



10th Annual Freedom from Slavery Forum  
**“Enabling Local Engagements and Global  
Synergies for Addressing Modern Slavery in  
Asia”**

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2023 Asia Regional Forum Report  
January 16-17, 2023

[www.FreedomFromSlaveryForum.org](http://www.FreedomFromSlaveryForum.org)

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# Introduction

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The Freedom from Slavery Forum was established in 2013 to gather anti-slavery leaders from around the world to create a collegial space to coalesce, create partnerships, discuss promising practices, and develop a shared agenda for action. Participants have built relationships and prioritized actions in advocacy and collaboration with other sectors.

In 2021, the annual Global Forum was supplemented by a series of Regional Forums divided into the following regions: Latin America, North America and Europe, Africa, Asia, MENA, and the Caribbean. Last year's series took place online and provided opportunities to increase access, ensuring grassroots ideas and voices were amplified within the movement. The 2022/23 series are divided into three in-person Forums (North America and Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean) to increase collaboration between regional actors and three online Forums (Latin America, Asia, and MENA). The series will be closed with the Global convening in May 2023.

The theme for the series is “Enabling local engagement and global synergies to address modern slavery.” The respective agenda and expected outcomes are developed in consultation with survivors and other key local and regional partners. Therefore, the focus will vary slightly for each region, responding to the situation and needs of each region.

For the Asia Forum, anti-slavery movement leaders virtually convened via Zoom for two days to discuss issues most pertinent to the region that were identified by some of the main stakeholders in the region. Thus, the first day focused on *Collaboration, Coalitions, and Partnerships to Combat Modern Slavery Post-Covid in Asia*. Panels and one workshop allowed participants to gather important information and discuss problems and possible solutions. The second day focused on *Meaningfully Engaging Survivors of Modern Slavery* during panels and one final workshop.

## General Objective

The general objective of the Regional Forums is to explore and define key strategies for local engagements, identify the best approaches to revitalize the movement and increase resilience and resistance and determine the ways in which these engagements may inform the global synergies. The Forum serves as a collegial space to unite stakeholders to unify in pushing forward the anti-modern slavery movement. The panels and workshops serve to discuss opportunities, challenges, and practices to promote strategies and actions to eradicate forced labor in the region among stakeholders from different countries and sectors.

## Specific Objectives

The Asia Regional Forum this year specifically brought together stakeholders from across Asia to discuss the most pressing issues of modern slavery and develop effective solutions. Over two days, the Asia Regional Forum considered how to increase collaboration and the development of working partnerships across the region and engage with survivors from the region to learn more about best practices for engaging with survivors and ensuring they are meaningfully included in the planning, program delivery, policy design, and justice activities.

# Day One: Collaboration, Coalitions, and Partnerships to Combat Modern Slavery Post-Covid

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## Introduction

The collapsing economic demand and the lockdown of key industries in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic are increasing the supply of vulnerable populations in search of work and economic opportunity. This is precisely the type of vulnerability that traffickers seek to exploit. In past analyses across different geographies and sectors, lack of employment opportunities and economic shocks are repeatedly cited as key drivers behind individuals' susceptibility to risky employment, migration, or marriage offers. Too often, these offers turn out to be fraudulent, and victims are trapped in exploitative situations through force or coercion. In the aftermath of the crisis, a lack of jobs and dire financial straits will likely contribute to increased forced labor and sex trafficking in at-risk communities. Many organizations that combat modern slavery anticipate a rise in fraudulent job offers and trafficking when economies begin to re-open.

If the appropriate measures are not taken, increasing inequality that already exists, aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic, will have a more significant impact on the most disadvantaged groups. Coordinated actions are required by all the actors involved, and above all, our justice systems are more agile and forceful in the face of significant and accelerated economic crises and growing job insecurity.

The Asia Regional Forum brings together stakeholders from across Asia to discuss the most pressing issues of modern slavery and develop effective solutions. Over two days, the Asia Regional Forum considered how to increase collaboration and the development of working partnerships across the region and engage with survivors from the region to learn more about best practices for engaging with survivors and ensuring they are meaningfully included in the planning, program delivery, policy design, and justice activities.

At the end of the day, three working groups discussed actions and strategies at the national and regional levels to contribute to fostering partnerships to eradicate forced labor and the role therein of civil society, businesses, governments, international organizations, and academia. The goals of these groups were to prioritize actions and strategies at the national and regional levels to contribute to the creation of coalitions and partnerships for the eradication of forced labor and to identify the role of key actors in achieving the actions/strategies. According to key actors, this was to be tackled through brainstorming and open discussion on creative and innovative proposals at the national and regional levels.

## Speaker Overview

- **Moderators:**
  - Kuldeep Chauhan | Free the Slaves | India
  - Ritz Lee III | Balaod Mindanaw | Philippines
- **Speakers:**
  - Bukeni Waruzi | Free the Slaves | USA
  - Risa Hontiveros | Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality | Philippines
  - Caitlin Wyndham | Blue Dragon Children's Foundation | Vietnam
  - Matthew Friedman | The Mekong Club | Hong Kong
  - Prof. Ishrat Shamim | Centre for Women and Children Studies | Bangladesh
  - Hong Tran | IOM | Vietnam
  - Ryan Figueiredo | Equal Asia Foundation | Thailand
  - Benu Maya Gurung | AATWIN | Nepal

## Summary of Day One

The first-day agenda was focused on discussing the importance of collaboration and partnerships to combat modern slavery in a post-Covid scenario

**Bukeni Waruzi**, Executive Director of Free the Slaves, gave the opening remarks where he provided an overview of the history of the Forums and stressed the importance of bringing together civil society at the regional and global level to think about local solutions to modern slavery

Bukeni also highlighted all the lessons learned from past Forums and emphasized how the Forum could reach a larger audience, increase participation and foster inclusion. Lastly, Bukeni reminded the audience that modern slavery is a controversial topic and that it is our responsibility to restore the dignity of those affected by all forms of modern slavery.

### **Keynote - Importance of Collaboration, Coalitions, and Partnerships to Combat Modern Slavery Post-Covid**

The keynote speaker, **Her Excellency Senator Risa Hontiveros**, Senator and Chairperson Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality – Philippines, addressed the increase of human trafficking that has worsened with the Covid pandemic, especially in the Philippines where the pandemic has only accelerated the number of victims of trafficking. Senator Hontiveros recognized that modern slavery is ever-changing and

adapting, and there are always new ways to subject people to slavery and slave-like work conditions. For this reason, she proposes that laws and regulations should be regularly updated to keep up with the new forms of slavery.

### **Panel: Collaborations Within Civil Society - Challenges and Best Practices**

Speaker **Caitlin Wyndham** indicated that since the pandemic, the forms and destinations of trafficking have changed and are on the rise. There has also been a change in the destination of trafficking from previous predominant destinations, such as China, and has increased domestic trafficking. Caitlin also presented the early warning system, a mechanism to prevent human trafficking through communications, screening, and response. This mechanism brings together organizations from local and national levels.

The second presenter, **Matthew Friedman** from the Mekong Club, gave examples of collaboration and partnerships that have worked for his organization. In Nepal, organizations came together with the government to process cases of trafficking where each parent played a role that complemented the work of each organization. He stressed the importance of working with NGOs and law enforcement to reach out effectively to victims and prevent them from falling again into modern slavery.

**Prof. Ishrat Shamim** concentrated her presentation on the work that the Center for Women and Children Studies has been doing to prevent children from trafficking and abuse, especially with the Red Heart Campaign, where she encouraged the rest of the participants to join the efforts of the organizations. She also highlighted the limitation of working with children in meetings, so they invite young adults with lived experience as children.

**Aaboo Varghese** focused on collaboration for the legal representation of their organization since the organization doesn't have the capacity to take over the legal aspects of protection against trafficking. He also talked about their work with the government in providing foster care to survivor children. He stressed the importance of collaboration with other organizations to complement their work. The presenter also expressed that the covid-19 pandemic has increased the number of victims of modern slavery and, at the same time, has augmented the collaboration between civil society and the government, who work together in different capacities to combat modern slavery.

Like many speakers in the panel, the third presenter of the Panel, **Tran Hong**, also raised the concern about the increase in the volume of human trafficking since the pandemic crisis. She stressed the importance of increasing engagement and linkage between stakeholders such as NGOs, government agencies, academia, and research institutions.

**Ryan Figueiredo** centered his intervention on the LGTBQ community and their vulnerability to falling victim to human trafficking. He pointed out one of the challenges of working with this



group is the lack of data on global efforts around this population. He indicated that many organizations seeking to combat human trafficking do not have LGBTQ population-centered services. Therefore, their particular needs are often invisibilized in the global efforts to combat modern slavery.

The fifth presenter **Benu Maya Gurung** also addressed the post-Covid situation and the importance of network collaboration to advance the efforts against trafficking. Her last remark was to call to action the organizations that work against trafficking to work together better to address this issue at all local and global levels.

When asked about the greatest challenges to collaborating in a post-Covid scenario and the role of the government in bringing together NGOs for a more integrated response to survivors, presenters had different responses.

It was mentioned that having the government coordinate NGOs was not always the best approach and rather bringing those organizations together who are eager to collaborate. It was suggested that those collaborations focus on sharing expertise and knowledge about new ways of human trafficking post-Covid. Furthermore, survivors need to be active members of those collaborations. Numerous speakers also brought up the fatigue many people are experiencing post-Covid and the need to rest and rejuvenate to carry on with the organization's mission.

In order to strengthen collaboration and partnerships post-Covid, it is important to find new ways of funding as limited resources continue to be a main problem for organizations in the region.

## Workshop

After the Panel, participants were broken into three groups to explore specific vulnerabilities and impacts they faced in their work post-Covid pandemic. The space brought together collaborators from across the region to discuss and explore the Forum's agenda further. The focus was on the challenges faced and how they were overcome creatively.

The first group focused on vulnerabilities experienced by populations in response to the pandemic, while the second group centered on challenges faced by civil society during the pandemic, and the third group discussed creative solutions for overcoming the obstacles.

Participants presented their experiences and findings with the larger group, ensuring all participants got a chance to delve deeply into their topic of choice while learning about other important facets of the issue.

Group one discussed partnerships and strategies being one of the outcomes of the discussions not to take partnerships for granted. They agreed that organizations can't accomplish their goals in silos. Organizations must be very clear on the help they need from governments since it's not always easy working with them. The group presented examples of India and Bangladesh. An important part highlighted was working with families and the community. The group also indicated the importance of partnerships in cross borders as it is one of the main ways trafficking operates. The final recommendation on the group's partnerships centered on the evaluation of resources to know what each actor brings to the table.

In terms of strategies, in order to address the vulnerabilities, particularly post-Covid, they indicated the importance of the use of tech, financial inclusion, and accountability of corporations to avoid falling into practices of forced labor. The law reform and involvement of the justice system were also indicated as a fundamental part of the strategy. Organizations need to be up to speed on the changes in the financial world as they also impact the forms of modern slavery.

Lastly, the group recognized that the integration of survivors is key to avoid survivors falling victim to modern slavery again.

The second group focused on building effective coalitions. With the lifting of Covid restrictions, organizations must start working on the village and community levels on trafficking and modern slavery. They stated that it is important to measure the capacity of civil society and the level of the national and cross border to build coalitions considering that a single organization cannot respond to all the needs of the affected population. A variety of needs are to be addressed by building a coalition, whether new or existing spaces.

The group indicated that several coalitions exist but lack ongoing dialogue. One of the benefits that the group finds in building coalitions is that different groups can develop collective interventions and have a united voice for advocacy rather than a singular voice. They also considered the mapping of services that are provided by different organizations on the ground, for which they recommended producing a directory of these kinds of services for civil society and also for victims to be able to access the services provided.

Lastly, the second group talked about equitable representation, where they view civil society as open to taking different views of different stakeholders but also understand the challenges that each stakeholder has, such as the media, the employer groups, the worker groups, the government, and also the judiciary system.

The third group discussed creative solutions in the midst of challenges faced during Covid. The participants shared their challenges, especially in terms of stakeholders coming together and the lack of platforms in city areas where many organizations work together but cannot connect with each other and share best practices; therefore, a space to come together was one of the group's recommendations. They stressed the importance of working with the victims beyond rescue since, on most occasions, rehabilitation is also needed. The group shared examples of how regional organizations have worked collaboratively to ensure victims have access to services and justice after their rescue.

The group also agreed on how they can use technology to effectively collaborate with different stakeholders and provide government officers with self-paced training on how to respond to cases of human trafficking and expand it to other regions.

The last topic discussed by the group was the importance of working within the India and Nepal borders and the work that different organizations are doing in the region to facilitate the repatriation of victims.

## **Conclusion**

**Kuldeep Singh Chauhan**, Regional Director for Asia, Free the Slaves, thanked all the panelists, speakers, moderators, and participants for their enthusiastic participation. He mentioned that we had heard inspiring stories among advocates that have called attention to the impact of modern slavery and trafficking in this region. We have also heard from national governments, international organizations, civil society, and private sector actors on their efforts to combat these issues. He mentioned that important conclusions can be drawn from today's convening, and hopefully, good connections have been made among representatives of participating organizations. Kuldeep invited participants for Day 2 simultaneously and sent in their feedback.

# Day Two: Meaningfully Engaging Survivors of Modern Slavery

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## Introduction

It has been evident in the past years that meaningfully engaging people with lived experiences of modern slavery and human trafficking in the different parts of the movement toward ending slavery results in more impactful results. Identifying means and ways of meaningfully engaging survivors have always been one of the important requirements highlighted in almost all the Forums and events conducted. Day 02 of the Asia Freedom from Slavery Forum was specifically dedicated to discussing how CSO/NGOs and meaningfully engage survivors in combating modern slavery.

The theme for Day 2 was **Meaningfully Engaging People with Lived Experiences of Modern Slavery to Combat Modern Slavery**. The session consisted of experience sharing by survivors, a presentation of a letter from a survivor, a panel discussion with survivors reacting to the discussion, and a workshop at the end of the Forum.

It is commonly accepted now that the engagement of people with lived experience in policy-making and programming is necessary because they are experts through experience. Their meaningful inclusion and engagement will result in strengthening policy effectiveness, effective programming and service outreach, and practical research outputs. To survivors, meaningful engagement would mean that people with lived experience will feel integrated, their experience valued much more than re-telling the stories of exploitation to pull heartstrings, support them in short and long-term recovery, having a seat at the table to influence policies concerning them, and overall, fulfill their full potential.

By engaging people with lived experience of modern slavery, we open up a whole new world of opportunities for collaboration and support. Actors can provide direct services and also give them a platform from which they can become leaders in this movement against modern slavery.

The group led an exploration of ways in which community members can create meaningful engagement with survivors of modern slavery and make a real difference in combating this global issue. This Forum hopes to give survivors an opportunity to lead their own journey and let their voices be heard in the fight against trafficking.

## Speaker Overview

- **Forum Advisory Committee Host:** Kuldeep Singh Chauhan | Free the Slaves | Asia
- **Moderator:** Kranti Tamang | Shanti Foundation | Nepal
- **Speakers:**
  - Professor Alex Balch | University of Liverpool | UK
  - Dr. Allen Kiconco | University of Witwatersrand | South Africa
  - Veerawit Tianchainan | The Freedom Story | Thailand
  - Archana Kotecha | The Remedy Project | Hong Kong
  - Vivian Isaac | My Choices Foundation | India
  - Cecilia Oebanda-Pacis | Voice of the Free | Philippines
  - Shariful Islam Hasan | Migration Programme & Youth Initiatives, BRAC | Bangladesh
  - Dalaina May | Dark Bali | Indonesia

## Summary of Day Two

The second day of the Asia Regional Forum focused on meaningfully engaging people with lived experiences of modern slavery to combat modern slavery. Day 2 started with a survivor sharing their experience, a presentation of a letter from a survivor, seven presentations from panelists, and ended with a workshop in which participants were asked to discuss Survivors and Community-Level Organizations, Survivors and Policy-Level Organizations and Survivors and Programming.

On Day 2 of the event, the focus was on survivors' experiences. The session began with a presentation of a letter from a survivor in Uttar Pradesh, India. She shared her story of being trapped in bonded labor along with her family at a brick kiln due to a debt taken by her father. Manav Sansadhan Evam Mahila Vikas Sansthan helped in her recovery from bonded labor, and she became a board member of the survivors' collective, Azad Shakti Abhiyan, advocating for survivors' rights on national and international platforms. **Bhima Natekar**, a survivor from Karnataka, joined the Forum to share her experience of being trafficked at 12 and sexually abused after being sent to a temple by her mother. She faced increased difficulties during the pandemic and lockdown, including caring for her mentally disturbed younger sister. Purnata, an organization, helped her and her family gain freedom from their situation. **Ms. Kranti Tamang**, Organizational Development Officer at Shanti Foundation, Nepal, moderated the session. Ms. Tamang invited seven speakers to share their organizations' experiences and best practices in engaging survivors and addressing the issues of modern slavery and human trafficking.

The first presentation at the event featured **Professor Alex Balch**, Director of Research at the Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre, University of Liverpool, UK, and **Dr. Allen**

**Kiconco.** They shared research on engaging survivors meaningfully in policy and programming, emphasizing the importance of including survivors in these processes. Their team included individuals with lived experience of modern slavery, significantly impacting the research findings.

The research had four key findings:

1. Meaningful engagement of survivors is beneficial for ending modern slavery, with benefits classified into three categories: improvements to programming, policy, and practice; benefits for people with lived experience; and benefits for ally colleagues.
2. There is significant variance in understanding key terminology related to slavery and trafficking among regions, groups, and stakeholders.
3. Promising practices were categorized into three areas: policy design and partnership, program development and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.
4. Connecting practice with principle involves being non-tokenistic, trauma-informed, and preventing harm.

The presenters concluded that while progress has been made, more work is needed to fully integrate survivors' contributions to the movement to end slavery and trafficking.

The second presenter, **Veerawit Tianchainan**, Executive Director of The Freedom Story, discussed the organization's founding 15 years ago, stemming from a documentary on trafficking victims and survivors. The organization emphasizes education as the key to preventing trafficking and engages mentors for education and awareness on trafficking and slavery. Veerawit also mentioned how engaging survivors, if engaged at the planning stage of the programs, can help design a program with sustainable results for the victims of trafficking. He also focused on the importance of education and awareness of vulnerable communities and victims of survivors in preventing trafficking. He shared how Freedom Story has engaged mentors to educate and generate awareness of trafficking and slavery.

**Archana Kotecha**, CEO of The Remedy Project based in Hong Kong, shared her organization's focus on access to remedies for migrant workers. She suggested three ways to engage survivors meaningfully: policy-level engagement, vocalizing survivors' stories, and including survivors in leadership positions.

**Vivian Anthony Isaac**, Head of Programs at My Choices Foundation, explained their work on domestic violence and human trafficking, including their collaboration with Quantum and developing a mobile app for data management and reporting. They use unique methods such as comic books and flipcharts to educate illiterate and semi-literate beneficiaries. The foundation operates a helpline and involves village stakeholders, including survivors, in program implementation. Vivian shared details about their 'Safe Village Program' and their presence in 10 Indian states, highlighting the impact of survivor involvement.

The fourth presentation was by **Cecilia Oebanda-Pacis**, Executive Director of Voice of the Free, Philippines. The organization has been protecting victims and vulnerable individuals against human trafficking for 30 years. Their strategy is a mix of social service, activism, and entrepreneurship. Cecilia discussed their model designed to prevent trafficking in poor communities, the 'I Fight Movement' youth initiative, and their involvement in policy formulation and implementation.

**Shariful Islam Hasan**, Programme Head of Migration Programme & Youth Initiatives at BRAC, Bangladesh, explained how migration plays a role in trafficking and slavery in countries like India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. In his presentation, he mentioned how in countries like India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, migration plays a prominent role in the rising number of trafficking and slavery. The traffickers have their networks in even the last household of a community, and they can take advantage of a vulnerable situation of a poor family and lure them with promises of safe migration and traffic them to the neighboring countries. He highlighted the extensive work of BRAC in anti-trafficking, education, and health and encouraged participants to share good practices to strengthen their programs.

**Dalaina May**, Executive Director of Dark Bali, Indonesia, gave the final presentation. Dark Bali is a coalition of several NGOs/CSOs working on trafficking and slavery in Bali, aimed at building the capacity of grassroots organizations. The coalition has grown to include 50 organizations, whose purpose is to strengthen and equip those on the front lines of anti-trafficking. Dalaina shared that many survivors in Indonesia are given opportunities to work with anti-trafficking organizations, and they have seen positive changes resulting from survivor engagement.

After all the presentations, the organizers invited two survivors, one from the Philippines and another from Nepal.

**Ms. Elony Monding**, a survivor and founding member of Tisaka Foundation, Philippines, emphasized the importance of survivor participation in policy-making and programming design for anti-trafficking initiatives. She stressed that survivors' lived experiences provide unique insights and understanding of the issue. Elony highlighted the crucial role survivors play in helping other victims rebuild their lives by offering advice, support, and access to opportunities. She urged fellow survivors to become involved in decision-making processes, share their strategies for advocacy, support, and activism, and help create a safer world. By amplifying survivors' voices and working together, they can break down barriers, raise awareness, and create positive change in the fight against human trafficking. Elony called for a strong, united stand against modern-day slavery.

**Ms. Cherimaya Tamang**, a survivor and founder & Chairperson of Shakti Samuha, shared her experience and emphasized the importance of treating survivors as equals. Shakti

Samuha, founded in 1996, is managed entirely by survivors of trafficking and slavery. Ms. Tamang urged participants to include terms like "survivors' inclusivity" in their programs and to view survivors as torchbearers and change-makers in the fight against slavery. She shared that Shakti Samuha adopts a survivor-centered approach, focusing on bringing survivors into leadership roles and empowering them to support others like themselves. Ms. Tamang emphasized the need for organizations to create a dignified environment for survivors and include them in policy-making and grassroots program implementation.

During the Q&A session after the panel, the moderator asked about the biggest challenges organizations face when working with survivors in the post-Covid scenario. It was mentioned that it was necessary to change the narrative around working with survivors by recognizing their strengths and capabilities rather than just seeing them as victims needing rescue. At the same time, they need to be given the space to process their experiences and participate according to their emotional and trauma capacities. Moreover, the pandemic made it increasingly difficult to reach out to survivors. Furthermore, a challenge was to analyze modern slavery through the lens of a global pandemic, which has increased poverty levels and pushed people towards immigration, making them more vulnerable to trafficking. The increase of online activities also made people more vulnerable to online victimization. While the pandemic has certainly made the anti-modern slavery work more challenging, participants were also reminded to celebrate accomplishments and recognize that the pandemic has also brought people closer.

## **Workshops**

After the Q&A session, a special workshop was held to discuss and explore ways to ensure survivors of human trafficking are more effectively included in policy and programming processes. There were three breakout rooms, each focusing on a particular topic:

1. Community-level organizations and survivors,
2. Inclusion of survivors in policy-level decisions and discussions,
3. Survivors and programming

Each group discussed specific questions related to their topic and then presented their findings.

Group 1 focused on how service providers can empower survivors, collaborate with community-level organizations, and ensure survivor feedback is utilized in program design and implementation. Suggestions included building staff capacity, applying trauma-informed care, establishing formal guidelines and policies, and providing economic security for survivors.



Group 2 explored systemic barriers that make it difficult for survivors to engage with policy-level organizations, ensuring authentic representation of survivors and using organizational platforms to support and enhance survivor engagement. The group emphasized the importance of trust, healing, representation, and survivor-led networks.

Group 3 discussed strategies to create safe and confidential spaces, address survivors' needs and perspectives, ensure their voices are heard and respected, and engage survivors in evaluating programs and practices. The group highlighted the need for culturally sensitive language and terminology and avoiding tokenism.

Lastly, the group recognized the importance of engaging survivors to evaluate the programs and practices

**Bukeni Waruzi**, Executive Director of Free the Slaves, gave the closing remarks, emphasizing that the event is part of a broader conversation that needs to continue. He encouraged participants to keep sharing, partnering, and learning from each other, especially from survivors, as the movement aims to be inclusive, cohesive, and participatory.

## Problems Identified

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The following issues were identified during the Days 1 and 2 sessions:

### Lack of Engagement and Support to Survivors

Despite the increasing number of survivors who can escape their captors, many struggle to reintegrate into society and rebuild their lives. This is due primarily to the lack of support and resources available to them. It includes the stigma and discrimination they face from their communities. Many survivors are forced to return to their previous situations of vulnerability due to the lack of viable alternatives, perpetuating a cycle of exploitation and abuse. Addressing this problem requires a multi-faceted approach that includes comprehensive support services, education and awareness campaigns, and advocacy efforts to change societal attitudes toward survivors of human trafficking. Survivors must be empowered and included in the fight against modern slavery, as they are the experts on the realities of exploitation and can provide invaluable insights into the needs and solutions required to end this scourge.

### More Focus on the Vulnerable Migrant Sector

The lack of focus to provide attention among governments to the vulnerable migrant and displaced persons in Asia is a significant problem that requires urgent attention. These groups are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking due to their lack of legal status and reliance on precarious work. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation, with many losing their jobs and livelihoods and having to resort to informal and often exploitative work. However, limited resources and limited political will contribute to the lack of support as governments prioritize their own citizens' interests. Inadequate coordination and collaboration among stakeholders also hinder efforts to identify and support vulnerable individuals. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is necessary, including effective policies and programs that meet the specific needs of these groups through government and civil society organization collaboration. They may lack the provision of access to healthcare, education, legal support, and safe working conditions, as well as empowering their groups to become self-sufficient and less reliant on exploitative work arrangements. Additionally, a shift in societal attitudes towards migrants and displaced persons is needed to recognize their inherent dignity and rights as human beings.

## Attention to Vulnerable LGBTQI+ Sector

LGBTQI+ individuals are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, as they often face discrimination and marginalization due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Moreover, their vulnerability may be compounded by factors such as poverty, lack of social support, and limited access to education and employment opportunities. Moreover, LGBTQI+ individuals may also face additional challenges when attempting to access services and support. For example, they may face discrimination from law enforcement officials or other service providers, or they may be unable to access gender-appropriate medical care. In some cases, they may also fear reprisals or retribution from traffickers or other individuals seeking to harm them. In addition, many anti-trafficking initiatives and programs in Asia have not adequately addressed the unique needs of LGBTQI+ victims and survivors of trafficking. This can result in LGBTQI+ individuals being excluded from mainstream services and support and being underrepresented in data and research on trafficking and exploitation.

## Increasing Risk of Climate Change

Climate change profoundly impacts vulnerable communities in Asia, and its effects contribute to the rise of human trafficking in the region. Climate change exacerbates poverty, displacement, and food insecurity in many parts of Asia, particularly in rural areas. These effects force many individuals to migrate in search of work and livelihoods, making them vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. Additionally, climate change-induced disasters, such as floods, droughts, and typhoons, can also displace communities and create new vulnerabilities that traffickers can exploit. Furthermore, climate change is also affecting the livelihoods of communities in coastal areas, such as fishing communities, which are experiencing declining fish stocks due to overfishing and changing ocean conditions. This loss of livelihood is forcing many individuals to seek employment in other sectors, such as the construction industry, where they may be subjected to exploitative labor practices and trafficking.

## The Insecurity Brought by Covid-19

The pandemic has significantly impacted vulnerable communities across Asia, creating new vulnerabilities and exacerbating existing ones, which has increased the risk of exploitation and trafficking. One of the primary ways COVID-19 has affected human trafficking in Asia is by increasing economic vulnerability. The pandemic has led to widespread job losses and economic insecurity, particularly for those working in the informal sector, making many individuals more susceptible to trafficking and exploitation. Moreover, the economic impact of the pandemic has disproportionately affected women and girls, who may be forced to turn to exploitative work, including sex work, to survive. Furthermore, the restrictions and lockdowns

imposed by governments to contain the spread of the virus have also contributed to the increase in human trafficking in Asia. For example, border closures and restrictions on movement have made it more difficult for migrants and refugees to cross borders safely, making them more vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. Additionally, the closure of schools and social services has meant that many children and vulnerable individuals are not receiving the support they need, making them more susceptible to exploitation.

## Solutions Proposed

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The proposed solutions include both recommendations given by speakers and strategies discussed during the working sessions of Days 1 and 2:

### Empowering Survivors and Building Networks

Survivors are uniquely positioned to use their experiences to raise awareness about the realities of modern slavery and the warning signs that potential victims should look out for. Through survivor-led advocacy efforts, survivors can also demand changes in policies and practices that perpetuate exploitation and create more effective prevention measures. Empowering survivors also involves providing them with the necessary resources and support to rebuild their lives and regain their agency. This includes access to education, job training, healthcare, and legal support. Providing survivors with these resources not only helps them to heal and reintegrate into society but also reduces their risk of re-trafficking. Moreover, engaging survivors in prevention efforts can help to identify and disrupt trafficking networks before they can exploit others. Survivors can serve as key informants for law enforcement agencies and anti-trafficking organizations, providing insights into the tactics and operations of traffickers. They can also work with their communities to educate others about the dangers of trafficking and how to protect themselves from exploitation.

### Capacity Building for Frontline Workers in Case Management

Capacity building for frontline workers in case management is also a critical part of the solution to the problems of modern slavery and trafficking in Asia. Frontline workers, including social workers, law enforcement officials, and other service providers, are often the first point of contact for survivors of trafficking, and their ability to identify and respond to cases of trafficking can make a significant difference in the lives of survivors. Capacity building for frontline workers in case management can involve training in various areas, including identifying trafficking indicators, understanding survivor-centered approaches to service delivery, and developing effective case management strategies. This training can help frontline workers better understand the dynamics of trafficking and how to provide trauma-informed care to survivors. Moreover, capacity building for frontline workers can help ensure that survivors are referred to appropriate services and that their needs are comprehensively and coordinated. By building the capacity of frontline workers to identify and respond to cases of trafficking, we can increase the likelihood that survivors will receive the services and support they need to heal and recover.

## Capacity Building for NGOs on Trauma-Informed Care

NGOs play a critical role in providing services and support to survivors of trafficking, and their ability to deliver trauma-informed care can make a significant difference in the lives of survivors. Trauma-informed care involves an approach that recognizes the impact of trauma on survivors and their needs for safety, choice, empowerment, and healing. Capacity building for NGOs on trauma-informed care can include training on trauma-informed approaches to service delivery, developing effective case management strategies, and building partnerships with other stakeholders. Through capacity building on trauma-informed care, NGOs can better understand the complex and nuanced needs of survivors and provide services and support that are tailored to their specific circumstances. This can include providing a safe and supportive environment, offering counseling and therapy, and connecting survivors with other resources such as legal and medical support. Moreover, capacity building on trauma-informed care can also help NGOs to recognize the intersectionality of exploitation and other forms of oppression, including gender, race, and class. By understanding the ways in which these factors intersect and impact survivors' experiences, NGOs can provide more effective and culturally appropriate services that address the root causes of trafficking and exploitation.

## Main Outcomes of the Forum

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The main outcomes of the Forum were established considering both how well expected outcomes were met, as well as based on the feedback received by participants.

It is increasingly evident that we must include more actors and achieve more effective regional, national, and local collaborations. The Asia Regional Forum presented an excellent opportunity to address and discuss some of the pending challenges in the region against forced labor. Such as, how to increase collaboration and the development of working partnerships across the region and engage with survivors from the region to learn more about best practices for engaging with survivors and ensuring they are meaningfully included in the planning, program delivery, policy design, and justice activities. Also, the migration crisis, the situation of specific groups such as the survivors and LGBTIQ+ community, the slow procedures of the justice system, and what should be the roles of civil society and governments.

Furthermore, regional and international experts promoted the discussions based on a multi-stakeholder format, from different fields, from academia, United Nations Agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and governments. And we wanted to highlight the practical experiences of the speakers.

Below we present the results achieved on each day of the Forum:

### **Day 1 - Partnerships and Collaboration**

- Establish and strengthen regional and local partnerships
- Improve collaborative problem-solving relationships among stakeholders to prevent sexual exploitation, forced marriages, and forced labor in the region.
- Explore effective partnerships to increase resource mobilization

### **Day 2 - Survivor Engagement and Inclusion**

- Increased understanding of how stakeholders can ethically engage with survivors in all sectors of the modern slavery movement.
- Increased commitment to amplifying survivor voices in developing policies and practices.
- Increased understanding of good allyship

## Next Steps

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Participants left the Forum with an increased understanding of forced labor in Asia, including detailed information on key indicators to identify forced labor, root causes of forced labor, as well as concerns for the most vulnerable groups, such as survivors and members of the LGBTQI+ community. In addition, establishing and strengthening regional and local partnerships to improve collaborative problem-solving relationships among stakeholders to prevent sexual exploitation, forced marriages, and forced labor in the region were discussed. The Forum also explored effective partnerships to increase resource mobilization.

The participants increased their understanding of how stakeholders can ethically engage with survivors in all sectors of the modern slavery movement and increased their commitment to amplifying survivor voices in developing policies and practices.

Considering the connections and partnerships established through the Forum, we hope that participants will benefit from the corporations formed and further the anti-slavery movement.

This Forum was the first of the Regional Freedom from Slavery Forums 2022/23. In 2021, the annual Global Forum was supplemented by a series of Regional Forums divided into the following regions: Latin America, North America and Europe, Africa, Asia, MENA, and the Caribbean. Last year's series took place online and thereby provided opportunities to increase access, ensuring grassroots ideas and voices were amplified within the movement. The 2022/23 series are divided into three in-person Forums (North America and Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean) to increase collaboration between actors in the region and three online Forums (Latin America, Asia, and MENA). The series concluded with the global convening in May 2023.

To follow each of the Regional Forums, check our [website](#) and follow us live at [@FFS\\_Forum](#).



## Participation and Evaluation

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Across the two days of virtual Forum events, 496 people from 34 countries registered and a total of 337 individuals from 22 countries attended the sessions. The countries with the most participants attending included: India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, and Vietnam.



An evaluation form was sent to all participants to solicit necessary feedback, which can be implemented in future Forums, in Asia as well as other Regional Forums and the Global Forum.

The comments shared indicated that participants appreciated the opportunity to learn about best practices of collaboration, expert knowledge shared by the speakers, an overview of the statistical data of the region, as well as survivor engagement.

Some recommendations were given around the issue of translation. Considering the many different languages spoken in the region, English was a barrier to some participants. Furthermore, participants' wishes for future Forums included action steps, information on mental health and women's and children's rights, and government responses.

# Speaker and Presenter Bios

## Day One: Collaboration, Coalitions, and Partnerships to Combat Modern Slavery Post-Covid

<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>	
	<p><b>Bukeni Waruzi</b> is the Executive Director of Free the Slaves. Previously, he formed the non-profit grassroots group AJEDI-KA/DRC Child Soldiers Project to confront widespread slavery and the use of child soldiers by militias and armed forces. In Kenya, Waruzi worked for the Porticus Foundation, overseeing projects on human rights, civic engagement, education, and climate change. For nearly a decade, he was the director of programs for WITNESS in New York, a group that empowers victims around the world to collect evidence to bring the guilty to justice. Waruzi has spoken before high-level audiences, including the United Nations Security Council, the International Criminal Court, and the US Congressional Children's Caucus. She currently represents anti-slavery groups as a civil society member of the Global Coordination Group of Alliance 8.7, the global initiative to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 8.7, an end to child and forced labor worldwide.</p>
<b>Keynote Speaker</b>	
	<p>Her Excellency <b>Senator Risa Hontiveros</b>, Senator &amp; Chairperson Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations, and Gender Equality, The Philippines is a health and women's rights advocate, a proud activist, and a champion of the basic sectors. She is the Philippines' first socialist woman Senator.</p> <p>A multi-awarded public servant, community organizer, and broadcast journalist, Hontiveros served as the representative of Akbayan Partylist from 2004 to 2010. She was first elected to the Senate in 2016 and was later re-elected by voters to a new Senate term in 2022.</p> <p>Hontiveros has personally championed 25 new landmark laws, including the historic Expanded Maternity Leave Law (RA 11210), which gives working moms 105 days of paid maternity leave, and the Mental Health Law (RA 11036), which provides the first legal framework over mental health care in the country.</p>

As chairperson of the Senate Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations, and Gender Equality, Hontiveros has successfully pushed into law the Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act (RA 11861), which provides wider social benefits to solo parents, the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313) which protects Filipinos – especially women – from gender-based harassment in public spaces, and the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children Law (RA 11930) which boosts government efforts to end online abuse and exploitation of Filipino children.

She is currently working to pass reforms such as the proposed Lingap Para Kay Lolo at Lola Act, which will establish a system of universal social pension for Pinoy senior citizens, and the Free Dialysis Act, which will mandate PhilHealth to provide free dialysis sessions to all senior citizens.

**Moderator**



**Nolasco Ritz Lee III Bisual Santos or “Ritz Lee”** is a social activist and human rights defender. He is currently the Executive Director of Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw, Inc. (BALAOD Mindanaw), a legal resource institution based in Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanaw, working with the poor and marginalized sectors, identities, and local communities, particularly in Mindanaw. He became instrumental in the drafting and enactment of local policies favorable to local communities, particularly on the protection of the rights of women and children, fisheries, and on DRRM in Misamis Oriental and Dinagat Islands. The ordinances are currently being used as a guide and/or replicated by other local government units in the Philippines. He joined BALAOD Mindanaw in 2005 as a Policy Advocacy Officer 2005 after a four-year stint as Community Coordinator at Tanggol Kalikasan (Defense of Nature), a public interest environmental law group. He is the Vice-Chair of the Council and Convenor of the Gender Cluster of the Alternative Law Groups, Inc. (ALG), a coalition of eighteen (18) legal resource non-governmental organizations that adhere to the principles and values of human rights and alternative and developmental law. He currently leads the network in working on Reproductive Justice issues, particularly advocating the right to humane, non-judgmental, and compassionate postabortion care and the right to safe and legal abortion.

**Speakers**



**Caitlin Wyndham** is an experienced leader committed to addressing social exclusion, inequality, and human rights violations. Her expertise with non-profit organizations encompasses research, grants management, donor relationships, monitoring, evaluation and research, organizational development, and program design. Caitlin has been involved with Blue Dragon Children's Foundation since 2003 and is focused on strategy, evidence-based programming, research, evaluation, and learning as well as stakeholder liaison as a senior staff member. Caitlin holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy, a Master's in International and Community Development, and a Master's in Sociology.



**Matt Friedman** is an international human trafficking expert with more than 30 years of experience. He is CEO of The Mekong Club, an organization of Hong Kong's leading businesses that have joined forces to help end all forms of modern slavery. Mr. Friedman previously worked for USAID and the United Nations in over 30 countries. Mr. Friedman offers technical advice to numerous governments, banks, and corporations working to eliminate all forms of modern slavery and is the author of twelve books. In 2017, Mr. Friedman won Asia's prestigious "Communicator of the Year" Gold Award.



**Prof. Ishrat Shamim** has four decades of teaching experience on Gender and Development issues, as well as courses on human trafficking at the Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka. She is the Founder and President of the Centre for Women and Children Studies (CWCS) and has been an activist for upholding women's and child rights. She has more than two decades of professional research experience in the field of gender and development and has more than 40 publications on gender violence, dowry, pro-women, and child-friendly policing, international women labor migration, women in informal sector employment, domestic workers, feminization of poverty, violence against children, online child abuse, abandoned children, street children, child labor and child domestic workers including 20 exclusively on human trafficking at national and international levels.

Presently, she is a member of the GO-NGO Committee to Combat Human Trafficking under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Bangladesh. She actively took part in preparing the 3 National Plans of Action for Combating Human Trafficking 2012-2014, 2015-2017, and 2018-

	<p>2022 initiated by the Ministry of Home Affairs. She initiated the ongoing project on “Gateway to Employment and Economic Employment for Survivors of Trafficking” in 2011 in Satkhira district, which is a disaster-prone area as well vulnerable to trafficking for the advancement of women’s socio-economic empowerment through income-generating activities and job placement of survivors and potential victims in a garment factory at Dhaka.</p>
	<p><b>Aaboo Varghese</b> is an expert in the field of human trafficking and modern slavery with an experience of 32 years. He has a bachelor’s degree in Chemistry from Mumbai University, and he also has an MBA in Development Management from the prestigious S P Jain Institute of Management &amp; Research. Aaboo was passionate about working for the vulnerable and exploited communities in India, and he started working with several communities in the villages of South and North India before joining Oasis India in the leadership team in 2018. He worked with the leadership team for 6 straight years, and later on he worked as Joint Executive Director and Director of Projects of the organization before moving on from Oasis in 2014. While working with different stakeholders throughout his career, he realized the inadequacy of the strategies followed by most Anti-Human Trafficking organizations where the focus was curative rather than preventive. With the vision to introduce better strategies for addressing human trafficking, Aaboo launched out to start Purnata. Purnata was born with an emphasis on a comprehensive prevention strategy of vulnerable victims at its core while we also rescued and rehabilitated survivors.</p> <p>In the last eight years, Aaboo with his team has been able to assist 300 Vulnerable women &amp; children from falling prey to traffickers apart from rescuing over 60 victims of Trafficking (nearly 30 majors &amp; over 30 minors), rehabilitating 40 survivors into mainstream society, helped, arranged and witnessed 2 survivors get married, rescued and arranged safe housing for 60 children at risk of being trafficked and brought awareness &amp; sensitization on Human Trafficking to over 2 lakh people.</p>



**Tran Thi Hong** currently works as the coordinator for the largest trafficking program in Viet Nam titled Tackling Modern Slavery in Viet Nam, for the International Organization for Migration (IOM). She is also the Secretariat to the Viet Nam Counter Trafficking Network, which includes UN agencies, NGOs, institutions members, and Embassies as observers.

Hong has been a migration practitioner with nine years of experience working in international organizations and NGOs, including IOM (more than five years), the European Parliament, Hagar International, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency. She holds a master's degree in Cultures and Development Studies from the University of Leuven, Belgium.



**Ryan Joseph Figueiredo** is the Founder and Executive Director of Equal Asia Foundation – an incubator for inclusive LGBT projects that are disrupting the LGBT movement from within and encouraging it to find collaborative solutions to deep-seated social inequities. EAF's work this year is focused on addressing the growing intergenerational gap in Asia, in particular reducing the social isolation of the elderly; preventing suicide and self-harm in the young; and mitigating the vulnerabilities of LGBT migrants and refugees affected by climate change, conflict and disaster. Ryan leads a team of change-makers from the non-profit, business, and public sectors across borders to incubate and accelerate LGBT inclusion projects in Asia.



Ms. **Benu Maya Gurung** is the Executive Director of the Alliance against Trafficking in Women & Children in Nepal (AATWIN), working with AATWIN since 2004. She is a women's rights activist and resource person for VAW, gender equality, and girls' rights, especially against human trafficking. She has been engaged and experienced about 20 years in the formation, implementation, and improvement of various Acts, National Plans of Action, and directives related to human trafficking, violence against women, and women's rights in Nepal as well as coordinated and collaborated with Govt. agencies and commissions. She is engaged and contributed to the CEDAW, SDG, BPfA, UPR, and CRC as a member of various committees of CSOs. She is the

Advisor of women trafficking survivors & HIV positive and a self-organized group of women workers. She is the Chairperson of the National Action Coordinating Group (NACG) of Nepal, a national coordinating body of SAIEVAC. She played a key role in the five National Conferences of Trafficking Survivors from 2007 to 2022.



**Dr. Aqueel Khan** is the Founding Director of the Association for Stimulating Know-How (ASK) and has extensively worked on modern-day slavery, human rights, and international labor issues within supply chains. He led the project on preventing modern slavery for migrant workers going to the gulf corridor. In addition to working on safe migration, the ASK team was involved in the rescue of workers from the gulf with active support and collaboration with POE and Government agencies. He also worked on financial innovation to develop financial products for migrant workers. In the last 30 years, he has extensively worked on child labor, forced labor, and migrant labor issues within various supply chains and sectors. This includes apparel, textiles, home furnishings, brass artware, glass, agriculture, Tea, Spices, electronics, footwear, minerals, and natural stones. He has designed and led traceability of supply chain, and risk assessment and also facilitated Capacity buildings and Remediation programs. He worked on various projects across South and Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Aqueel is a Board Member of the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), a global platform promoting sustainable agriculture across the world. He started his career with UNHCR in India and holds a Master's Degree in Social Work and a Ph.D. in women empowerment from Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi.



**Sumitha Shaanthininni Kishna** is an advocate, solicitor, and proprietor of the Chambers of Sumitha. She holds an LLB (Hons) from the University of East London and was called to the Malaysian Bar in 2005. She is a qualified mediator and is on the mediators' panel of the Bar Council Malaysian Mediation Centre. She is the Director of Our Journey, a civil society organization for experts on migration issues to advocate for government and private stakeholders to develop a supportive migration system for noncitizens incorporated with international standards and norms.

Sumitha serves in many national, regional, and international groups/coalitions/networks to advocate for the protection and rights of migrants, domestic workers, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, trafficked persons, and foreign spouses, as well as foreign nationals on death row.



**Temsukumla Pongener** is a lawyer practising at Delhi and a Legal Retainer for (IJM), Delhi. She has completed her BA and an LLB from Delhi University and Diploma in International Law & Diplomacy from ISIL, Delhi.




She advocates for individuals and families victimized by the bonded labour system. Her experience cuts across a number of social development areas, such as bonded labour, child labour, child protection, human trafficking, and policy development. She is also a trainer and conducts training for the Police, Public Prosecutors, Officials from the Labour Department, DA, State Legal Services Authorities, NGOs et al., on laws and procedures of bonded labour, child labour and labour trafficking and has trained more than 5000 officials.

Prior to working with IJM, Ms. Pongener worked mostly in Delhi High Court with the Standing Counsel Govt. of National Capital Territory, Standing Counsel for Municipal Corporation of Delhi & Delhi Development Authority representing and defending the Delhi govt. on Writs, Contempt, and Appeal matters. She had also worked with a Criminal law firm on various criminal matters representing clients before the Supreme Court, High Court, and District Courts of Delhi.





## Day Two: Meaningfully Engaging Survivors of Modern Slavery

<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>	
	<p><b>Kuldeep Singh Chauhan</b> is the Regional Director for Asia at Free the Slaves. Kuldeep has fifteen years of practical experience in community development and human rights. He has experience in training and capacity building in private sector supply chains, stakeholder relations, resource mobilization, and coalition building across Asia. As the Regional Director for Asia at Free the Slaves, he represents Free the Slaves in the region; provides ongoing technical assistance to partner organizations in strategic design, implementation, measurement, and reporting; and holds responsibility for the overall management of the regional program, strategy development, business development, and program oversight.</p>
<b>Moderator</b>	
	<p><b>Kranti Tamang</b> is a young social activist from Nepal who identifies as a second-generation human trafficking survivor passionately working for her community with the Shanti Foundation, a non-profit organization founded and operated by trafficking survivors and women living with HIV for other trafficking survivors and people</p>
<b>Speakers</b>	
	<p><b>Alex Balch</b> is a Professor of Politics at the University of Liverpool. He has led several multi-country projects examining efforts to address exploitation, focusing on approaches from the arts and humanities. He was Principal Investigator for the Anti-Slavery Knowledge Network (AKN) 2017-2022, funded through the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The AKN funded a number of sub-awards across different African countries, featuring research into creative, community-based methods, safeguarding practices, and equitable partnerships.</p>



**Dr. Allen Kiconco** is visiting researcher at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. She is a gender and conflict researcher who also studies various aspects of modern slavery and human trafficking including forced marriage and sexual slavery during wartime. Her work promotes person-centered, ethical, and all-encompassing research practices. She is the author of *Gender, Conflict, and Reintegration in Uganda: Abducted Girls, Returning Women* (Routledge, 2021).



**Veerawit Tianchainan** is the Executive Director of The Freedom Story, guiding the organization's work in Thailand. He is a human rights advocate who has about 20 years of experience working in various roles in Thailand and on the international stage i.e. UN High Commission for Refugees, Country Director of the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, and Founder and Executive Director of Thai Committee for Refugees Foundation. He also served on regional and national advisory boards of networks focused on migration and human rights, as well as alliances on child's rights and counter trafficking in persons. With his business background, he brings business and management perspectives to the works of Not-for-Profit organizations, along with his keen interest in the latest Information Technologies. He frequently speaks at national, regional, and international fora as well as is interviewed by international and national media on the human rights situation of refugees, stateless persons, and survivors of human trafficking, and supporting campaigns to end child detention.



**Archana Kotecha** is recognized as a regional expert on human trafficking and forced labor issues across APAC. A UK-qualified barrister and former corporate lawyer, Archana has over 15 years of experience advising international organizations (including the UN International Organization for Migration, UN International Labour Organization, and US-AID), ASEAN bodies, governments, and human rights practitioners on human trafficking and forced labor. Archana is widely published and regularly engaged as a subject matter expert by NGOs, governments, and the private sector. In 2017, Archana was named one of the top ten innovative lawyers in the Asia Pacific by the Financial Times and she is also an alumnus of the prestigious International Visitor Leadership Program run by the US Department of State. She is regularly named as an influential changemaker and

	<p>was most recently named one of Asia’s most inspiring social entrepreneurs by APAC Entrepreneur.</p>
	<p><b>Vivian Anthony Isaac</b> has over 38 years of experience in community programs, developmental communication, organizational leadership, project management, strategic media planning, and fund-raising gathered through working across various humanitarian organizations at the national and global level – human, child, and sex trafficking, medical missions, disaster relief, microenterprise, and safe drinking water.</p> <p>Currently, he serves as a Programme Director for the anti-trafficking wing of My Choices Foundation, Operation Red Alert, and works to prevent child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children through community engagement. Vivian is a firm believer and advocates for partnerships, and Operation Red Alert’s entire focus is on building a network of organizations that support each other and strengthen each other, to be able to strengthen the communities that we live in. He has built a partnership base of over 100+ NGOs spread across ten states in India, creating awareness about trafficking.</p>
	<p><b>Dr. Bhanuja Sharan Lal</b> is the Executive Director of Manav Sansadhan Evam Mahila Vikas Sansthan (MSEMVS) based in Varanasi.</p> <p>Around 1996, Bhanuja began to work directly on issues of child labor, especially in carpets. He joined MSEMVS as an intern in 1996 after completing a Master’s in Social Work and was involved in women empowerment programs in rural areas. Mr. Bhanuja, throughout his career, realized that without a strong mechanism for rehabilitation, other efforts are not going to sustain the freedom of the child laborer. He has always stressed the proper rehabilitation of the freed laborer through education and livelihood building. Mr. Bhanuja became the Director of MSEMVS in 2003, and he is responsible for leading more than 75 frontline anti-trafficking workers in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Bhanuja and his team have enabled communities to progressively dismantle entrenched systems of bonded labor at brick kilns, farms, quarries, etc., in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand.</p> <p>Bhanuja is a member of the Working Committee of NITI AAYOG, Govt. of India for the sustainable engagement with CSOs; the Task Force on Bonded Labour and Child Labour in Varanasi at the district level; and the Monitoring Committee “on Laws related to women and children i.e. Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act, Juvenile Justice Act, Adaptation Act, etc. at Commissioner Level of Varanasi.</p>



**Cecilia Oebanda-Pacis** is an internationally acclaimed slavery fighter. Her awards include the Anti-Slavery International Award, US Dept. of Labor Trafficking in Persons Hero, First Iqbal Masih Award, World Children's Prize, Reuter's Trustlaw Connect Impact, and Child10 Award. In 2011, she was appointed by the Philippine President to the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking, where she was seated for six years. In 2013, CNN featured her fight against slavery in a documentary entitled "The Fighters". Recently, she entered the Advisory Board of Freedom United and as Advisory Council of Telos Governance Agency.



**Charimaya Tamang** is a Founding Member and Chairperson of Shakti Samuha. She became a member of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT) as a representative of survivors for the first time in Nepal. In the journey of the anti-human trafficking campaign, she was honored by the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare in the 2nd National Day Against Human Trafficking in 2065 BS. In addition to this, she was awarded the International Award "Hero Acting to End Modern Day Slavery Award" by the US Government in 2011 AD. She was privileged by the Nepal Government as a "Samaj Sewa Shree" Maanpadawi on the occasion of the Republic Day in 2068 BS, and again she was awarded by "Dayaram Periyar Award" in 2016 AD.



**Dalaina May** grew up overseas and has lived in 5 countries on three continents. When she moved to Indonesia, she finally found her home. She holds a BA in Intercultural Studies from Biola University and a MA in Global Leadership with an emphasis on Children at Risk from Fuller Seminary. After supporting the local staff of a safehouse for trafficked teen girls in Bali, she realized that there was a need for an organization providing similar support for the entire Indonesian anti-trafficking community, and Dark Bali was born.



**Eleony Monding** is a survivor of sex trafficking. She co-founded Tisaka Foundation on October 28, 1998, a non-profit organization based in Cagayan de Oro, Philippines. She advocates for promoting the rights and inclusion of survivors in the community and fighting the misconception and wrong judgment of sex trafficking survivors. Currently, their organization is composed of 78 survivors. She is married and a mother to a daughter who is now a licensed psychologist.



**Eugenio M. Gonzales** is an Industrial Engineer with more than 35 years of experience in development work in the fields of strategic planning, project development and management, grant-making, institutional development, and policy analysis as a project team leader, consultant, trainer, and executive officer.

At present, he is the Chief of the Party of the Strength CTIP Project funded by USAID-Philippines under a cooperative agreement with the Partnership for Development Assistance in the Philippines (PDAP). The goal of the project is to strengthen local systems and partnerships for more effective and sustainable Counter Trafficking-In-Persons (CTIP) in the Philippines.



**Nasir Chowdhury** has been serving Winrock International in Bangladesh as the Project Director of the B-PEMS AugroJatra Climate Change project, which works on the intersection of climate change and human trafficking. Earlier, he worked for the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) as their Country Manager in Bangladesh, where he monitored, reported on, and supported the implementation of GFEMS-funded projects. Before joining the GFEMS, he worked as an Advisor for Winrock International's anti-trafficking project to ensure sustainable social and economic reintegration of trafficking survivors. In addition to his experience and expertise in human rights, climate change, migration, and modern slavery, he also has experience, through his previous jobs, in research, project, and syndication (structured) financing, green financing, corporate banking, risk management, skills development and employment,

	<p>enterprise development and livelihoods, strategic partnership, and new business development. Nasir holds an MA in International Development from the School of International Service and a Graduate Certificate in Gender Analysis from the Department of Economics, American University, Washington D.C.</p>
	<p><b>Shariful Islam Hasan</b> is working as the Head of the Migration Programme at BRAC Bangladesh, the world's largest Non-government Organization. Through rigorous advocacy, he is trying to ensure the rights of the migrant workers and their families, from grass root level to the policy level. His work area is also extended to combating human trafficking or modern-day slavery issues and ensuring dignified lives for all the survivors through emergency rescue support to sustainable reintegration. He is a member of the Labour Migration Sub Committee of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and also a member of the thematic group for Migration, Migrants workers' Rights, and Anti Trafficking of the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh.</p> <p>Shariful did his master's in journalism, Media, and Communication from the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, and Oslo University College, Norway. Before joining BRAC in 2017, he worked as a senior reporter for Prothom Alo, the highest-circulated daily newspaper in Bangladesh. He produced hundreds of investigative reports on different national and international issues on politics, education, women empowerment, migration, and trafficking from 2005 to 2017. He received Migration Media Award consecutively in the years 2015 and 2016 for his special reports.</p> <p>Skilled in Communication and Journalism with diverse knowledge of Mass Media, social media, International relations, Development Communication, and Migration. Utilizing the knowledge and skills acquired to achieve a better Bangladesh and the world.</p>



**Vivek Singh** is a passionate sustainability practitioner who has assisted more than 187 multinational organizations in integrating sustainability into their processes and practices. He is an expert in developing solutions to complex ESG challenges organizations face in a constantly changing market environment. He has developed ESG frameworks, standards, and value chain solutions, enabling industries to prevent ESG risks and meet their UN SDG goals. A member of the Georgian government invited him to serve as an advisor to support technology innovation in the country. In this capacity, he had the opportunity to work with entrepreneurs from Georgia and India. He brings a unique perspective to enterprise sustainability due to his extensive experience working in the private and development sectors. Living and working in cross-cultural teams enabled him to understand better the impact that societies have on one another and the ecosystem. As a result of this diversity, he has developed not only a global business outlook but also a global outlook on life. His ability to recognize minor problems enabled him to prevent significant problems from occurring. These experiences and skills have allowed him to simplify complex issues without dumbing them down. This perspective, in conjunction with the analytical and quantitative skills acquired in his MBA, gives him the ability to be an exceptional leader.