
Anti-trafficking

People are not commodities, yet the trade in human-beings is thriving. Our fight is for freedom and the dignity of humanity.

Why Tearfund works in Anti-trafficking

Human trafficking is an organised criminal activity that deceives and coerces people into slavery. The majority of victims are vulnerable women and children trapped in poverty.¹ Trafficking and forced exploitation largely exist because of the profit involved. According to the International Labour Organisation it is estimated that forced exploitation generates \$150 billion (USD) in annual profit, with sexual exploitation making up \$99 billion of that.²

Human trafficking and exploitation are abuses of a person's humanity. The life expectancy of people caught in the trap of human trafficking and exploitation dramatically decreases from the norm. In fact some estimate that those caught in sexual exploitation survive only an average of seven years.³

Human trafficking and exploitation also tear families apart. Sometimes parents are in circumstances that compel them to sell their children or they are lied to and manipulated into giving their children up. Even if an individual is freed from trafficking the family is not necessarily reunited. Sometimes the stigma surrounding the victim is so great that it is impossible for them to return to their home and family. Returning home may run the risk of the individual being re-victimised or taken advantage of because of their vulnerability.

According to the International Labour Organisation there are almost 21 million people who are enslaved today.

¹ <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang-en/index.htm>

² http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_243201/lang-en/index.htm

³ <http://arkofhopeforchildren.org/child-trafficking/child-trafficking-statistics>



A Biblical Perspective

Human trafficking and exploitation are an assault on what's known as the 'Imago Dei' (the 'image of God'). One of the starting points of Christian thinking is that we are created in the image of God. We see this in the creation narratives of Genesis. The arc of scripture highlights this image from the opening chapters of Genesis. Creation in God's image is followed by a 'fall' from what was intended, and then a movement back towards that intention and eventually a greater realisation of it in the closing chapters of Revelation.

Slavery was present and normal in ancient times. It would be easy to dismiss scripture as affirming slavery while missing the many times where, in their context, the writers were offering challenging revolutionary steps forward on the issue. The world that is seen in Revelation 21 and 22, was firmly in mind.

Two critical signals of this are found in the writings of Paul. One is where he affirms the equality of all people in Christ in his letter to the church in Galatia (Galatians 3:28). The next comes as he openly challenges a wealthy man, Philemon, to welcome back his slave, Onesimus, as a brother rather than as a slave. Paul's view here was that Philemon and Onesimus were equals. The early Christians sat at the same table: man, woman, Jew, Gentile, slave, and free. This was revolutionary in the 1st Century world.

Our Approach

Tearfund has an end-to-end approach to tackling human trafficking and exploitation. We address the issue right from the potential victims, through the trafficking chain, to the conditions that make the industry profitable.

With this in mind Tearfund is involved in the following with our partners:

**Our goal:
To combat trafficking & exploitation holistically**

Prevention

We reduce the vulnerability of communities and individuals' to trafficking and exploitation by addressing the root causes. The tools we use to achieve this are awareness-raising about the risks of trafficking within communities, increasing income generation and education opportunities, encouraging safe migration, supporting women's empowerment, gender equality and child rights and protection initiatives.

Prosecution

With our partners, we investigate domestic and cross-border cases of trafficking and exploitation. We facilitate the rescue of victims and prosecute perpetrators through strengthening judicial and financial systems and holding these systems to account.

Protection

Alongside our partners we provide trauma-informed aftercare services for survivors of trafficking and exploitation. This allows space for recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

Partnership

We support inter-agency collaboration and build strong partnerships to resist the co-ordinated networks of traffickers.

Policy

We support research, policy development and advocacy to strengthen institutions and policy mechanisms to deliver justice and protect victims. We also support NZ groups working against cultural attitudes to women that create demand.

Your Response

Our work with partners overseas can help reduce vulnerability to trafficking, rescue victims and rehabilitate survivors. But the other half of the story is demand. In our everyday lives, we may be unwittingly purchasing goods produced through slavery and exploitation. This side of the equation needs much work!

Give

You can support Tearfund's end-to-end work to combat human trafficking and exploitation by giving to our Project Act pledge. You can also raise money yourself by participating in *Live Below the Line* or the *Poverty Cycle*.

Learn

There is much more to be learned about modern slavery – its history, causes, perpetrators and solutions. Tearfund's *No Longer Slaves* booklet has been highly commended as a great introduction to this topic.

Advocate

Take action and lobby companies to ensure their supply chains are slave free. Baptist World Aid's *Behind the Barcode* campaign and *Shop Ethical* both provide information on how companies stack up, ethically.

Lobby the New Zealand government to create clearer laws around supply chain for imports and on human trafficking and exploitation. Or campaign against the sexualisation of women and girls that drives demand for the sex trafficking industry.

Pray

Pray for freedom for victims currently trapped in slavery. Pray for wisdom and courage for those fighting the issue and for transparency where corruption entrenches the problem. Pray for the care and nurture of survivors.

Live

The challenge is to live a lifestyle where you refuse to exploit others for your gain or entertainment – even if this is hidden. Check out Tearfund's lifestyle challenge resources including *The Good Lives Project* study booklet and *Living Lent*. These resources will help you to become conscious of the impact of your purchasing and lifestyle.