



University of  
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Rights Lab



# Building Local Resilience Against Exploitation in the Context of COVID-19:

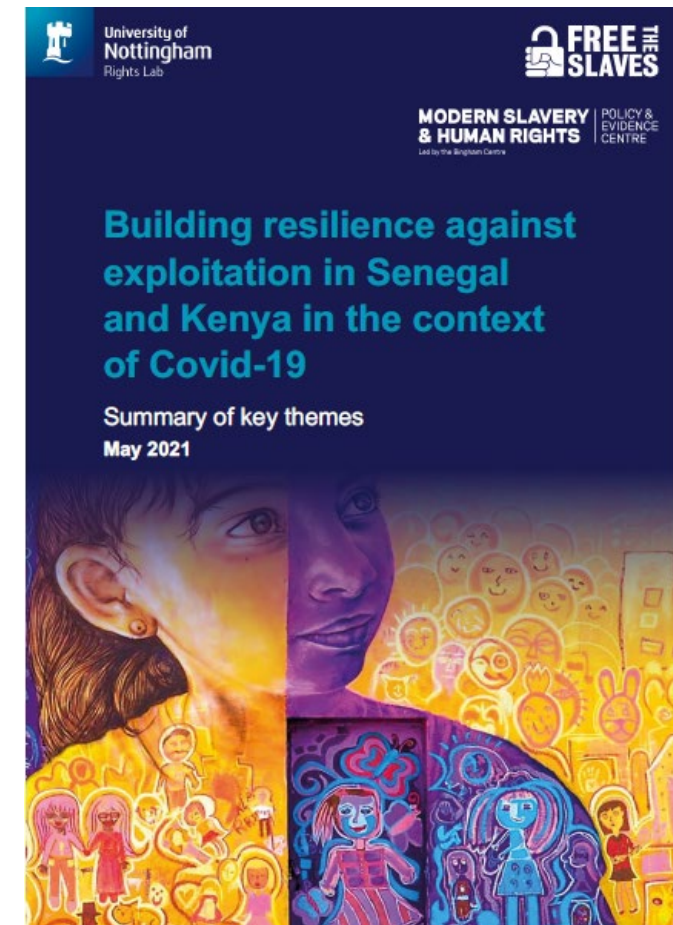
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MODERN  
SLAVERY  
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## Four key research questions:

- **What factors underpin community resilience against exploitation in each setting?**
- **How were anti-slavery projects contributing to building resilience before COVID-19? Which other stakeholders played critical roles?**
- **How is COVID-19 impacting on the structural issues, legislation, institutions, systems and practices that underpin resilience to exploitation?**
- **What issues, partnerships and processes need to be prioritised to ensure resilience is developed and protected?**

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/beacons-of-excellence/rights-lab/resources/reports-and-briefings/index.aspx>

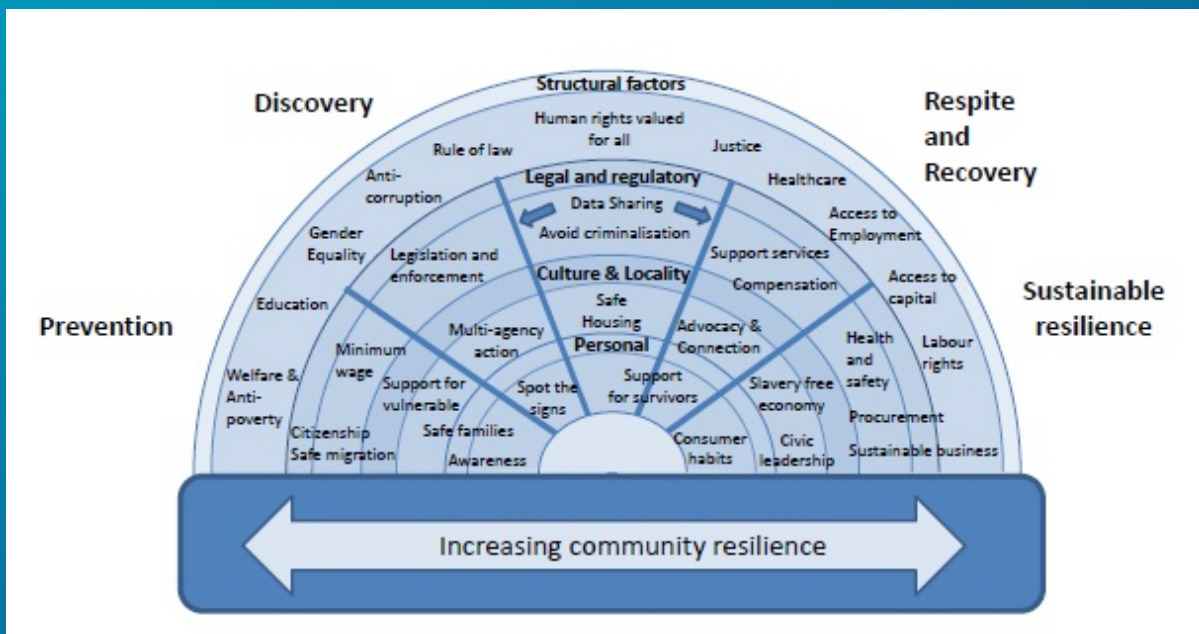




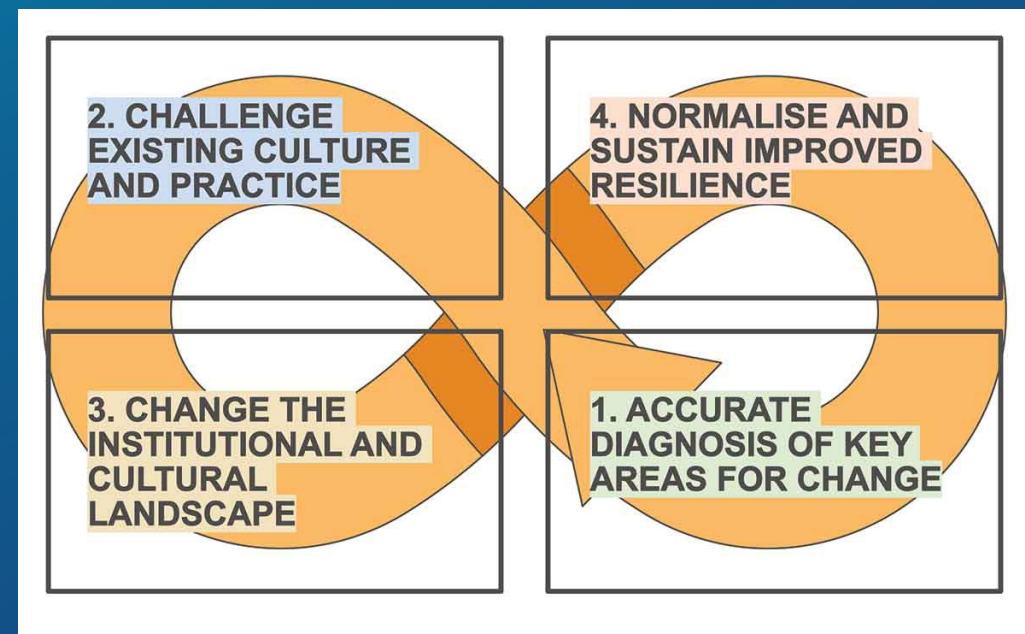
# Background



- The project uses a resilience framework to explore the social determinants and dynamic processes underpinning exploitation



*Social determinants of resilience against modern slavery*



*An adaptive cycle of resilience to modern slavery*



## Three stages:

- A documentary analysis of existing literature on modern slavery and human trafficking in Kenya and Senegal
- Interviews with 25 stakeholders in Kenya, and 22 stakeholders in Senegal to better understand the local context of anti-slavery activity and the impact of COVID-19.
- Focus group of stakeholders to validate or enhance findings of the first two stages and to jointly develop recommendations.

Each stage is guided by the resilience framework and is designed to understand which social factors, government interventions, institutions and initiatives have been most critical to combatting exploitation.



# Factors impacting on resilience before Covid-19



## Senegal

Focus on forced begging associated with daaras system

Practices of *confiage* and *mbaraan*

Legal protections for sex workers

Incomplete national framework for victim support

## Shared Factors

**Focus on Children** (sexual exploitation, sex tourism and labour exploitation)

**Early / forced marriage**

**Poverty**

**Informal labour**

**Unequal access to birth registration**

**Unequal access to education**

**Gender inequalities**

**Slow legal processes**

**Lack of training for law enforcement**

**Lack of international – local agreement on practices seen as exploitative**

## Kenya

Exploitation of adults in Gulf cooperation countries

Internally displaced people

Criminalisation of sex workers

Existence of a national framework for victim support



# Covid-19 exacerbates structural factors (1)



	<b>Pressures</b>
<b>Structural factors</b>	<b>Increased economic pressure for families and loss of housing</b>
	<b>Increased pressure for children to work</b>
	<b>Decreased access to healthcare including birth registration</b>
	<b>Closure of schools, greater risk of abuse, early marriage.</b>
	<b>Missed education, with potential long-term impacts for earnings.</b>
	<b>Digital exclusion and increased gender inequalities particularly in relation to access to education.</b>
	<b>Membership and powers of trades unions decreasing</b>



# Covid-19 exacerbates local factors(2)



	<b>Pressures</b>
<b>Governance factors</b>	<b>Slower legal processes for court cases and compensation</b>
	<b>Closure of borders increasing the likelihood of hazardous migration &amp; extra challenges repatriating victims from abroad</b>
<b>Local, cultural and institutional issues</b>	<b>Reduced ability to operate normal activities, fewer interactions with government and international agency officials. Government resources re-directed to mitigation and support</b>
	<b>Fewer people in communities available to assist in reporting concerns.</b>
	<b>Increased stress and pressure in family settings</b>
	<b>Greater pressure on shelters, impacts upon the physical and mental health of survivors</b>

## **The need to develop a shared understanding of concepts**

- Terms ‘modern slavery’ and ‘human trafficking’ were not resonant – barriers in developing shared objectives, hinders a broader conception of exploitation and efforts to engage communities.

## **Close the gap between legislation and implementation**

- Both countries showed evidence of an ‘implementation gap’ between policy and legal frameworks and lived experience

## **A need to better collaborate and coordinate activity**

- Improve communication between international and local stakeholders, greater use of local knowledge;
- Ensuring coordination of policy implementation by the government, state and civil society;
- Connecting social and economic development and anti-exploitation work.

## **A need for better data**

- A means to understand how different elements of exploitation are evolving alongside the pandemic.





# Revising the Theory of Change



The adaptive cycle offers some suggestions on how stakeholders might build a revised theory of change for work after COVID-19. These could include:

- *Diagnosis*: working with all key stakeholders towards a refreshed vision, shared language and understanding of the key challenges moving forward in the context of COVID-19
- *Challenge*: Involving a wider range of stakeholders in plans to address exploitation. Engaging intensively at local and community level
- *Change*: moving beyond awareness campaigns to sustained programmes aimed at shifting social norms and delivering institutional change
- *Normalising*: continuing to work on clarifying and improving key areas of legislation and policy, and acting on legislative gaps. Continuing training and sensitisation for key actors in the field.



## **Reframe the language and focus of anti-trafficking work**

- Agree terminology that reflects a shared understanding of exploitation, is meaningful within local contexts, and includes terms that are recognisable to local communities.
- Existing focus on children in anti-trafficking work should be widened to include adults, families and the role of communities.

## **Adopt a whole-systems perspective on funding and policy implementation**

- Connect anti-trafficking measures with development-focussed interventions (e.g. education or gender inequalities).
- Fund prevention-focussed activities as well as targeted measures such as victim identification and support.
- Review and address impacts for anti-exploitation co-ordination and collaboration.
- Protect victims from criminalisation, and invest appropriately to ensure that resources are available for shelters and support.

## **Build on local knowledge and expertise**

- Funders should draw more extensively on local and grass-roots expertise
- Actors and stakeholders at all levels – including religious actors and institutions - should be involved in planning and implementation of anti-exploitation policies.



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Thank you.

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