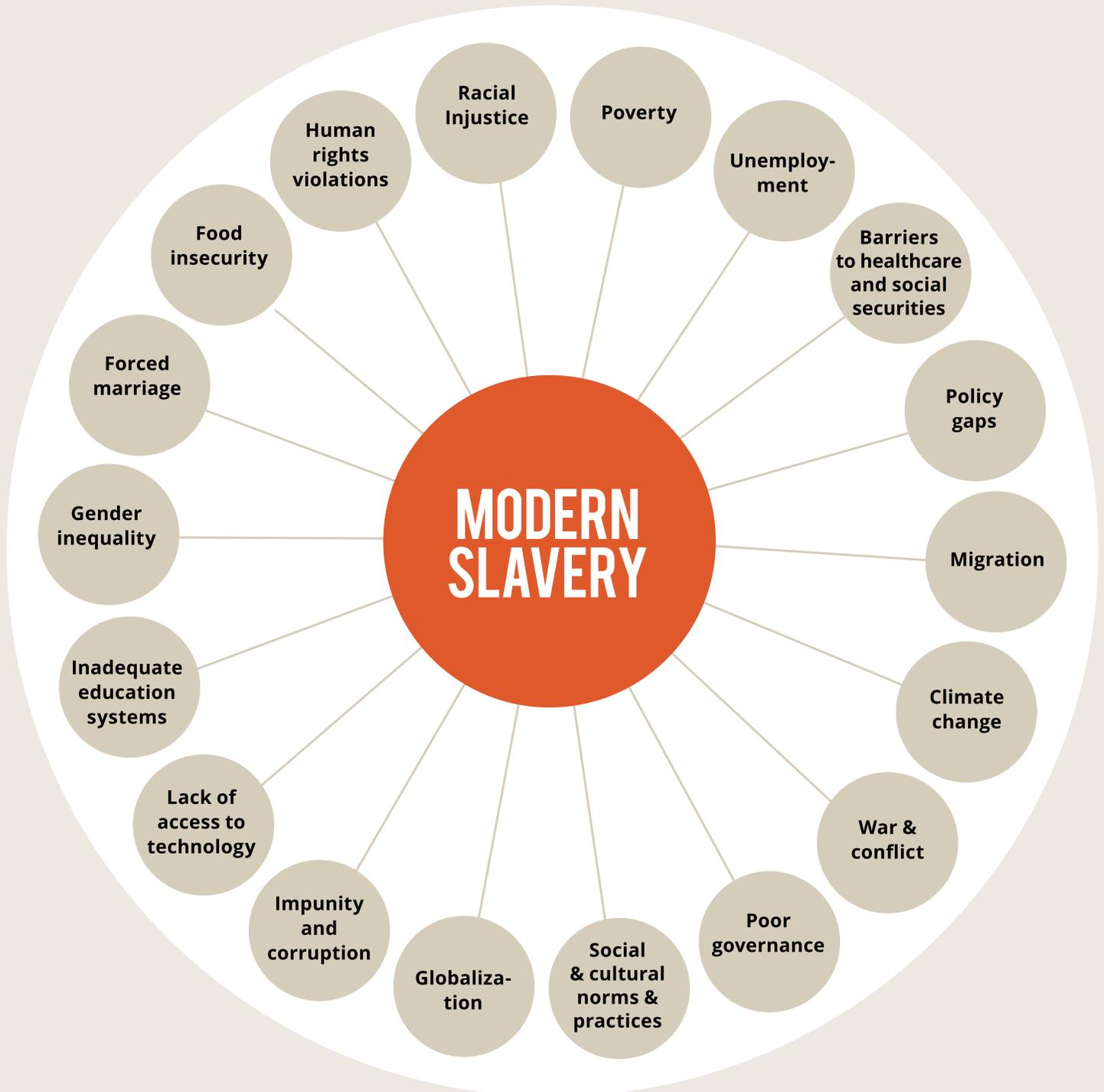


Our new plan is to align our work and the anti-slavery movement with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that address global trends, and help communities chart paths toward freedom by ending—at a local level—the conditions that allow modern slavery to exist.

## We're focusing on:

1. Populations living in poverty or in marginalized communities with little or no social services available
2. Survivors, especially women and girls, young people, and children
3. Discriminated classes/castes, ethnicities, and races at the lower end of social hierarchies
4. Displaced populations, undocumented migrants, and refugees
5. Public officials, members of grassroots organizations, and movement partners that seek innovative ideas and solutions to end modern slavery

# Modern slavery exists at the intersection of a multitude of social problems:



## OUR OBJECTIVE AREAS



### Community Engagement

Community organization, raising awareness, mobilizing, building knowledge, and changing attitudes and behaviors that are deeply ingrained in traditional patriarchal norms.



### Policy and Advocacy

Local and national policies, as well as law enforcement, must align with international standards. Implementation, enforcement, and budgeting address policy gaps where policies are enacted but never acted on.



### Movement Building

Keeping Free the Slaves in a leadership position within coalitions such as Alliance 8.7 and the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking; organizing the annual Freedom from Slavery Forum.

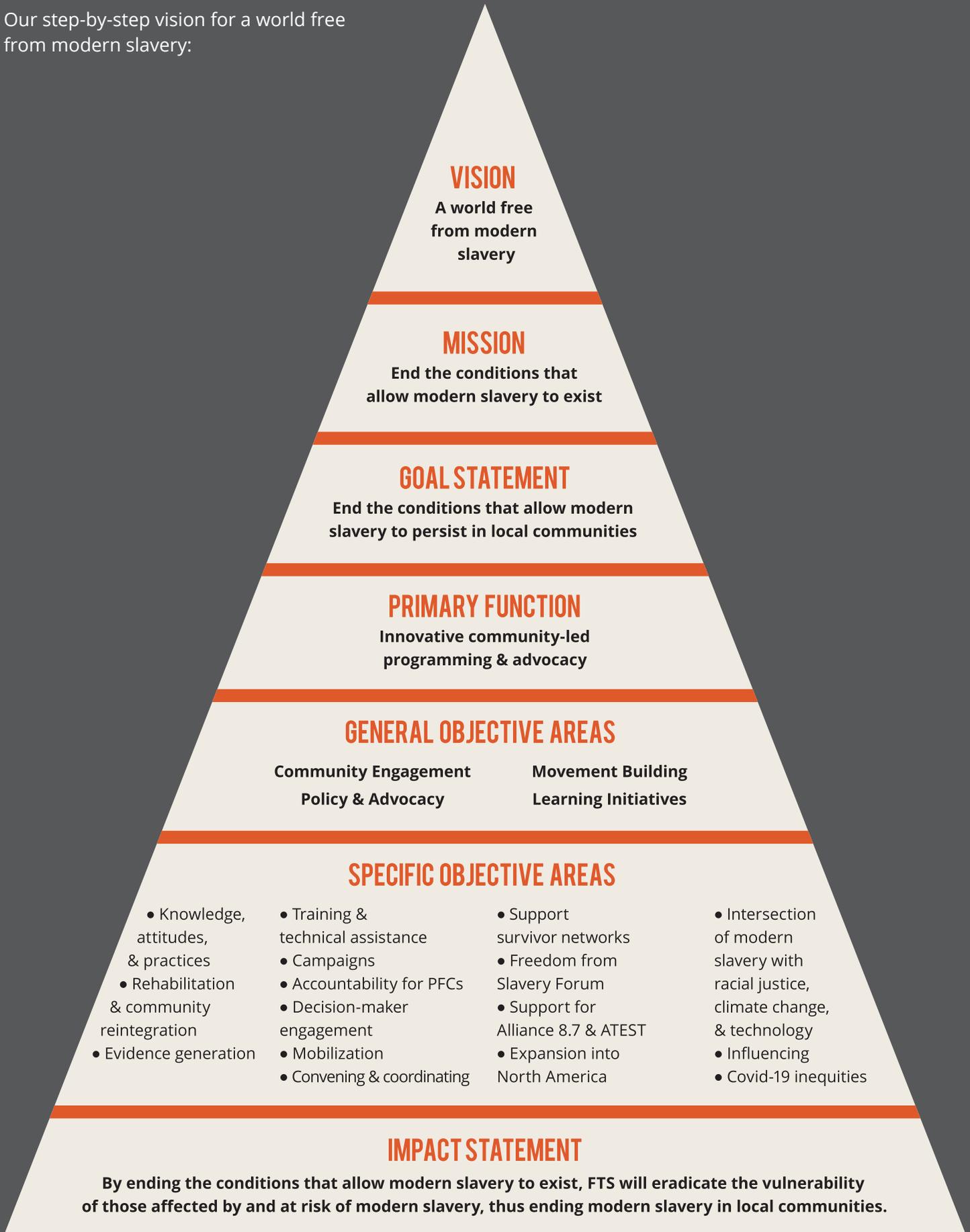


### Learning Initiatives

Exploring new programs that enhance organizational effectiveness and learning, support the movement, or tackle pressing issues that require Free the Slaves involvement such as trafficking in American Indian and Alaska Native communities and the nexus between racial justice and modern slavery in the United States and beyond.

# OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Our step-by-step vision for a world free from modern slavery:





*Front-line field journal*

## Fighting child trafficking in **GHANA**

Free the Slaves Executive Director Bukeni Waruzi traveled to villages in Ghana in 2021 as our program expanded to meet grassroots partners and visit villages where children are sent from home to work on fishing boats. His journal recounts how key elements of the Free the Slaves community-based strategy are reducing child trafficking.



### **STARTING A COMMUNITY-LED SAVINGS AND LOAN**

People without resources are vulnerable to offers of cash, food, or livestock if they send a child away with a trafficker. People without credit must borrow informally during emergencies, working off the debt in conditions of slavery. This is why I was keen to visit an island community called Chenekope. The boat ride took me through the fishing waters of Lake Volta, where thousands of children are enslaved on unsafe boats and canoes. There is no official bank in this village. So, with the help of Free the Slaves, people started their own village savings and loan association (VSLA). It allows villagers to establish savings and provides loans to families and microenterprises in need. The group looked well organized—and committed to the fight against human trafficking. VSLA members told me the savings club helps keep children off the boats.

## CHILD RIGHTS BEGIN WITH CHILDREN

The village school in Kobiri Nsuoano is a beacon of hope. It's a simple building down a bumpy narrow road. But what happens inside is revolutionary. Children are learning about their rights as part of a Free the Slaves program to prevent them from being trafficked into fishing slavery. It was uplifting and inspiring to see third, fourth and fifth graders so energized and optimistic about protecting themselves and safeguarding their entire village from traffickers.



## REBUILDING YOUNG LIVES SCARRED BY SLAVERY



The Village of Life shelter in Ghana is exactly what modern slavery survivors need. It's a vibrant and supportive place—far from the hardships and exploitation that children experience when enslaved in remote fishing villages. My visit started with a simple tour, including dormitories for boys and girls, the sick bay, canteen, school, soccer pitch, basketball court and play fields. There's everything a child needs to become a child once again. But just as important as the physical infrastructure is the philosophy of caring so evident here. Children arrive as malnourished, overworked laborers who have endured deeply traumatizing conditions. The shelter staff understands that these children need physical, psychological, social, and educational support to fully recover and return home.

## FOUR LETTERS THAT SPELL FREEDOM

It takes organization to free a village from modern slavery. In Ghana, that organization has a long name with a short acronym: a Community Child Protection Committee, or CCPC. Helping villagers form these committees is a fundamental element of our community-based approach. I dropped in on the CCPC in a village called Krankuase. They said they have been very busy. One of the key goals of any CCPC is educating villagers about child rights, and this group has not only been holding village meetings but has been going door to door to ensure that no child's family is left behind in the community education process. Another goal is to be on constant lookout for cases of child trafficking, and to intervene. I was impressed that this simple community structure was changing knowledge and attitudes.



combating  
slavery

# WORLDWIDE



## **SURVIVORS LEARN CAREER SKILLS TO BUILD THEIR FUTURES** ▶ VIETNAM

Most female trafficking victims in Vietnam end up in China as “brides” and sex workers. Vietnam is also the largest source of foreign brides for Taiwanese and South Korean men. To build financial resilience for Vietnamese trafficking survivors who’ve returned home, a new Free the Slaves partnership with HopeBox helps women rebuild their lives and build careers in food production and commercial kitchen operations.

## **SUPPORTING SURVIVOR ACTIVISTS** ▶ KENYA

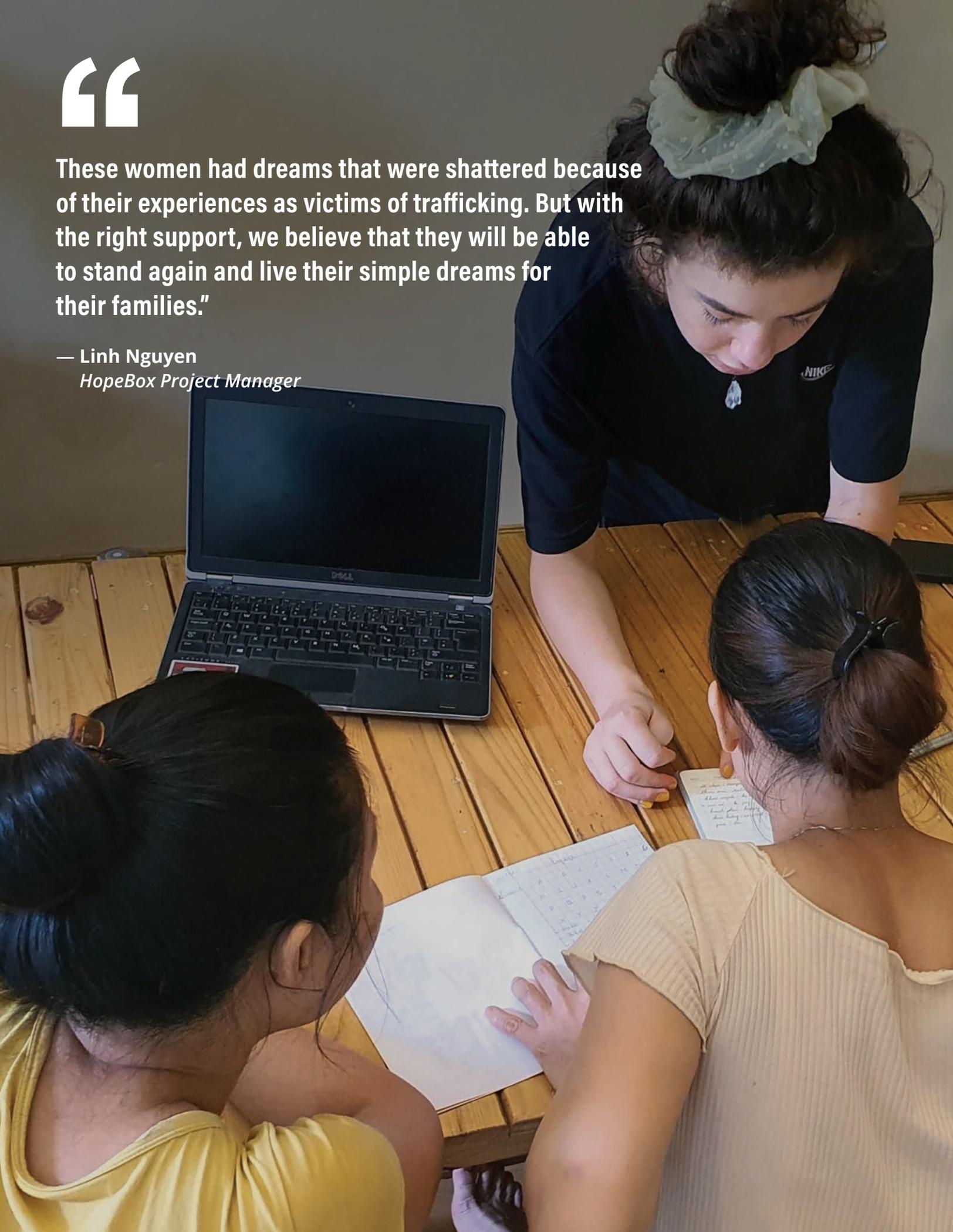
Grace Mwangangi joined our Kenya team in 2021 for the launch of the Free the Slaves survivor fellowship program. Nobody knows more about slavery than the people who have lived through it. Their experiences and wisdom form the foundations of the modern anti-slavery movement. Their activism is a moral force for change. Grace demonstrated exemplary courage by exposing her traffickers in an investigative documentary in 2019. Now, she’s helping to promote community awareness to prevent others from being exploited. Her fellowship focuses on developing technical and leadership skills as a human rights activist. She’s helping the Kenya team promote empowerment and self-sufficiency by organizing survivor support groups.



“

These women had dreams that were shattered because of their experiences as victims of trafficking. But with the right support, we believe that they will be able to stand again and live their simple dreams for their families.”

— Linh Nguyen  
*HopeBox Project Manager*





## BUILDING HOPE AMID CRISIS ► HAITI

Haiti is facing political instability, natural disasters, economic uncertainty, food shortages, and kidnappings for ransom. But on the remote island of La Gonave, Free the Slaves and our partner Beyond Borders are building hope in rural communities affected by child slavery. More than 100 women completed our Family Graduation Program in 2021. The initiative targets impoverished women whose children are at risk of being sent away into *restavèk* domestic slavery because she cannot support them. Participants receive a weekly cash stipend; construction materials to build a house; support for health care; a goat, pig, donkey, or start-up funds for a small business; and weekly visits from a case manager.

“ Through this program I received training and support that allowed me to begin earning a living. Now I can care for Claudia and my other children, send them to school, keep them fed, and give them the future I was denied.”

— **Carline** (pictured above)  
*Program graduate and child victim of restavèk slavery*



## PROMOTING SAFE MIGRATION ► INDIA

Migration is a fundamental human right, but traffickers take advantage of migrants who don't know the telltale signs of a scam. Thousands of Indian laborers migrate each year to the Middle East. For many, it's a journey into modern slavery. Free the Slaves is working with Indian community groups to share the warning signs of exploitative foreign work opportunities, and to provide information about government resources to avoid traffickers. The Safe Migration program has launched community-level training meetings and street graffiti messaging in 60 villages, based on a new in-depth manual created to help communities help themselves.



## OVERCOMING GOLD RUSH

### SEX TRAFFICKING ► SENEGAL

Small-scale gold mining in Senegal's Kédougou region has become a primary source of income for local villages, but it has led to widespread sex trafficking of adolescent girls and young women. They are often lured from their homes with promises of formal employment in Europe or elsewhere but find themselves trapped in forced sex work in mining zones instead. Our multi-year program, launched in 2021, will help hundreds of girls and women leave sex work at mines and return home. The program is training grassroots organizations and governmental agencies to ensure they provide services to victims and survivors of trafficking and their families.



## TRAINING JOURNALISTS AND NETWORKING ACTIVISTS ► MAURITANIA

Slavery in Mauritania dates back centuries, when Arab Berbers raided and enslaved Black Africans, forcing them to the bottom of a race-based social system. Today, 90,000 people, approximately two percent of Mauritania's population, are held in conditions of modern slavery. Free the Slaves is building social inclusion of structurally and historically marginalized groups. We're training journalists and building an inclusive media platform to foster social equity. We're establishing advocacy networks of activists, lawyers, and community organizations to hold the government accountable and to foster a culture of human rights. We're coordinating global civil society organizations and national governments to ensure Mauritania honors its international commitments to uphold the rule of law.



# 2021 | Movement Building

THE ELKES  
FOUNDATION

## FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY FORUM

### FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY FORUM

The Freedom from Slavery Forum pioneered new ground in 2021 as the anti-slavery movement's premiere thought-leadership convening. For the past eight years, the Forum has been a collegial space for anti-slavery leaders from around the world to coalesce, create partnerships, discuss promising practices, and develop a shared agenda for action. In 2021, the Forum added five regional convenings to ensure that grassroots ideas and voices are instrumental in and foundational to the movement. The new regional approach, conducted online, improved access for front-line activists and allowed the Forum to be a better reflection of the modern anti-slavery movement, putting the focus on equity, democratization, and inclusion.

Read the 2021 Regional Forums Reports at [freedomfromslaveryforum.org](https://freedomfromslaveryforum.org)



### ELKES IMPACT AWARDS

Dan Elkes is a visionary leader who established the Freedom from Slavery Forum to bolster the grassroots anti-slavery movement. The Elkes Impact Awards were launched in 2021 to recognize tremendous work being done by:

- Local survivor advocates and the impact they are creating in communities affected by modern slavery
- Civil society organizations working in affected communities at the front lines of the fight against modern slavery

#### 2021 Award Winners:

Grace Mwangangi, Most Impactful Survivor Advocate; Survivor Network of Cameroon, Most Impactful Local CSO. They received cash prizes, access to skill-building opportunities, and an invitation to the Global Freedom from Slavery Forum. Winners were recognized as ambassadors for the anti-trafficking movement and the Forum.

Free the Slaves serves as the secretariat for the Forum and the Awards.

ALLIANCE



## HOLDING GOVERNMENTS ACCOUNTABLE

Free the Slaves led development of a new mechanism to hold governments accountable for pledges they've made to reduce modern slavery. More than 25 countries have made commitments to Alliance 8.7, the U.N. effort to end child and forced labor. Free the Slaves serves on the alliance Global Coordinating Group (GCG) and innovated a process to applaud successful implementation of government action plans and to spotlight instances where governments fall short. We also successfully advocated to expand the GCG to include a slavery survivor activist.



Alliance To End  
Slavery & Trafficking

## RENEWING AMERICA'S COMMITMENT

One of the world's most comprehensive anti-trafficking laws is the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which must be renewed every few years. We helped lead anti-trafficking advocacy in 2021 as co-chair of the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking. The alliance engaged in detailed discussions with Congress to expand protections for survivors, prevent trafficking in supply chains, and integrate anti-trafficking strategies into foreign assistance.



United Kingdom 2021



## CLEANING UP GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

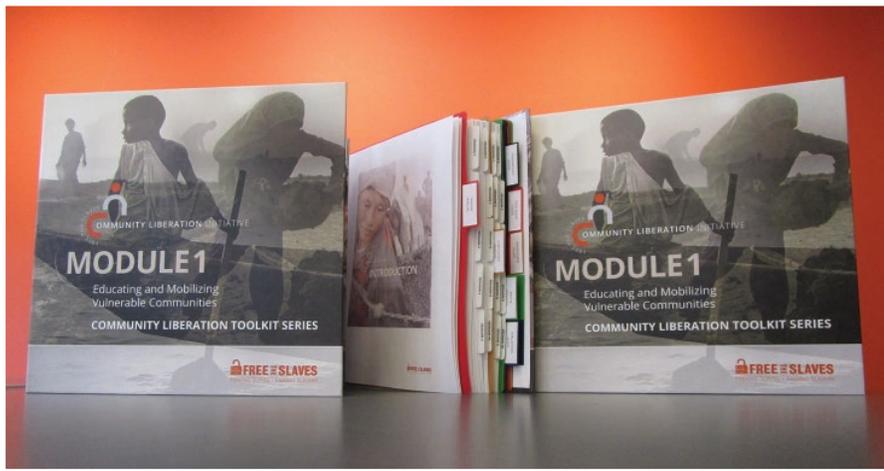
Free the Slaves Executive Director Bukeni Waruzi joined other anti-trafficking leaders to ask the Group of Seven industrialized nations to coordinate action against forced labor worldwide. G7 members should harmonize legal and regulatory standards; affirm that any future trade agreement, trade preference program, or other trade tools must prohibit forced labor; commit to recognizing any forced labor-related import, export, or internal sale prohibition of one G7 country as prohibited in all G7 countries; use public procurement policies to prevent forced labor; and commit new financial resources. World leaders responded in their communiqué to clean up global supply chains.



## STRENGTHENING LOCAL COALITIONS

Armed conflict and a weak government allow slavery to flourish in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Forced labor and sex slavery are widespread in mining regions—as is forced marriage. Our team is working with local organizations to strengthen the work of COSCAE, the Coalition of Civil Society for the Abolition of Slavery. COSCAE has been a vital voice in eastern DRC that strengthens the collective voice of community leaders to advocate with political, business, and security officials.

# 2021 | Capacity Building



## TOOLKIT TRAINING BUILDS LOCAL SKILLS

The Free the Slaves Community Liberation Toolkit distills the knowledge, skills and norms needed to implement our community-based approach to end the conditions that allow modern slavery to exist. The goal is to share best practices among front-line activists who often lack formal training in anti-trafficking techniques. Our teams conducted online workshops in 2021 for activists in India, Nepal, Kenya, and the Philippines.

**Module 1** | Educating and Mobilizing Vulnerable Communities

**Module 2** | Survivor Liberation, Care and Reintegration

**Module 3** | Strengthening the Rule of Law

**Module 4** | Ensuring Access to Essential Social and Economic Services



**The exchange of ideas from other participants including their best practices in addressing gaps in modern slavery have provided us powerful insights."**

— Juvy Naguita  
*Philippine Islands Kids  
International Foundation*

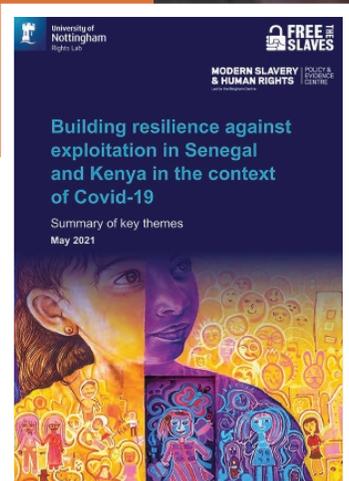


## SUPPORTING SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Free the Slaves works with survivor activists around the globe to document the injustice, insecurity, and indignity of modern slavery and to support their activism for urgent action. We have helped pioneer a survivor-centered approach since our inception. Survivor experience brings a unique perspective at local, regional, and global levels. We are creating, strengthening, and supporting locally-based networks of survivors to mobilize and educate communities and local decision-makers. The networks are aimed at enhancing survivor-centered leadership by providing capacity-building, advocacy, mobilization, and movement-building opportunities. This enables innovative approaches when responding to modern slavery and supports effective coordination and learning.

In Haiti, the Survivors of Restavèk Network builds public awareness that child domestic workers are child trafficking victims.





## COVID-19 IMPACT ON TRAFFICKING IN SENEGAL AND KENYA

The cost of the COVID-19 pandemic has most frequently been measured in lives lost and economic hardship. Triumphs have often been charted in terms of vaccine roll-outs and returns to 'freedoms' outside lockdown. However, pandemic impacts are likely to extend over decades, with complex effects for politics, society, and the lives of the COVID generation. Our 2021 [research project](#) with the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab explored this long-term and intersectional impact on human trafficking programs in key African countries.

## UNDERSTANDING MODERN SLAVERY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

There are 20 countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and modern slavery exists in different forms throughout the region. The most prevalent forms are labor trafficking, sex trafficking and domestic servitude, but forced marriage, organ trafficking, and the worst forms of child labor are also prevalent. Our 2021 MENA [landscape survey](#) details the current state of knowledge and approaches by civil society organizations. The findings are informing programmatic strategies to ensure they address gaps and further build capacity for the movement at the regional level.





## HUMANITARIAN AID PROVIDES LIFELINE FOR SURVIVORS ► INDIA

Human traffickers target society's most vulnerable individuals, and the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically increased vulnerability in India. To help community members through the crisis, Free the Slaves and our partner MSEMVS distributed food and hygiene kits to 1,000 families in 2021. Most of the recipients had been liberated from bonded labor slavery at brick kilns. The humanitarian aid was a critical lifeline to prevent their re-enslavement. Families lined up in special queues to receive emergency aid while maintaining safe social distance. Social workers helped more families get proper documentation to grant access to special government assistance.

“

Before Covid-19, my brothers used to help me. But now they are themselves struggling to earn. This ration will be sufficient for us to survive. I would like to thank you. You are helping us poor and needy in the time of crisis.”

— Urmila (pictured above)  
*Food Parcel Recipient*



## INTEGRATING ANTI-TRAFFICKING WORK INTO VACCINATION PROGRAMS ► INDIA

A pandemic response program in India worked to prevent the spread of the coronavirus while simultaneously spreading critical information to help people avoid human traffickers. Free the Slaves linked our advocacy partners with our India front-line partners to hand out anti-trafficking pamphlets to vulnerable community members at vaccination clinics. The goal of the brochure is for patients to become aware of trafficking and connect them to resources if they are victims. The team distributed more than 20,000 brochures in one of the most vulnerable areas of India.



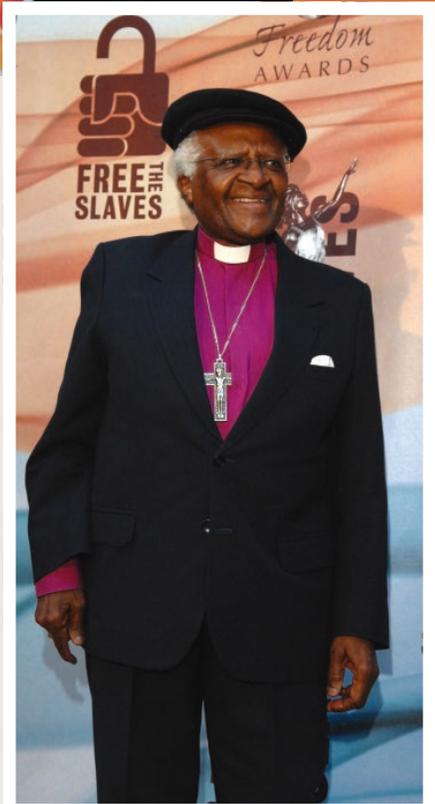
## REMEMBERING ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

As 2021 came to a close, sad news broke that one of history's greatest champions for freedom had passed. South African Archbishop, anti-apartheid activist, and Nobel Prize Laureate Desmond Tutu was an early and instrumental supporter of Free the Slaves. He served as our international advisor to build global momentum for the movement during our formative years.

"It is my great pleasure to support Free the Slaves in your sound research, targeted advocacy, and direct support of grassroots anti-slavery groups around the world. With Free the Slaves' rapid growth and compelling message, the

modern anti-slavery movement has grown from a few dedicated voices to a robust chorus demanding that slavery must end," he wrote.

The archbishop attended the 2008 Free the Slaves Freedom Awards in Los Angeles to present the Frederick Douglass Award to survivor-activist and Free the Slaves partner James Kofi Annan of Ghana. As he spoke to James and the hundreds of Hollywood celebrities, activists, and Free the Slaves supporters who gathered at the gala to celebrate front-line heroes of the anti-slavery movement, Tutu's irrepressible humor underscored that the work of liberation is arduous but joyous.



**On behalf of God — I have a hotline — thank you."**

— Archbishop Desmond Tutu

“

Enslaving others is one of the most horrendous crimes imaginable... I've seen Free the Slaves' successes firsthand in Ghana, Haiti, India, and Nepal. I can't imagine more important work to support.”

— Sheila Siegel

*Free the Slaves donor and volunteer*



*Slavery survivor James Kofi Annan has partnered with Free the Slaves to ensure trafficked children in Ghana are liberated and enrolled in school*

# 2021 | Global Staff and Board of Directors



## *The following individuals served on the Free the Slaves staff in 2021*

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Grace Nana Adwoa Banasam	Christa Giesecke
Lily Bivins	Jules Grifferty
Gemma Bardaji Blasco	Brittany Hamzy
B. Sonia Adu-Gyamfi	Wad Khalafalla
Joha Braimah	Claudia Lamptey
Casey Branchini	Friederike Lindenau
Eddy Byamungu Lwaboshi	Romcy Madronio
Kuldeep Singh Chauhan	Smith Maxime
Munya Chitambo	Lee McClure
Sokhna Fatou Cissokho	Jackline Mwendu
Justine Dery	Anita Nyanjong
Alphousseyni Diallo	Bismark Quartey
Tsering Diskit	Lianet Rosado
Anthonia Emordi	Nour Sibaa
Papa Fall	Marie Soveroski
Terry FitzPatrick	Bukeni Waruzi
Lamine Gaye	Pauline Werner

## *The following individuals served on the Free the Slaves board in 2021*

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**Juan A. Arteaga**  
Crowell & Moring LLP\*  
*Board Secretary*

**Evelyn Chumbow**  
Baker McKenzie\*

**Davina Durgana**  
Statistics Without Borders\*

**Lila Leno**  
Calibre CPA Group PLLC\*  
*Board Treasurer*

**Wade Litchfield**  
Florida Power and Light\*

**Carolyn Long**  
Independent Consultant  
*Board Vice Chair*

**Timothy Patrick McCarthy**  
Harvard University\*  
*Board Chair*

**Anesa "Nes" Parker**  
Deloitte\*

**Karen Stauss**  
U.S. Justice Department\*  
*Board Secretary*

**Amy Komoroski Wiwi**  
Lowenstein Sandler LLP\*

*\* Affiliations are for ID purposes only*

# 2021 | Our Thanks

Foundations, institutions, and donors made 2021 a remarkably successful year for Free the Slaves. Our heartfelt thanks for your grants, donations, and in-kind contributions.

Abra Hovgaard and Holly Hanson  
African Programming and  
Research Initiative to End Slavery  
Aldemar Montero  
Antonia Stefanescu  
Ashley Garrett  
Barbara Hebel  
Becket Family Foundation  
Dirk Robinson  
Dunn Family  
Charitable Foundation  
Elkes Foundation  
Freedom Club of Sacramento, CA  
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Freedom Fund  
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International Labor Organization  
Joyce and John Feeney  
Light a Single Candle Foundation  
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MKM Foundation  
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for Democracy  
NEO Philanthropy

Ninan Chacko  
Richard Higgins and Margaret  
Graff  
Salesforce  
Schechter Foundation  
Seamont Foundation  
The Sunflower Foundation  
The W. O'Neil Foundation  
Timothy McCarthy  
U.S. Department of State  
United Way  
University of Nottingham  
Verité

Thanks to the many individuals from around the world who continue to support Free the Slaves.  
With your help, we can end the conditions that allow modern slavery to exist.

**WORKING TOWARD A WORLD FREE FROM MODERN SLAVERY.**



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