HUMAN TRAFFICKING, RESEARCH AND POLICY IN AFRICA (OVERVIEW)

NOVEMBER 2022

Written by: Mr Morris Andati

Policy engagement in Africa

After participating in the human trafficking Africa Forum in Rwanda, it became abundantly clear that there is a significant problem with policy engagement in the human trafficking space, as so many countries lack a human trafficking act or law, as well as a policy to guide the engagement of various government institutions in anti-trafficking efforts.[1] When it comes to research, there is a lack of participation, but not only in Africa but also in other regions.

However, with the growth in human trafficking concerns, there has been a sluggish development in research, which is exacerbated by a lack of documentation. Numerous organizations involved in the elimination of human trafficking do not keep statistics on the effect, reach, and possibilities of collaboration with the government in their operations.[2] This implies that documentation is required for many actions in order to have a data-driven industry.

Regarding the eradication of human trafficking, we require substantial public engagement and participation in the African context, thus looking at policy formulation and execution, facilitated by civil society and government institutions. This will bring up the social and cultural concerns that are driving the Agenda of human trafficking ahead and might be crucial in building sustainable strategies for the creation of policies in various nations.[3] This may be accomplished by including the community, particularly survivors, in the establishment of these policies, since they understand the community context and gaps that led to their being victims of human trafficking.

The issue of human slavery in Africa is a political one that threatens to affect the existing policies, rights, and communities in Africa. Providing a rationale for all African nations to concentrate on tackling the problem at the national level. We must seek channels to involve the political class in order for them to advocate for the establishment, funding, and execution of anti-human trafficking measures in these nations.[4] This is because they have the authority to formulate and implement these policies.

The lack of knowledge has slowed the development of policies by governments, but also has led to the emergence of several movements. With so many individuals seeking employment and a better life, there is a need for study and collaboration amongst many players to assist identify gaps and aid the government in its efforts to combat human trafficking.[3] Now activists have a purpose to get together and consider how they might involve the public in solution-making in these areas.

The powers of African government in regards to policy development

West Africa has very high levels of human trafficking with 80% of the total amount

By: Mr. Morris Shapwala Andati

being subjected to forced labour and 75% of that being young children. In light of the fact that nations in West Africa have enormous young populations, this poses a significant concern. To combat the growth in the above-mentioned numbers, there is a need for substantial government and community involvement in the creation of appropriate migration and labor market regulations.[5] Mauritania is one of the countries that have established crucial anti-modern slavery tactics. However, even in such nations, many African activists engaged in the battle against contemporary slavery have been imprisoned. With the cooperation of the United Nations, however, aid channels have been developed and the battle against modern slavery has been bolstered. Among the techniques established in Mauritania was the infiltration of activists inside the administration, where they were able to demonstrate why it is crucial for the government to combat modern slavery.[6]

To decrease the occurrence of contemporary slavery, we must engage the whole population, as well as the political sphere, the regional council, and even the continent. We require community leadership to educate community members, as a result. It will be crucial for the government to adopt ways to eliminate aspects of slavery by utilizing its own instruments, such as regulations and the legislation, as well as its influence over cultural and social development.[1]

There is a need for support and implementation of human trafficking research results in order to have contextualized policies that lead to sustainable action plans and the enhancement of current legislation. The engagement of social aspects, such as cultural perspectives in various communities, which provide a pathway to modern slavery, such as labor trafficking and sex trafficking, is another area of emphasis. The government must therefore consider incorporating these perspectives into newly developed anti-trafficking strategies.[5]

There must be a link between research, community development, and policy in order to aid in the creation of effective solutions to contemporary slavery. The following pillars might be very beneficial when discussing research and the eradication of modern slavery:

Prevention of contemporary slavery

There is need to examine the evolution of community-based research and initiatives this will allow us to comprehend the problem we are fixing in depth. Thus looking for physical proofs with an aim of letting the impacted communities work on their own solutions (Survivors)

Protection of the affected and afflicted

There is need for the creation of lasting measures to prevent survivors from falling victim to the same issue. This is through investigating economic, social, and political structures that brought up the problem and solving those problems.

Partnership

By: Mr. Morris Shapwala Andati

There is need to examine methods in which different groups might collaborate depending on the varied sectors in which they are involved in the fight against modern slavery, ranging from the government to civil society.

Monitoring and assessment

There is a need to investigate the following steps when it comes to rehabilitation of the individuals affected. The government and lawmakers must be committed to exposing the culprits with the aim of assisting those harmed. In so many nations, there is no law against modern slavery, resulting in inadequate or no punishment for the criminals. All parties must participate in monitoring newly enacted policies, legislation, and parliamentary acts.[1]

We need a proper grasp of human trafficking at the government level in all nations.

Problems

- Some countries who are members of Alliance 8.7, a global alliance focused on achieving SDG target 8.7) and are pathfinders are not sharing reports when it comes to human trafficking in their countries.
- Lack of enough data on human trafficking in Africa.
- Lack of commitment in countries when it comes to policies, development of country strategies and working with community organizations.
- Lack of awareness among communities and civil society on the existing strategies being developed by the governments for example Rwanda in the repatriation and support of those affected.
- Low demand for research when it comes to policy makers in Africa.
- Its difficult to develop research components when it comes to human trafficking in Africa.

Solutions

- Building capacity of research networks in Africa.
- There is need for change when it comes to project developments and this is should be research driven.
- Drive collaborations with research organizations and also have data from implementing actors at a point of having drive key activities in the sector.
- We need to have policy that are driven by research and data collection.
- Looking into having partnerships with research driven organizations when it comes to application.

Law requirements

- Structured punishment or genuine punishment when it comes to the perpetrators.
- Have short procedures when it comes to prosecution.
- Setting minimum labor standards in countries and also externally.
- Minimum wage in countries to affect labor standards in all countries.
- Little to know prosecution to survivors in relation to being forced into criminal

By: Mr. Morris Shapwala Andati

activities.

- Have regional labor laws to help cub unsupervised movement and gaps when it comes to recruitment.
- Compensation of the survivors to be clear in the legal framework.
- Have clear stipulation when it comes to social protection for those affected.

We need ideas that are based on data or are informed by data, particularly when it comes to the creation of projects and programs regarding human trafficking; this will lead to a focus on identifying the important data gaps when it comes to the formulation of policy and action plans.

There is a pressing need to investigate the function of politics in the formulation of public policy and the means by which we might make data and community input the primary drivers of policy.

[1] *40515-wd-policy_on_the_prevention_of_trafficking_in_persons_in_africa-_english.pdf* (2022) *40515-wd-POLICY_ON_THE_PREVENTION_OF_TRAFFICKING_IN_PERSONS_IN_AFRICA-_ENGLISH.pdf | African Union*. Africa Union. Available at: https://amert.au.int/en/document/40515-wd-policyonthepreventionoftraffickinginpersonsinafrica-englishpdf (Accessed: November 28, 2022).

[2] Kkienerm (2021) *Trafficking in persons & smuggling of migrants module 10 key issues: Civil society actors*, *Trafficking in Persons & Smuggling of Migrants Module 10 Key Issues: Civil Society Actors*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/tip-and-som/module-10/key-issues/civil-society-actors.html (Accessed: November 28, 2022).

[3] Allais, Carol. (2006). AN OVERVIEW OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.

[4] Bello, P. O. , Olutola, A. A. , 2020, 'The Conundrum of Human Trafficking in Africa', in J. Reeves (ed.), Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, IntechOpen, London. 10.5772/intechopen.83820.

[5] *Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030): Migration for Development in Africa (RMPFA) (2018) 8: In 2015 there were an estimated 21 million migrants in Africa, of which 18 million originated from Africa and the rest largely originated from Europe, Asia and North America.*

[6] Achibra, G. (2022) "Freedom From Slavery Africa Regional Forum," in *Modern Slavery in Mauritania*. Kigali: Free The Slaves. Available at: Modern Slavery.

By: Mr. Morris Shapwala Andati