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Commonwealth 8.7 Network
We support the Sustainable Development Goals

The 8.7 Quarterly

Summer 2023

Welcome to the tenth 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 86 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 Smarita Sengupta, Member of the Commonwealth 8.7 Network

Dear 8.7 Network Members and Friends,

From Destiny Reflection, we are pleased to present the Summer edition of The 8.7 Quarterly Newsletter, which focuses on a topic of immense significance - Organisational Perspectives on Empowering Survivors.

At Destiny Reflection, our core belief is in "transforming one life at a time." We are proud to share the inspiring journey of Naina, a survivor who overcame immense hardship. Orphaned at a young age and subjected to years of sexual abuse, becoming a mother at the age of 15, Naina's life took a positive turn when she escaped her abusers and found refuge in a government shelter home. With the support of Destiny's connected social care programme, she gained access to safe accommodation, vocational skills, and a decent job. Moreover, she found a trusted community of mentors and friends who helped her rebuild her life. Today, Naina volunteers at the same shelter home and advocates passionately against sex trafficking and slavery.

However, the institutional mechanisms available post-rescue for survivor assistance are deficient - limited to financial compensation and medical help. This leaves survivors vulnerable once they are out of institutional care, often leading to joblessness and the risk of re-victimisation or re-trafficking. To address this, Destiny employs a three-pronged approach and a longitudinal model to ensure survivors receive long-term, tailored support when they need it the most, and on their own terms. Our key pillars for success include education, safe accommodation, economic empowerment, and a supportive community of friends and mentors. We recognise that long-term survivor assistance is a complex issue, requiring multifaceted support involving psychological, legal, social, and financial aspects to cater to each survivor's unique challenges.

In conclusion, we are committed to empowering survivors like Naina and transforming lives, one step at a time. Together, let us work towards creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for survivors, ensuring their voices are heard and valued. Thank you for joining us on this journey of survivor empowerment and support.

Smarita Sengupta, Co-Founder, Destiny Reflection

Spotlight

On inclusion and ethical survivor engagement: A message from a survivor

Gone are those days where we still talk of survivor inclusion, I presumed by our lived experiences we are graduated automatically to be engaged, have a say and play an active role in making the world a safer place for anyone not to go through what we have experienced.

We need to be committed to this task with full dedication and make sure first hand we bring to the table any hindrance that can slow down our full attention to carry on the task we have naturally taken upon in our lives.

I urge us to be of good morals when carrying out our task, despite the fact that we survivors want our voices to be heard and we need to give commands to our leaders to put in place strong policies on anti-trafficking and punishments on traffickers, we also need to do it respectfully. On the other hand, respect is reciprocal so we need to be respected as well and not looked upon and always be associated with our lived experience - it's our past.

Notwithstanding, we should all have in mind the recent high demand of survivor engagement in the anti-trafficking fight, yet many factors are still holding this down. Such as:

- Formal education, stigmatisation from our peers and community
- Capacity building on public speaking
- Tokenism
- Survivors re-exploitation
- Personal economic empowerment of survivors.

We should not forget that our stories are super powerful, like I always say, my story is my greatest asset, not only to anti-trafficking movements, but a strong tool to push other survivors who are still timid to come out of that coat of shyness to join their voices.

Francisca Awah Mbuli, Founding Director, Survivors Network Cameroon,
Commonwealth 8.7 Network Member

On Organisational Perspectives on Empowering Survivors

Redefining Survivor Empowerment

by Robyn Philips, Director of Operations, Human Trafficking Foundation

This blog discusses survivor empowerment in the context of human trafficking. It emphasises the need to recognise survivors beyond their lived experiences, valuing their unique skills, interests, and future goals. The author highlights the importance of meaningful consultation, moving away from merely expecting survivors to "share their stories". Genuine collaboration with survivors can lead to more effective anti-trafficking responses. The blog calls for organisations to view lived experience as more than a resource and provides insights on how to approach co-working with survivors respectfully.

Read the full 8.7 blog here

Fostering Survivor Empowerment and Collective Action

by Winnie Mutevu, Advocacy and Partnerships Development Manager, HAART Kenya

This blog highlights the Survivor Leadership Programme initiated by HAART Kenya. The programme aims to empower survivors of human trafficking by providing not only direct assistance, such as economic and psychosocial support, but also creating a platform for networking and advocacy. By fostering connections among survivors and enabling their active involvement in countering human trafficking, the programme seeks to build a more inclusive and effective movement. The blog emphasises the importance of going beyond mere service provision and valuing the unique expertise and contributions of survivor advocates.

Read the full 8.7 blog here

Collective Action

Catch up on: Webinar on Disability and Modern Slavery

On 6 June 2023, the Commonwealth 8.7 Network brought together experts from Africa, Asia, and Europe to explore the intersections of disability and modern slavery. The discussion focused on the systemic barriers that increase the risk of persons with disabilities to exploitation in the context of modern slavery, as well as on the strategies to enhance their rights and support systems. Through the lens of the human rights social model of disability, the discussions explored the societal factors that lead to these disproportionate risks, rather than framing disability as an inherent vulnerability.

Watch the recording of the webinar "Disability and Modern Slavery" here.

Regional Networking and Advocacy Event for Asia

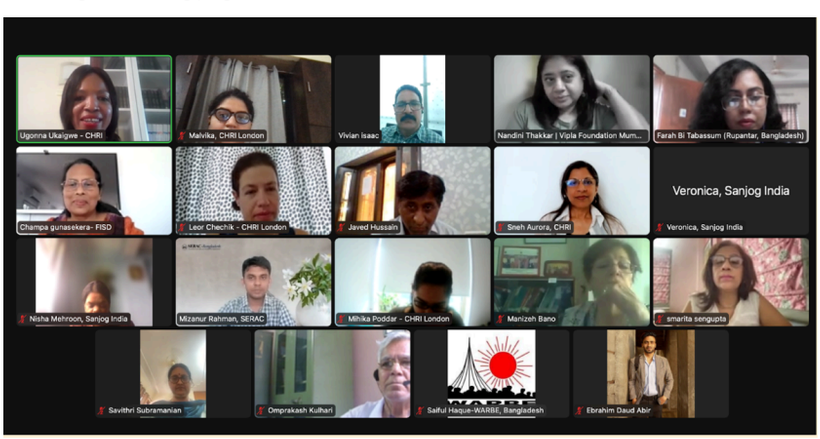
On 20 July 2023, members of the 8.7 Network in Asia came together for a virtual Regional Advocacy and Networking Event.

The 150-minute interactive session provided the opportunity for the members in Asia to share, exchange and learn about each other's work and efforts being made to tackle contemporary forms of slavery in their countries.

Members discussed and identified priority human rights issues in relation to contemporary forms of slavery in the region, ways to tackle the issues to make the most impact in the region, and defined a strategy for joint action to tackle the issues across Asia- both regionally and nationally.

Members agreed to work collectively at the regional level to:

- Prepare joint statements and submissions to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and other human rights mechanisms on priority human rights issues.
- Initiate joint letters targeting national level governments on specific issues.
- Implement social media campaigns on key dates.
- Organise learning and sharing webinars on issues relevant to regional members.
- Promote exchange of resources and data with members in the region.
- Organise training programmes.



Commonwealth 8.7 Network - Asia Regional Advocacy and Networking Meeting (July 2023)

The Commonwealth 8.7 Network observes the World Day against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July 2023

On ‘World Day against Trafficking in Persons’, members of the Commonwealth 8.7 Network united to reinforce their unwavering commitment to combating human trafficking and to intensify their efforts to put an end to modern slavery and human trafficking worldwide. A diverse array of voices, including activists and survivors of human trafficking from Africa, Asia, Europe, Americas and the Pacific underscored the urgent need for collective action to confront this grave violation of human rights.

Watch the video here.

8.7 Members' News

New projects and publications from our members:

In-person event in Edmonton for Victims of Crime Week
ACT Alberta, Canada

In recognition of Victims of Crime Week (14-20 May 2023), ACT Alberta hosted a collaboration opportunity and conversation about the realities of labour trafficking in Alberta and the resources and strategies needed to combat it together. They were honoured to speak and walk with allies at the 2023 Stand Up Walk to End Sexual Violence, learned from elders, heard from survivors, strengthened partnerships, and raised money for survivors. They also spoke to The House of Commons' Standing Committee on the Status of Women to share the results of their study of human trafficking of women, girls and gender diverse people.

Network launched to work on modern slavery in Cumbria
The Clewer Initiative, United Kingdom

In May 2023, 80 people gathered in Barrow-in-Furness to discuss how modern slavery can be tackled more effectively in Cumbria. The Clewer Initiative provided support to get the programme off the ground and build connections for a multi-agency partnership. There were three sessions: a presentation and discussion about modern slavery in the UK and Cumbria; a presentation and discussion on how survivors of modern slavery access social support systems including stories of how they can ‘fall through the net’ and finally, a facilitated discussion about next steps for Cumbria.

Ingredients for Life programme improves recovery journey for modern slavery survivors
Causeway, United Kingdom

Causeway's pilot programme which invites participants, who have experienced forced labour, sexual exploitation, or domestic servitude, to attend cooking courses run by professional chefs is now up and running and has proven successful at raising the confidence and skill set of survivors. Causeway’s Research and Development Manager explained that the programme is designed to create tangible change in the lives of survivors of modern slavery.

Ethiopian child survivor reunited with family after two years of abuse
Hope for Justice, United Kingdom

A child survivor of trafficking is safely back with his family, after being forced to work for two years in conditions so abusive that he was left malnourished and “between life and death.” Hope for Justice outreach workers supported him at one of their safe shelters for children who have faced trafficking, provided medical treatment, food and a safe place to sleep until the boy was well enough for the return trip to his family home. Hope for Justice also supported the child holistically through counselling to restore him physically, mentally and emotionally, via a grant to support the family’s economic livelihood, and providing business skills and support, so that the child and his siblings can stay safe and continue their education.

Global Campaign to raise awareness about child safety in sport
It's a Penalty, United Kingdom

It’s a Penalty launched their 2023 Global Campaign around the Women’s World Cup, raising awareness about the importance of child safety in sport. The group invites all to watch and share their campaign awareness video, featuring women football stars who have lent their support to this important cause. The campaigns video is being promoted by several large airlines and airports across Australia and New Zealand.

Share the campaign post to help advocate for a safer environment for children in sport.

Journey to leadership: Five services that help survivor leaders create change
Sanjog, India

Sanjog, through its pioneering initiative "Leadership Next Programme", supports survivors of trafficking in India, empowering them to rise from victimhood and become leaders in their lives and communities. By identifying and offering five essential services: Facilitation to Collectivise and Claim Rights, Secretarial Services for Bureaucratic Due Diligence, Legal Aid for Justice and Representation, Defense against Stigma and Prejudice, and Media Engagement and Advocacy, Sanjog is enabling survivor-leaders to rewrite their narratives.

My Choice Foundation to hold 5th Asian Anti-Trafficking Forum
My Choices Foundation, India

To observe the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, My Choices Foundation is organising the 5th Asian Anti-Trafficking Forum. This significant event, themed “Creating safe villages and reaching every victim of trafficking, leaving no one behind,” will be held in Hyderabad, India, from 1-3 August 2023. The forum will convene diverse stakeholders, including implementing and strategic partners, supporters, police representatives, think tanks, activists, and members from the private sector, foundations, civil societies, and non-governmental organisations. With a shared mission to combat trafficking for sexual exploitation, the 5th Asian Anti-Trafficking Forum seeks to raise awareness, pool resources, evaluate and enhance prevention measures, and identify and support survivors of trafficking.

Oasis wins award for Best Human Trafficking Prevention Organisation 2023
Oasis, India

We are thrilled to announce that Oasis India has been presented with the "Best Human Trafficking Prevention Organisation 2023" award by Acquisition International. This recognition underscores their unwavering commitment over the past 28 years to creating safer communities in India where women, children, and everyone can realise their full potential.

Destiny Reflection holds an open house to prevent exploitation and re-victimisation for women and youth
Destiny Reflection, India

In collaboration with Sage.Camp, and Pi Kids US, Destiny Reflection held an open house, on 7 July, to prevent exploitation and re-victimisation of women and youth through economic empowerment, life skills training, and education. The organisers provided students with modern day computer programming skills. Students were also provided with on-the-ground support from Destiny.

UNODC Eastern Africa support for HAART Kenya
HAART, Kenya

In a powerful testament to the resilience and the indomitable human spirit, Catherine, a survivor of human trafficking, has turned her life around with the support of UNODC Eastern Africa and HAART Kenya. Having healed from the trauma of her experiences under HAART Kenya's dedicated care, Catherine today operates her own poultry farm and stands as a vocal activist, campaigning to end human trafficking. This inspiring narrative underlines the importance and impact of comprehensive support structures in helping survivors reclaim their lives and advocate for change.

Upcoming Events

Ongoing

Anti Trafficking and Labour Exploitation Training Programme

ATLEU have announced two new training sessions for those advising and supporting survivors of modern slavery.

More information on this programme can be found here

Resources and Tools

Global Slavery Index (GSI)
Walk Free

The Global Slavery Index 2023 has been launched – bringing together the world's most comprehensive datasets on modern slavery to produce estimates on the prevalence of modern slavery, vulnerability of populations, and what governments are doing to combat it, across 160 countries.

Click here to download the full report.

The Robustness of Modern Slavery Statements and Assurance
KPMG

This blog describes factors to consider when preventing modern slavery throughout business operations.

Read more here.

Kenyan Advocacy on Child and Forced Marriage: A guide for faith leaders
WalkFree, Inter-Religious Council of Kenya and Global Freedom Network

This guide examines the nature of child and forced marriage in Kenya, outlines current gaps in the national response, highlights opportunities for faith leader advocacy, and provides advocacy strategies and tools to support advocacy efforts.

Read the guide here.

Human rights due diligence on the risks of modern slavery for displaced workers
Anti Slavery International

This guidance, published with La Strada International, explains how businesses can prevent and mitigate some of the risks of labour exploitation, forced labour and trafficking affecting displaced people. It is aimed in particular at businesses who work in or with suppliers in countries neighbouring conflict zones or where there are high numbers of displaced people.

Find the guidance here.

Addressing human trafficking through health systems: a scoping review
World Health Organisation

This review summarises and synthesises this evidence-informed research to help Member States in addressing the intersection of health care and trafficking and in attempts to prevent and respond to human trafficking.

Find the review here.

Forced marriage resource pack
UK Government

The resource pack has been designed to highlight examples of best practice and to help ensure that effective support is available to victims of forced marriage.

Find the resource pack here.

Updated Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance, July 2023
UK Government

The Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance was updated on 10 July, following a judicial review challenge that led to the Home Secretary agreeing to withdraw, reconsider and revise parts of the Guidance in relation to the Reasonable Grounds (RG) decision. This guidance is aimed at competent authority staff in any part of the UK who make decisions on whether or not an individual is a potential victim/victim of modern slavery for the purpose of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – wherever in the UK a potential victim is identified.

Find the guidance here.

Stop Slavery Blueprint
Shiva Foundation

This toolkit is intended for internal use by hotels and other stakeholders in the tourism industry. The robust guide includes recommended action and templates throughout to set up strong processes and protocols to address risk of modern slavery within businesses and supply chains. The Blueprint can be adapted by individual managers, department heads and teams, as appropriate, to better suit the nuances and needs of diverse organisations.

Find the toolkit here.

Refugee protection, internal displacement and statelessness - Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children
OHCHR

This Report highlights States' obligations to ensure effective access to international protection for trafficked persons, and persons at risk of trafficking. It highlights obligations oF states to prevent trafficking in internal displacement and refugee settings, to ensure effective access to asylum, compliance with the principle of non-refoulement. It emphasises the urgency of eliminating statelessness, as an important measure to prevent trafficking in persons, especially children.

Find the report 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 based on your/ your organisation's mandate. 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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