

# THE FIGHT TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

*By Chris Miller*  
*Geneva Global Senior Sector Advisor*

The figures speak for themselves, although they are often overshadowed.

Trafficking in human beings enriches criminals by \$7 billion to \$10 billion a year – falling just behind illegal trading in drugs and weapons, according to United Nations reports. And an estimated 27 million people are victims of slavery and human trafficking, says Kevin Bales of Washington, D.C.-based Free the Slaves.

Since 2003, Geneva Global clients have invested more than \$4.4 million in the fight against human trafficking, bringing measurable Life Change to nearly 450,000 people. Our strategy focuses on restoring liberty and dignity to the enslaved and helping change underlying cultural norms and legal systems that allow people to be treated as property.

Because of these values and systems, slavery and trafficking continue to flourish. Though poverty makes people and communities more vulnerable to trafficking, it is not the true cause. Deeply rooted cultural norms devalue women and children, or accept slavery as a necessary piece of the local economy. Laws against human trafficking exist, but are enforced poorly or not at all.

In our experience, programs that have a significant impact on human trafficking – whether led by an individual implementer or carried out by a network of organizations – address each of three key elements:

### 1. Prevention

Raising community awareness helps prevent trafficking, and providing opportunities to build income reduces the vulnerability of poor families. An investment of \$36,000 through Geneva Global helped a North India organization educate parents and community leaders on the dangers and signs of trafficking, and train them to identify potential victims. Families benefited from income-generating activities.

### 2. Rescue and rehabilitation

These efforts free victims of sexual exploitation and forced labor, and provide support to keep them from being trafficked again. In Ghana, an investment of about \$60,000 through Geneva Global helped an organization rescue 100 children from servitude and provide them with counseling and job skills. The project also supplied job training and small loans to 200 parents of trafficked children, raising household incomes for 800 family members and reducing victims' vulnerability to repeated trafficking. Rehabilitation can be a lengthy and costly process. Young victims may need years of extensive support. But it is critical to

preventing re-trafficking and breaking the cycle of abuse.

### 3. Strengthening legal protection and access to justice

These projects focus on legal reform, prosecution of traffickers and local advocacy for government accountability and services for victims. By creating a deterrent to traffickers, these efforts can also serve as preventive measures. An investment of about \$70,000 through Geneva Global helped an Ecuadorian advocacy group push through legislation against sexual exploitation of children, and then educate local government and community leaders on the new law. These efforts helped protect an estimated 30,000 children.

Each of these projects was part of a larger multipronged Initiative in its region – a comprehensive approach more effective against slavery and trafficking. Programs must also be tailored to local cultures and conditions. While these abusive practices share similarities around the globe, there are also geographic differences that call for specific strategies. The following examples are not indicative of all human trafficking in the specific region, but they illustrate how different the problem can be around the world:

#### Eastern Europe

Organized crime plays a key role in Eastern Europe's human trafficking. Programs should include national and international law enforcement efforts.

#### India

Government accountability is critical in fighting trafficking and slavery. Indian law promises freed slaves \$450 each in rehabilitation funds, but obtaining payment requires determined advocacy on behalf of victims. Government

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As our research teams follow and adjust best practices, they also investigate how each implementer employs them so your investments go to where they will be most effective.

*Our sectors are:*

- > HEALTH
- > ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
- > HUMAN LIBERTY
- > EDUCATION
- > DISASTER RECOVERY
- > ENVIRONMENT



*An environment of international and government pressure makes it possible for grass-roots organizations, like one in Ghana in which these girls were beneficiaries of education to prevent trafficking, to make inroads against human slavery. Geneva Global clients bring this vital support to local abolitionists around the world.*

shelters for women and children rescued from sexual exploitation often lack basic necessities. Private funding can help strengthen these shelters' services, but must not replace government commitments and responsibilities.

## Ghana

Our recent research into Ghana's fishing industry shows law enforcement to be a less effective first-line intervention. Unlike the sex trade in Asia, the slavery of children in Ghana is not a lucrative business. It is an embedded cultural practice under which many slaves will eventually become slave owners themselves; the fishermen see no other way to keep their businesses viable. Local organizations have been successful in making fishermen aware of a new law against these abuses, and have provided microloans to help develop sustainable fishing businesses and other livelihoods that do not depend on forced child labor.

Local implementers are critical in ending the horrific practices of slavery and human trafficking. But the real key is effective collaboration among these local abolitionists, international organizations and national governments.

Applying the unique strengths of each of these three forces will bring about the pressure on all sides needed to topple this appalling criminal enterprise.

We have seen success in the fight against modern-day slavery through the right combination of local implementers, international organizations and government commitment. Over the last five to 10 years, for instance, the epicenter of sex trafficking in Southeast Asia has shifted from Thailand to Cambodia and now to Malaysia. Trafficking has not been eradicated in Thailand and Cambodia, but coordinated efforts have reduced it significantly.

An environment of international and government pressure makes it possible for grass-roots organizations to bring about such changes. We want to bring this vital support to local abolitionists around the world.

Two hundred years ago, the British Empire abolished the slave trade. Today, we draw strength and inspiration from that victory in the fight for human liberty. Slavery has been beaten in the past, and today's battle can also be won.