

INTRODUCTION

Modern Slavery

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and patterned leggings, is bending over in a grassy field, smiling and clapping her hands. Two young children, a girl and a boy, both wearing white school shirts and dark blue skirts/pants, are standing in front of her, also smiling and clapping. The background consists of lush green trees under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

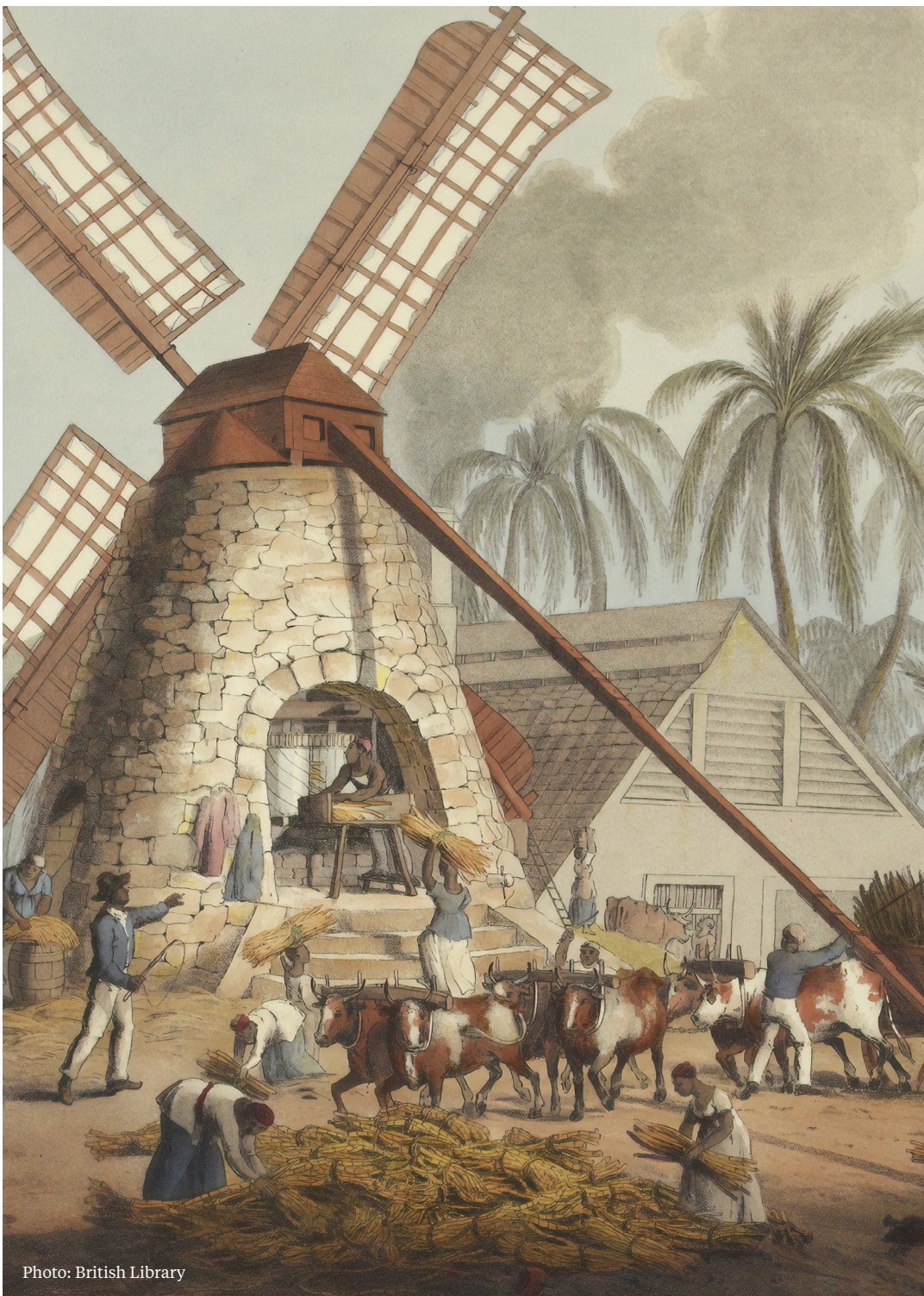


Photo: British Library

Introduction

Tearfund's Modern Slavery work is focused on helping to protect vulnerable people from trafficking and exploitation, as well as giving survivors a safe place to heal, recover and restore their dignity through rehabilitation and supported reintegration.

Slavery is something that happened a long time ago—right? Wrong. There are more people trapped in slavery today than were transported during the transatlantic slave trade. At Tearfund, we are committed to fighting this injustice. As history attests, it's not a fight we can wage alone; to combat modern slavery, we need a movement.

History of Slavery

Slavery predates human records and was institutionalised in cultures around the world from the earliest days of humanity. Over time though, it has been recognised that slavery breaches and is an abuse of basic human rights.

As soon as humans began forming civilisations they also began the practice of slavery. An early example of slavery is recorded in the Bible. In Exodus 1, the Israelites were being held as slaves in Egypt and forced to work in poor conditions. Generations later, the people of Israel were exiled to Babylon (2 Kings 25).

The most well-known slave-trading system was the transatlantic slave trade. This trade was brutal and constituted a mass migration, by kidnap, of Africans into other nations. Records show that an estimated 13 million African slaves were taken from their homeland and moved to other nations during the legal trade. Tragically, only 11.3 million survived the initial transportation and were delivered to destination ports¹.

The United States of America has a legacy as a significant perpetrator of the slave trade, with some of the cruellest slavery practices in history. From the 1600s, the burgeoning economies of the southern states in America were heavily reliant on the free labour of slaves from the transatlantic trade.

1 <http://www.slaverysite.com/Body/facts%20and%20figures.htm>



Photo: Nikki Denholm

In 1807, thanks to the work of William Wilberforce and other abolitionists, the British Parliament abolished the slave trade throughout the British Empire.

Much later, on the 10th of December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 4 of the Declaration states, “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude, slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.”² The battle against slavery had finally been won... or had it?

A Biblical Perspective

Sadly, while many Christians were inspired by their faith to combat slavery, others used the slavery in the Bible to justify the legal trade in slaves before it was abolished.

There is a recognisable progression on the issue of slavery in the Bible. This is understandable once we recognise that the Bible is a group of books spanning thousands of years. While God is unchanging, we would all recognise that cultures and context change over time. Because of this, slavery is seen in a different light in a new era. Slavery is one of the issues that changes in scripture over time and across the span of different cultures within the various writings.

Paul’s New Testament teachings strongly reinforce the belief that all people are made in the image of God and so deserve freedom and dignity. With this in mind, if you are a person who follows in the footsteps of Jesus, you are endowed with a mandate to promote human dignity and to stand against that which seeks to dehumanise. Human trafficking and slavery are glaring issues that rob people of their humanity. We people of faith have to stand against it, and we exist within a tradition that has, historically, done exactly that.

2 <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

Modern Slavery

Whilst the legal trading of slaves ended several hundred years ago, the trade itself did not. Unfortunately, slavery has become worse in recent years. It is once again a global problem of mammoth proportions that requires a comprehensive response.

Modern slavery means a person is being forced to work very hard without proper remuneration or appreciation and are usually unable to escape. It is estimated that there are around 40.3 million people trapped in some form of slavery today.³ It is an issue that impacts every country in the world.

Of those 40.3 million, 24.9 million people are trapped in forced labour, and 4.8 million of these are in forced sexual exploitation. Forced labour includes working in rock quarries, garment factories and domestic servitude and includes sexual exploitation. Children are also in forced labour. The remaining 15.4 million people are those in forced marriages including children.⁴

Trafficking

It is important to understand the difference between slavery and trafficking because these two things often get mixed up and wrong statistics circulate as a result. Trafficking is how many people, but not all, end up in slavery. Lots of people are caught in debt bondage and end up in slavery and exploitation in their community. These people are not, technically, trafficked.

Human trafficking is an organised criminal activity that largely exists because of the profit involved. The International Labour Organisation estimates the human trafficking and slavery industry generates (NZ) \$230 billion in profit annually. Of that, commercial sexual exploitation generates about \$150 billion.⁵

³ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/policy-areas/statistics/lang--en/index.htm>

Our Approach

Our Modern Slavery cause aims to holistically combat labour and sex trafficking and exploitation in all its forms.

To do this, we work holistically through what is called the “five Ps approach”: prevention, prosecution, protection, policy and partnership. The different approaches we take within this sector to comprehensively address issues of trafficking and exploitation are explained below:

Prevention:

Reducing vulnerabilities to trafficking and exploitation through addressing the root causes through community mobilisation, increasing income generation, education and decision-making opportunities, encouraging safe migration; and supporting women’s empowerment, gender equality, and child rights and protection initiatives.

Prosecution:

Supporting the increased deterrence to trafficking and exploitation through investigating both domestic and cross-border cases of trafficking and exploitation, supporting police operations to remove survivors from harm, and prosecuting perpetrators through strengthening judicial and financial systems and holding these systems to account.

Protection:

Supporting the provision of trauma-informed aftercare services for survivors of trafficking and exploitation for recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration into the community, significantly reducing the risk of further exploitation.

Partnership:

Supporting inter-agency collaboration and strong partnerships to resist the coordinated networks of traffickers.

Policy:

Supporting research, policy development and advocacy to strengthen institutions and policy mechanisms to deliver justice and protect survivors.

Your Response

Modern Slavery is a challenging and distressing cause to engage with. The statistics are sobering reading but Tearfund's partners are making a difference on the frontline of global efforts to combat exploitation and slavery.

Learn

Check out the Church Mission, Modern Slavery study booklet, to learn more about modern slavery, how Tearfund is working to address this issue and what you can do to help. Check out *Digging Deeper Human Trafficking* and the *Church Mission: Modern Slavery* study booklet available on our website to learn more.

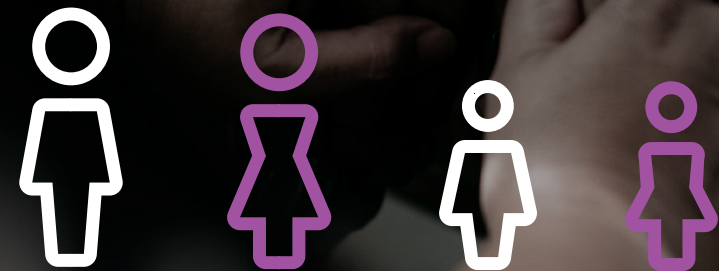
Pray

You can pray that victims of trafficking and exploitation will receive the help and rehabilitation they need. Pray also for our partners on the frontlines working tirelessly to help prosecute perpetrators, educate communities, represent the needs of survivors and provide ongoing support and rehabilitation.

Act

- The extent of labour exploitation in the supply chains of products you use or consume every day is staggering. Start being a conscious consumer to make sure you're not accidentally perpetuating slavery and exploitation through your everyday choices in New Zealand. Tearfund's Ethical Fashion work is a great place to start.
- Consider participating in a Tearfund fundraising event or organising your own. Your efforts can help fund Tearfund's partners working in the Modern Slavery cause.
- Join Tearfund's advocate network to keep up to date with activities, information and stories from Tearfund's partners. Share your learning with friends, family and networks.

Detected victims of trafficking in persons globally by age group and sex 2016



Men 21% Women 49% Boys 7% Girls 23%

Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.