The 8.7 Quarterly

Winter 2024

Welcome to the twelfth edition of the Commonwealth 8.7 Network Newsletter!

Here you will find news about the 8.7 Network, the impact of our work across all regions, useful resources and tools, as well as our latest updates and activities.

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Photo Credit: Empower People

About the Commonwealth 8.7 Network

The Commonwealth 8.7 Network is an international, member-driven network of 106 national and local civil society organisations and individuals united by a common vision to eradicate contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking.

Our members work on diverse issues including survivor advocacy, direct assistance and vocational training to survivors, child protection, women's rights, migrants' rights, indigenous peoples' rights, and human rights due diligence for businesses.

Founded by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, the Commonwealth 8.7 Network is named after the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.7. The Network serves as a knowledge-sharing platform working collaboratively to raise awareness, build capacity, and advocate for legal and policy change.

In 2019, the Commonwealth 8.7 Network received the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Award for Innovation for Sustainable Development.

Join us today and let's work together to eradicate contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking!

https://www.commonwealth-87.org/become-a-member

Meet Jamils Richard Achunji Anguaseh, Member of the Commonwealth 8.7 Network

Dear 8.7 Network Members and Friends,

From the Global Welfare Association (GLOWA), it is an honour for me to present the winter edition of The 8.7 Quarterly Newsletter, which focuses on "Women Empowerment: Education through Skill Development and Vocational Training"

In this edition, we delve into how our network fosters resilience and unlocks potential for women across the globe. We challenge our readers to consider: how can empowering women not only safeguard them from vulnerabilities like trafficking, but also propel them toward richer, more fulfilling lives? Are we effectively supporting women in our own communities through education and growth opportunities?

At GLOWA, we stand committed to empowering women to rebuild lives and strengthen resilience, particularly those at risk of exploitation. Our GLOWAHaus serves as a beacon of healing and growth, offering resources tailored to individual needs. Guided by the wisdom of "prevention is better than cure," we actively build resilience in women at risk, addressing vulnerability through academic scholarships, research initiatives, and awareness campaigns that illuminate recruitment scams and abusive behaviours.

For too long, women's contributions to our world have been undervalued, often dismissed as unskilled labour. This outdated perspective fails to recognise the boundless potential locked within each woman. It's time to shift our focus and invest in women's empowerment through skill development and vocational training.

We strongly believe that if the educational and vocational skill needs of women are properly evaluated together with the role they play not just in economies, but in families, communities, and the very fabric of our societies, there can be a genuine motivation for the prioritisation of their empowerment.

Jamils Richard Achunji Anguaseh, Co-founder and Executive Director of Global Welfare Association (GLOWA), Cameroon

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Spotlight

On Women Empowerment: Education through Skill Development and Vocational Training

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Breaking Barriers, Building Futures: Women Empowerment through Skill Development and Vocational Training

By Sally Irwin, Freedom Hub

The empowerment of women is a critical step towards building a more equitable society. Education, specifically through skill development and vocational training, plays a pivotal role in this empowerment process, particularly for those vulnerable to cycles of victimisation and poverty. It offers a pathway for women to break free from their past circumstances and forge a path towards self-reliance and independence.

Read the full 8.7 blog here

Good Practices for Women Empowerment: Highlighting Members Achievements

Survivors' Network, Cameroon

Survivors' Network is making a significant impact on the lives of women survivors through educational training for economic empowerment and livelihood programmes. Since 2021, Survivors' Network has operated multipurpose vocational training centres in the South West and East Regions of Cameroon, providing free livelihood training to over 2000 survivors, internally displaced persons, and vulnerable individuals.

Survivors' Network also offers economic empowerment programmes such as setting up Information Technology training units, workshops on local snack production, and providing startup materials for independent business ventures. Successfully implemented in eight out of ten regions in the country, these initiatives have contributed to poverty reduction and have addressed various abuses faced by women in the communities.

You can explore inspiring success stories from Survivors' Network's economic empowerment programmes here.

Global Welfare Association, Ghana

Operating through GLOWAHaus, a healing and empowerment centre, Global Welfare Association (GLOWA) provides survivors with customised training in sewing, traditional embroidery, and plans for expansion into other skills. GLOWAHaus also integrates a baby safe space for children born from sexual exploitation, offering an early childhood programme. This closed space is exclusively for children born from sexual exploitation, whose mothers were programme participants, ensuring a safe environment for their development.

Graduates from GLOWAHaus join the FollowCare Programme, receiving support for developing individual start-ups. This post-training package includes a personal business plan, financial education, and business mentorship. GLOWAHaus remains a valuable resource for alumni, serving as frontline abolitionists and supporting ongoing skills enhancement and financial empowerment.

Destiny Reflection, India

With the primary goal of attaining justice and preventing the unfortunate fate of young girls trapped in sex trafficking, Destiny Reflection has established a social enterprise which is comprised of survivors.

These resilient individuals, once victims, have transformed into skilled professionals creating exceptional premium products, including yoga bags, travel essentials and accessories crafted from recycled fabrics. As the social enterprise expands its reach, the products crafted by survivors have garnered global acclaim for their quality, aesthetic appeal, and the impactful cause they represent.

In terms of impact, Destiny Reflection has achieved significant milestones. The organisation successfully rehabilitated over 100 women, economically empowered at least 75 women through fair wages, housing, healthcare, and medical insurance, and enhanced the skills of more than 100 beneficiaries.

Empower People, India

Empower People's Survivor Solidarity Fund is a unique initiative inspiring survivors of bride trafficking to unite, using their talents to liberate others from oppression. Recognising survivors' potential as beacons of hope, the fund fosters solidarity and empowerment, encouraging them to break the chains of bride trafficking.

In another impactful effort, Empower People organised a three-day women's empowerment workshop in Haryana, India, which provided business skills training to women facing economic challenges. It covered essential topics like management, negotiation, conflict resolution, and networking. Over 150 female participants formed a seven-member leadership group, tasked with leading the community. This initiative ensures that each member's voice is respected with dignity, reflecting a commitment to inclusivity and empowerment.

Awareness Against Human Trafficking (HAART), Kenya

To prevent re-trafficking and ensure sustainability, HAART has implemented a rehabilitation plan that focuses on economic empowerment. The organisation has supported over 700 survivors by assisting them in setting up businesses of their choice through small grants in collaboration with funding partners. Survivors actively participate in training sessions, formulate business plans, and implement and monitor them. To foster sustainability, follow-up visits and additional training are offered to those who have completed the programme.

In collaboration with partners, HAART supported 53 vulnerable youths and 5 survivors of trafficking from various parts of Kenya. The training covered a diverse range of courses such as hairdressing, beauty therapy, tailoring, dressmaking, store keeping, welding, food and beverage, ICT, and driving/plant operator courses. Each student received personalised support based on their individual needs. The students acknowledged that the support received during this project significantly improved their lives and those of their families.

Freedom Hub, Australia

The Freedom Hub's Survivor School is dedicated to aiding individuals who have experienced modern slavery in their recovery, upskilling, and employment journey. Developed over 15 years with ongoing input from survivor voices, the curriculum is tailored to their unique needs. The Survivor Board contributes survivor perspectives to shape workplace policies.

This transformative school accelerates survivors into success through one-to-one mentoring, supported learning, and practical application in a trauma-informed environment. Both face-to-face and online classes are offered to survivors across Australia. Wellness workshops, peer support groups, and outings help rebuild confidence and foster socialisation. Work experience and employment pathways are provided through screened partner companies for graduates of Survivor School courses.

You can find more information here.

8.7 Members' News

New projects and publications from our members:

Vote for Survivors' Network 'For Freedom Spotlight Award'
Survivors' Network, Cameroon

Network Member Survivors Network has been nominated to recieve Freedom United's 'For Freedom Spotlight Award', in recognition of the organisation's impactful awareness raising campaigns to end modern slavery. You can vote for them here.

Education in cocoa-growing areas: Nestlé Cocoa Plan and International Cocoa Initiative set up Reading Clubs
International Cocoa Initiative, Ghana

"When the reading club was set up and I was informed about it, I encouraged my son to participate in the reading sessions. This has really benefited him to the point that he won a competition here in Binao." These are the words of Yao Menzan Jacob, the proud father of Marc-Aurel who is 11 years old and is in the sixth grade. He is one of the Binao students who regularly participates in the reading workshops organised by the association Notre Boîte à Livre (Our Reading Club) one of 33 reading clubs set up by Nestlé Cocoa Plan in collaboration with the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) to improve the quality of education for the children of cocoa farmers.

HAART release a booklet to welcome survivors
HAART, Kenya

To support survivors of trafficking at their shelter, HAART have developed a welcome booklet in five languages (English, Amharic, Tigrinya, Luganda and Swahili) that will inform residents in their own language on why they are at the HAART shelter, what to expect, understand the services that HAART offers, including reintegration and rehabilitation support.

Candle of Hope conduct field activity in efforts to fight against human trafficking
Candle of Hope, Kenya

Candle of Hope conducted a field activity, distributing Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials to truck drivers and bus drivers who participated in their previous training on how to fight against human trafficking. They believe that empowering those on the front lines with knowledge is key to preventing human trafficking.

Life Bloom's initiative to safeguard girls at risk
Life Bloom Services International, Kenya

Life Bloom, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and local governments, has taken a step in the fight against Female Genital Mutilation and early marriage. The organisation has established a temporary rescue centre specifically designed to protect girls who are vulnerable to these harmful practices. In a notable launch event, the rescue centre was equipped with essential amenities, including beds, bedding, and mattresses.

Empower People celebrate National Girl Child Day and International Education Day
Empower People, India

Empower People observed National Girl Child Day and International Education Day across several of their projects. Project SEAL shed light on the persistent issues of female foeticide, gender inequality, and sexual exploitation. The rally emphasised the need to recognise and address these dangers, striving for equal opportunities and respect for girls worldwide. Project Rise engaged with members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and their children, challenging stereotypes through art. The children expressed their thoughts on gender differences through paintings. They shared aspirations and pledged support for each other's dreams. Project Rise celebrated by distributing pens and copies in a village, emphasising the power of education. The community came together with SHG groups, children, and members, engaging in dialogue, art, dance and highlighting education as a tool for empowerment.

Hope for Justice collaborates with World Economic Forum on educational tool
Hope for Justice, United Kingdom

In collaboration with the World Economic Forum, Hope for Justice curated an education tool on modern slavery and human trafficking The virtual map demonstrates the complexity of human trafficking and modern slavery among a magnitude of factors. It is not only an educational tool for the public, but a vital resource for businesses to understand where the risk of human rights violations lie.

Crucial new guidelines expected to boost conviction rates in Bangladesh
Justice and Care, United Kingdom

New guidelines, drafted by Justice and Care for the Government, aim to strengthen the prosecution process for all crimes in Bangladesh. Despite existing laws allowing the use of foreign evidence in international human trafficking cases, a 2020 inquiry by Justice and Care found its application rare. Recognising the challenges, the Justice and Care team informed the Ministry of Home Affairs and were tasked with creating an instructional manual in collaboration with relevant ministries and law enforcement agencies. Two years later, the Bangladesh Government endorsed the 'Implementation Guidelines for Mutual Legal Assistance on Criminal Matters' during the seventh meeting of the National Anti-Human Trafficking Authority.

Anti Slavery's new podcast series 'Speak Now: About Forced Marriage' is available now
Anti-Slavery, Australia

In this eight-part series, hosts Helena and Habiba unpack the hidden issue of forced marriage in Australia. Their conversations explore common myths about forced marriage and reveal how you can best support affected individuals, families and communities.

Upcoming Events

7 February 2024

Online Course: Breaking County Lines Train the Trainer
The Clewer Initiative

County lines are becoming one of the most prevalent forms of modern slavery. Breaking County Lines is designed as a resource to enable churches and communities to understand and raise awareness of the scale of the problem and to spot the signs of its presence. It also looks at ways of building resilience in communities with an emphasis on the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

To register for the event, please click here.

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7 February 2024

Launch of Research Project: Identification of Adults with Lived Experience of Modern Slavery in the UK
BIICL, HTF

A research project led by the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL) in collaboration with the Human Trafficking Foundation, investigates ways to improve the identification of adults with lived experience of modern slavery in the UK through the examination of existing practice, looking at gaps in identification processes, and capturing promising practice in the area.

The research report will be launched online on Wednesday 7 February, 12:30 pm - 2:00pm GMT. You can register here.

22 February 2024

Human Trafficking Foundation In-Person Advisory Forum
Human Trafficking Foundation

HTF invites you to join their upcoming in-person Advisory Forum which provides an opportunity for anyone working in the anti-trafficking space to come together, network and hear the latest updates on modern slavery policy and practice.

The event is hosted by Linklaters LLP and will be held on Thursday 22 February 10.30 am - 2 pm GMT at 1 Silk Street, London, EC2Y 8HQ. To register for the event, please click here.

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6 March 2024

8.7 Webinar: Transformative Journeys: Showcasing Good Practices of Women's Empowerment through Skill Development and Vocational Training
Commonwealth 8.7 Network

Don't miss our upcoming webinar in March on women's empowerment through skills development and vocational training offered the same week of International Women's Day on 8 March 2024. This timely webinar will share good practice examples and expert insights on skills and vocational training programmes that empower women survivors of human trafficking economically, socially, and personally.

The webinar will take place on **6 March 2024, 9.30 - 11 am GMT.**

You can register for the webinar here.

Resources and Tools

Protective Community Index
International Cocoa Initiative

Developed by ICI, the Protective Community Index is a simple tool used to rapidly assess the protectiveness of a community by assessing access to key services that help protect children in cocoa-growing communities. The tool consists of ten simple questions about service accessibility and quality at community level. It captures factors related to children's fundamental rights, such as quality education and safe water, as well as other community characteristics that are associated with lower levels of child labour.

Find more information here.

Human Trafficking
UK House of Commons Committee

The UK House of Commons Committee has published a report, finding 'the Government is prioritising irregular migration issues at the expense of tackling human trafficking' and calls for a new modern slavery strategy.

Read the report here.

Anti-trafficking in humanitarian settings: Gaps and priorities for a more systematic response
Justice and Care

Drawing on new in-depth qualitative data, the report provides an analysis of heightened vulnerability in humanitarian settings; details of the growth in awareness and visibility of the issue; core challenges related to specialist anti-trafficking capacity; gaps in frontline and back- end capacity; dynamics of the relevant funding contexts; and a focus on wider areas of concern (including the traffickers and formal identification processes).

Find the full report here.

Press release on the report on the role and responsibility of prisons in securing the rights of modern slavery survivors in the UK
Modern Slavery PEC

The project is the first comprehensive academic research which analysed the challenges around identification and support for modern slavery survivors in UK prisons. Although the lack of collected statistics makes it impossible to estimate the exact numbers, the research report concludes that the scale of this issue is likely larger than currently thought as there are many challenges in identifying survivors of modern slavery in prisons .

Find the report here.

Climate change and modern slavery in public procurement
Modern Slavery PEC

Public sector organisations are not equipped to address the risks of modern slavery and climate change in their operations and supply chains, according to new research funded by the Modern Slavery & Human Rights Policy & Evidence Centre. According to the research, there is a lack of legal mandate and shortage of resources to address the increasing risks consistently.

Read the report here.

Modern slavery impact of the Nationality and Borders Act
Modern Slavery PEC

A research project led by the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL), in collaboration with the Human Trafficking Foundation (HTF) and the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group (ATMG), investigates the impacts of the UK Nationality and Borders Act (NABA) on the identification and well-being of people with lived experience of modern slavery in the UK.

Find more information here.

Join our Network!

Join us today and let's work to eradicate contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking! Together, we can raise awareness, strengthen skills, share good practices and advocate for changes to laws and policies.

The Commonwealth 8.7 Network offers three membership categories for organisations and individuals who share our vision. To learn more about how you can join, visit: https://www.commonwealth-87.org/become-a-member

Join the 8.7 Network

Send us your Stories!

If you are a member of the Commonwealth 8.7 Network and would like to be featured in the next issue of our newsletter, we invite you to get in touch. And share your stories and photos!

Email the Secretariat

Thank you!

Donate

Keep up to date with us via email and our social media platforms.

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We are grateful to all those who have contributed to this edition of The 8.7 Quarterly newsletter and invite you to share it with your networks.

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