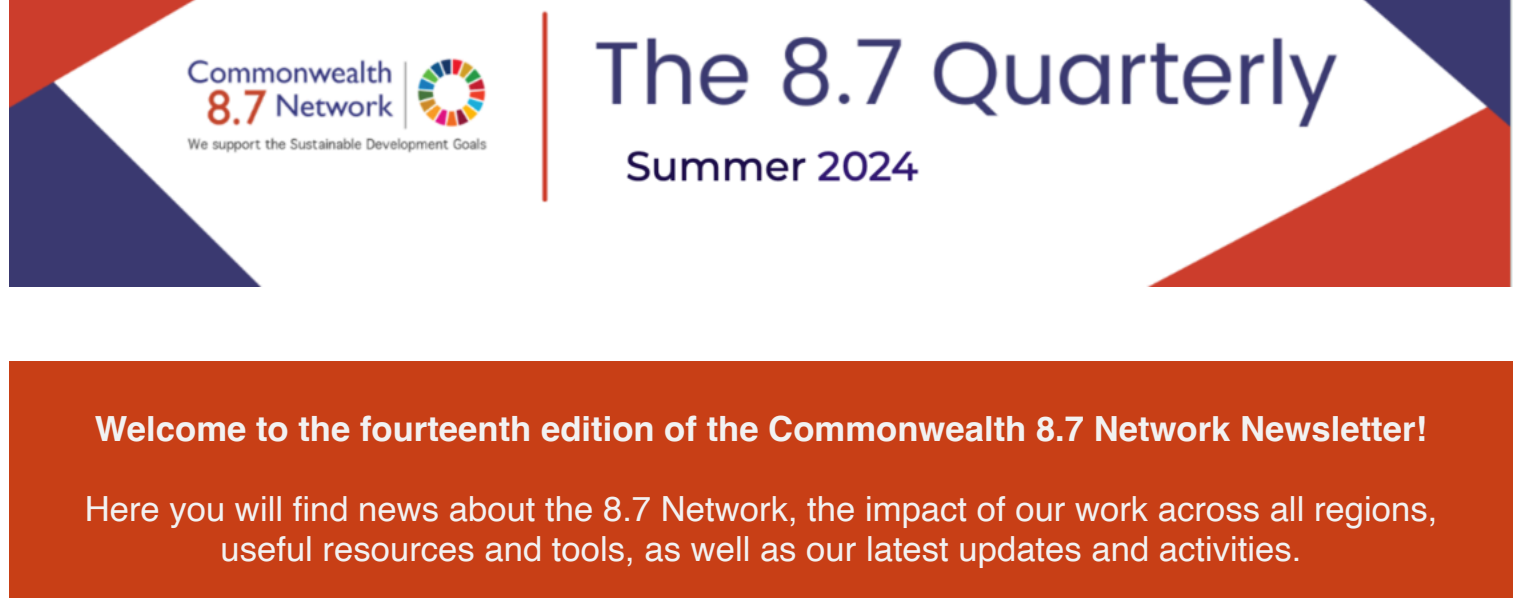


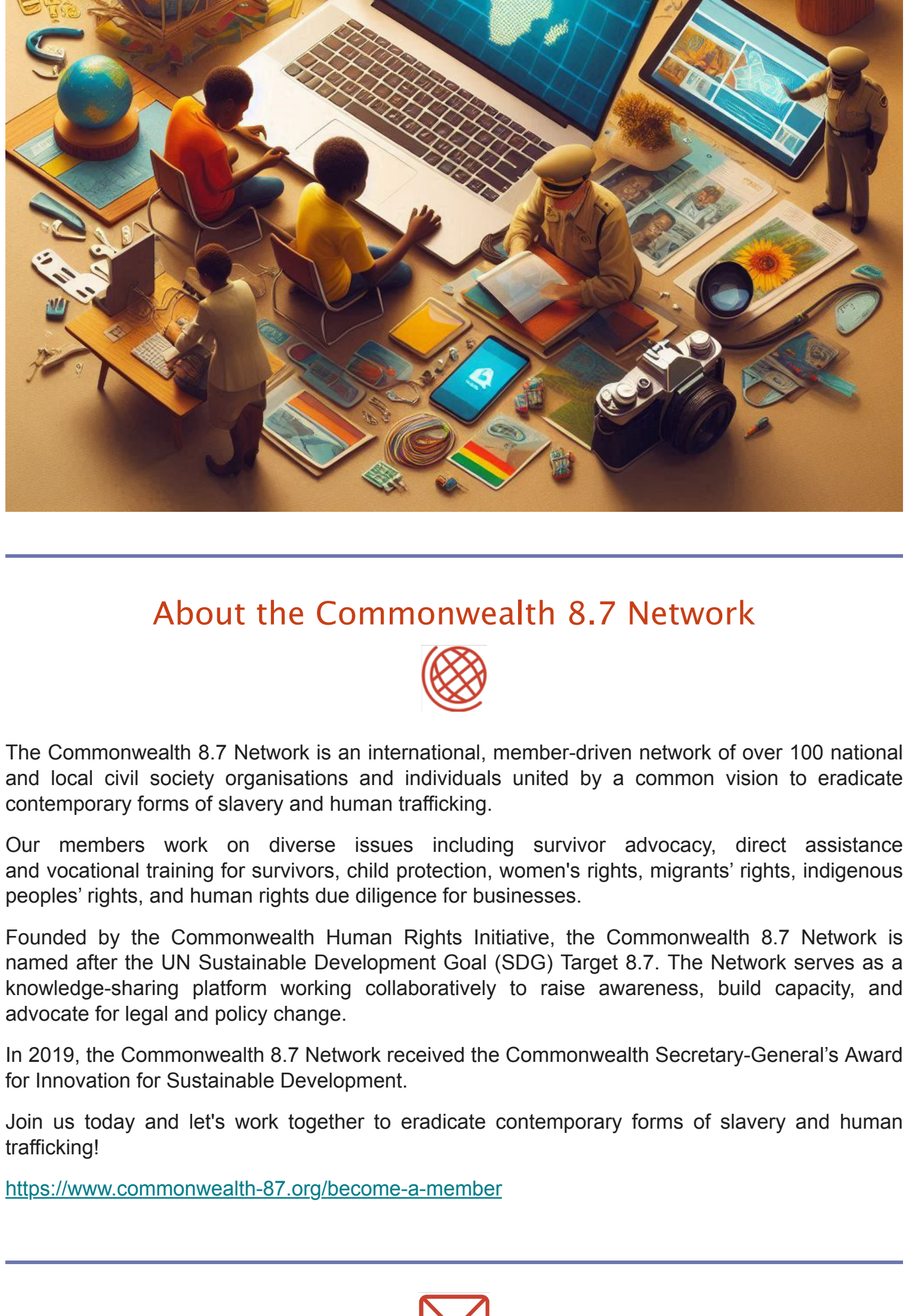
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Welcome to the fourteenth edition of the Commonwealth 8.7 Network Newsletter!

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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About the Commonwealth 8.7 Network

The Commonwealth 8.7 Network is an international, member-driven network of over 100 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 for 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.commonwealth87.org/become-a-member>

Dear 8.7 Network Members and Valued Supporters,

From the Women's Consortium of Nigeria, we are pleased to present the Summer edition of The 8.7 Quarterly Newsletter, focusing on a critical and increasingly significant issue - Online Sexual Exploitation in Africa.

Online sexual exploitation (OSE) represents a deeply troubling aspect of the digital age. While internet and digital technologies offer numerous benefits and opportunities for communication, education, and entertainment, they also create new avenues for exploitation and abuse, particularly targeting vulnerable populations such as children and adolescents.

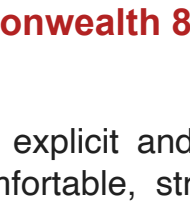
For nearly three decades, the Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON) has been a steadfast advocate for the protection and empowerment of women and children. Through various programmes and activities, WOCON has made significant strides in raising awareness about the sexual exploitation of children, both offline and online.

Efforts to combat OSE require a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach involving the collaboration of governments, law enforcement agencies, technology companies, non-governmental organisations, and communities. Addressing the complex and evolving nature of OSE effectively demands coordinated action across these diverse sectors.

As WOCON continues its commitment to raising awareness about online sexual exploitation and abuse, and advocating for protective policies and laws, we call on everyone to join hands in creating safer online environments. Together, we can protect the most vulnerable members of our society from online exploitation and abuse.

Morenike Omaiibo, Director of Programmes, Women's Consortium of Nigeria

Spotlight



On Online Sexual Exploitation in Africa

Combating Online Sexual Exploitation: Protecting Our Children and Communities

By Morenike Omaiibo, Women's Consortium of Nigeria

Online Sexual Exploitation (OSE) is a grave crime committed by offenders who exploit individuals using information and communication technologies or the internet. This issue is of significant concern in Africa and worldwide, growing at an alarming rate. With increased internet access, it has become easier for sexual predators to groom, recruit, and exploit both adults and children with impunity.

[Read the full 8.7 blog here](#)

Tackling the Digital Danger: Online Sexual Exploitation in Africa

By Katherine Ramjit, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

In recent years, the digital revolution has transformed many aspects of life across Africa, bringing unprecedented opportunities for connectivity and economic growth. However, the technological progress has also introduced significant challenges, particularly concerning online sexual exploitation. The rise of the internet has unfortunately provided a new platform for predators, exacerbating the vulnerability of children and women across the continent.

[Read the full 8.7 blog here](#)

Unmasking Grooming: A message from Ikape James Ikape, Media Coalition and Awareness Against Human Traffickers (McCAHT), Member of the Commonwealth 8.7 Network

Online sexual exploitation often involves explicit and provocative words, actions, and images designed to make the victim feel uncomfortable, stressed, or provoked. This form of abuse typically targets vulnerable individuals through a process known as grooming.

Grooming often begins with the perpetrator repeatedly complimenting their victim, showing excessive kindness, and showering them with gifts. These actions are intended to make the victim feel safe and build a sense of trust and access. Once trust is established, the perpetrator may begin to demand intimate content from the victim, which they then use as blackmail material.

Understanding these tactics is crucial in recognising and preventing online sexual exploitation. By being aware of the grooming process and its red flags, individuals can better protect themselves and seek help if they find themselves in such situations.

It is crucial for victims to understand that they are not alone in their experience. Attempting to navigate this trauma alone can be overwhelming and isolating. It's much healthier to confide in trusted sources who can provide support and guidance.

When faced with online sexual exploitation, it is essential to take the following steps:

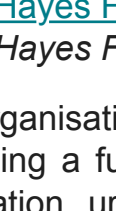
1. Do Not Respond: Avoid engaging with the perpetrator in any way.
2. Cease Communication: Stop all forms of contact with the abuser.
3. Report the Abuse: Notify the relevant authorities and report the account.
4. Deactivate Accounts: Consider deactivating accounts used for communication with the abuser.

Combating online sexual exploitation effectively requires a multifaceted approach. This includes:

- Legal Action: Strong laws must be in place and enforced rigorously.
- Personal Responsibility: Individuals should be cautious about sharing intimate content and private information online, whether with friends or strangers.
- Resource Allocation: Adequate resources must be available for the investigation of cybercrime incidents.
- Institutional Cooperation: All institutions involved in addressing sexual abuse cases must work together seamlessly.

By combining legal measures, personal vigilance, and institutional support, we can make a significant impact in preventing and addressing online sexual abuse.

8.7 Members' News



New projects and publications from our members

ENGAGE NOW AFRICA

[Engage Now Africa educates students on modern slavery and human trafficking](#)
Engage Now Africa, Ghana

Engage Now Africa organised educational forums for students, including a significant event at Abulba Senior High School in Ghana. The organisation also collaborated with local security agencies, which led to the rescue of 108 trafficking victims.

International COCOA Initiative

[International Cocoa Initiative advocates for education and human rights due diligence in 2023 Annual Report](#)
International Cocoa Initiative, Ghana

The organisation emphasised the importance of investing in the education of older children (15-17 years) to combat hazardous child labour, as highlighted in their 2023 Annual Report. Additionally, they announced a webinar aimed at helping retailers implement effective human rights due diligence (HRDD) to address child and forced labour.

DEVAPOT CENTRE FOR AFRICA DEVELOPMENT

[Devapota Centre organises walk against child domestic work](#)
Devapota Centre for Africa Development, Nigeria

Devapota Centre For Africa Development organised a Walk Against Exploitative Child Domestic Work in Ijebu-Egba, Lagos State as part of their 'Protect Child Domestic Workers from Harm' project. Additionally, Devapota emphasised the need to create safe spaces for human trafficking victims to seek help and support.

CANDLE OF HOPE FOUNDATION

[Candle of Hope Foundation leads campaign against child trafficking](#)
Candle of Hope Foundation, Kenya

The foundation promoted a campaign for World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, focusing on ending child trafficking. Coiff, in partnership with World Vision Kenya and IOM Kenya, distributed goats to vulnerable households in Marsabit County, a part of the Trafficking in Persons Project.

MY CHOICES FOUNDATION

[My Choices Foundation aligns with UN SDGs and launches Safe Village Programme](#)
My Choices Foundation, India

My Choices Foundation emphasised their efforts to align with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) like gender equality and reduced inequalities. They recently launched their Safe Village Programme to combat domestic violence and offer free counselling and legal services.

SANJOG

[Sanjog facilitates a training session for journalists](#)
Sanjog, India

The organisation recently facilitated a training session for journalists on creating equitable and empowering partnerships with survivors. The Journalism Center on Global Trafficking and The American Center in Kolkata organised the workshop.

HOPE FOR JUSTICE

[Hope For Justice's role in Northern Ireland's modern slavery strategy](#)
Hope for Justice, United Kingdom

The organisation was featured in Northern Ireland's modern slavery strategy. On July 16, they reported the successful conviction of a police officer for exploiting a 14-year-old girl. They also highlighted new pledges from the King's Speech that support their mission and engaged their audience with a quiz on modern slavery.

SOPHIE HAYES FOUNDATION

[Sophie Hayes Foundation launches their 2024 manifesto](#)
Sophie Hayes Foundation, United Kingdom

The organisation has recently launched a campaign demanding a future free from slavery and exploitation. The organisation urges policymakers to overhaul the current system, which often exploits vulnerabilities through online grooming, deliberate manipulation, and intersectional marginalisation, leaving individuals susceptible to trafficking. The Foundation also calls on businesses to ensure their practices and supply chains are free from exploitation and to reject goods and products created through slavery and suffering.

ITUC CSI IGB

[International Trade Union Confederation releases 2024 Global Rights Index](#)
International Trade Union Confederation, Belgium

On June 13, the International Trade Union Confederation released the 2024 Global Rights Index, which assesses workers' rights in 151 countries.

FREEDOM

[The Freedom Hub launches Fivers for Survivors fundraising initiative](#)
The Freedom Hub, Australia

The organisation recently launched "Fivers for Survivors" on July 3, encouraging community fundraising events like walkathons. In May, they participated in the #Fivers4Freedom event in Sydney, collaborating with other organisations to support their mission against modern slavery.

Collective Action



ACT NOW: Join others and endorse our modern slavery statement for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

As the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2024 approaches, we have a unique opportunity to unite and address one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time: modern slavery and human trafficking.

Despite the Commonwealth's commitment to promoting human rights, millions remain trapped in forced labour, domestic servitude, and sexual exploitation. This gross violation of human rights demands immediate attention.

We are reaching out to invite your organisation to join us in endorsing our Modern Slavery Statement for CHOGM 2024. This statement will be presented to the Committee of the Whole (CoW) in advance of CHOGM in Samoa in October 2024.

We urge governments to support survivors, protect children, and eradicate exploitation from supply chains through targeted actions and policies.

See the full statement [here](#) for the detailed recommendations.

By signing this statement, your organisation will join our global Network to advocate for concrete actions at CHOGM 2024. Your support will amplify our collective voice and demonstrate our unwavering commitment to ending modern slavery across the Commonwealth.

You can TAKE ACTION NOW by signing the statement [here](#).

Commonwealth 8.7 Network recognised in the 2024 High Level Political Forum Position Paper

The Commonwealth 8.7 Network has been recognised in the NGO Major Group's Position Paper for the 2024 High-Level Political Forum, an acknowledgement of the essential role of civil society coalitions in advancing the SDGs by uniting diverse organisations with specialised knowledge and experience in various SDG-related areas. This collaborative approach enhances comprehensive problem-solving, sharing of best practices, and optimal resource utilisation to enable impact. The full document is available [here](#).

Follow the Commonwealth 8.7 Network on Facebook

We encourage you to follow the Commonwealth 8.7 Network on Facebook! Stay updated with the latest news, resources, and initiatives from the network and its members.

Here's what you can expect:

- 📢 Important updates: Be the first to know about our campaigns, events, and advocacy efforts in the fight against modern slavery.
- 📖 Knowledge-sharing: Gain access to valuable resources, research, and best practices that contribute to the eradication of modern slavery.
- 🤝 Engage and connect: Join a community of like-minded individuals, organisations, and experts who are passionate about human rights and combating exploitation.
- 📢 Call to action: Help us amplify our impact by clicking the "Follow" button and inviting others to join this important cause. Together, we can raise awareness, build capacity, and advocate for change.
- 🌍 Follow us now and become part of the Commonwealth 8.7 Network! Together, we can create a world where freedom and dignity are universal rights.

[Follow here](#)

Upcoming Events



31 July



FREE SLAVES

You are Invited! The Caribbean Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons Launches on 31 July

Free the Slaves is thrilled to announce the official launch of the Caribbean Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons (CCATIP) on Wednesday, 31 July at 10:00 AM EST/14:00 GMT via Zoom.

This landmark coalition unites a diverse range of stakeholders, including state agencies, civil society organisations, law enforcement, academics, researchers, and survivors, all working together to eradicate human trafficking and modern slavery in the Caribbean.

The CCATIP's formation stems from a clear need for stronger collaboration. Stakeholders attending the Freedom from Slavery Caribbean Regional Forums in Trinidad and Tobago (February 2023) and Jamaica (May 2024) emphasised the necessity for cross-sector and cross-border partnerships.

Join us for the launch event to hear from esteemed speakers from government agencies, UN organisations, civil society organisations, and survivors. This is a crucial opportunity to witness the collective commitment to achieving a future free from human trafficking in the Caribbean.

Register [here](#) to attend the virtual launch.

10 September

Human Rights Due Diligence in the Cocoa Sector: The Role of Retailers
International Cocoa Initiative (ICI)

Learn how retailers can undertake effective Human Rights Due Diligence in their operations and supply chains, and address child and forced labour. Register [here](#).

Date: 10 Sep 2024

Time: 09:00 - 10:30 BST

Resources and Tools

Internal trafficking and exploitation of children with special educational needs and disabilities

Modern Slavery & Human Rights - Policy & Evidence Centre

This research summary provides a comprehensive analysis of the internal trafficking and exploitation of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The study highlights gaps in policy, training, and data collection, emphasising the need for better protection and early intervention for children with SEND.

The findings underscore the importance of engaging education services and listening to parents' concerns to keep these children safe from exploitation.

Read the report [here](#).

AI shows promise in improving understanding of modern slavery survivors' support needs

Modern Slavery & Human Rights - Policy & Evidence Centre

This report from Project RESTART highlights the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in understanding and addressing the support needs of modern slavery survivors. Funded by the Modern Slavery & Human Rights Policy & Evidence Centre, the study utilised AI to analyse case notes and revealed significant insights into survivors' legal, financial, social, and mental health needs.

Read the full report [here](#).

Labour and sex trafficking among homeless youth

Loyola University

This study examines labour and sexual exploitation among homeless youth in Covenant House's care across 10 cities. Researchers interviewed 641 homeless youth, revealing that nearly 19% were victims of human trafficking, with 14% trafficked for sex and 8% for labour. Factors such as economic desperation, housing insecurity, and lack of job opportunities contribute significantly to their vulnerability. The study highlights the urgent need for targeted prevention, specialised interventions, and supportive legislative measures.

Read the report [here](#).

Assessing the modern slavery impacts of the Nationality and Borders Act: One year on

British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL), Human Trafficking Foundation, Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group

This report explores the effects of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 on identifying and supporting modern slavery survivors in the UK. The Act introduces changes to defining potential victims, recovery entitlements, and disqualification grounds. Key updates include amendments to the Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance and the National Referral Mechanism.

Read the full report [here](#).

Focus on Labour Exploitation

Caring about workers' rights: How a well-designed 'Fair Work Agency' could benefit care workers
Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLX)

This briefing details risks of exploitation for care workers on the Health and Care Worker Visa and plots how a well-designed Single Enforcement Body (SEB) could best respond to these risks. UK labour market enforcement has been inefficient and fragmented, this briefing looks at how an effective SEB, in the form of the Fair Work Agency, could improve UK labour market oversight in order to build resilience against risks of labour exploitation.

Read the briefing [here](#).

Child labour in cocoa growing regions of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire: An analysis of academic attainment in children engaged in hazardous labour

International Cocoa Initiative (ICI)

This paper examines the relationship between child labour and educational attainment and explores the distinction between harmful and non-harmful agricultural cocoa work. The authors conducted a secondary analysis of data on 3,338 children who reported attending school in 2018 across cocoa-growing regions of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

Read the report [here](#).

Sustainable finance and trafficking in persons

Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT)

This paper provides an overview of the intersections between sustainable finance and human trafficking and proposes recommendations and metrics for States, and other actors on how to harness sustainable finance to counter trafficking in persons.

Read the paper [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 want to share our vision. To learn more about how you can join, visit: <https://www.commonwealth87.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.

Email YouTube Twitter LinkedIn Facebook

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

[Subscribe](#)

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