

NORTH AMERICA REGIONAL FORUM

**Mobilizing for
Anti-Trafficking
Action:** *Bridging the
Gaps and Enabling
Collective Awareness
Through
Technological
Advancements*

DATES: MARCH 11-13, 2024
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FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY FORUM SERIES



The Freedom from Slavery Forum was established in 2013 to gather anti-slavery leaders worldwide to create a space to merge, 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, a series of Regional Forums supplemented the annual Global Forum. The 2022-2023 series took place online and in person, providing opportunities to increase access and ensuring grassroots ideas and voices were amplified within the movement. In 2024, the European Forum also became a separate entity, resulting in 7 forums held throughout the year: three in-person forums (North America, Caribbean, Europe) and four online forums (Latin America, Asia, Africa, and MENA). The series will conclude with the Global Forum in 2025.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE FORUMS



The objectives of the Regional Forums are **to explore and define critical strategies for local engagements, identify the best approaches to revitalize the movement, increase resilience and resistance to modern slavery, and determine how these engagements may inform the global synergies**. The Forum is a collegial space to unite stakeholders and strengthen the anti-modern slavery movement. The panels and workshops discuss opportunities, challenges, practices, strategies, and actions to eradicate modern slavery in the regions.

NORTH AMERICA REGIONAL FORUM



The North American Regional Forum, held from March 11-13, 2024, at Miami Dade College in Miami, Florida, brought together 64 stakeholders under the theme, *Mobilizing for Anti-Trafficking Action: Bridging the Gaps and Enabling Collective Awareness Through Technological Advancements*.

Miami, Florida

March 11-13

Mobilizing for Anti-Trafficking Action: Bridging the Gaps and Enabling Collective Awareness Through Technological Advancements

The Forum's theme highlights the urgent need for the North American anti-modern slavery movement to adapt to and provide leadership amidst rapid technological advancements. Recently, innovations have driven positive transformations across various sectors, ushering us into an era filled with immense possibilities and significant challenges. The rise of generative AI demonstrates the potential to democratize free speech, enhance educational frameworks, and fortify fundamental freedoms crucial to human existence.

Diverse stakeholders, including survivors, academics, NGOs, government representatives, and technology experts, participated in the Forum to address a fundamental question: How can technological advancements accelerate our fight against modern slavery while safeguarding against potential misuse?

The Forum explored the intersections of technology and modern slavery. Participants confronted the challenge of embracing innovation as an opportunity, recognizing the risks, and collectively forging a path toward ethical and effective technology integration into our strategies to fight against modern slavery.

Over the two-day event, representatives from the United States and Canada focused on leveraging technological advancements to combat human trafficking rather than allowing traffickers to exploit these tools. Participants shared their experiences of integrating new technologies into their work.

A significant takeaway was the necessity for nonprofit organizations to utilize technology for greater efficiency while remaining vigilant against its potential misuse by traffickers. Funding limitations were identified as a significant obstacle for nonprofits attempting to adopt new technologies in anti-trafficking work.

The Forum underscored the importance of the human element in technology. Speakers emphasized the need for survivor experiences to guide the development of artificial intelligence (AI) to fight human trafficking and forced labor. Participants were encouraged to adopt new technologies thoughtfully and responsibly, balancing innovation with caution.



THE PLANNING OF THE FORUM

While Free the Slaves serves as the Forum's secretariat, we were not the sole actors planning the event. We would like to thank all external committee members, without whom this event would not have been successful.

Special thanks to;

- **Bukeni Waruzi**, Executive Director, Free the Slaves
- **Dr. Brook Bello**, Founder, More Too Life
- **Tegan Hare**, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, US Department of State
- **Kate Price**, Executive Director, Action Coalition on Human Trafficking, Alberta
- **Melissa Yao**, Executive Director of the National Trafficking Sheltered Alliance
- **Krystal Snider**, Executive Disruptor, Collaborative Community Solutions

Day One

INTERSECTION OF TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

During day one of the North America Regional Forum, participants engaged in critical discourse on the intersection of technology and human trafficking, examining case studies and relevant research. The discussions focused on identifying how technology can pose threats to the prevention of human trafficking and how it can aid in the protection of victims and survivors. Additionally, the Forum explored how technological advancements can be leveraged to create innovative solutions aimed at preventing forced labor, sex trafficking, and other forms of modern slavery.



OBJECTIVES



To explore the intersection of technology and human trafficking through critical discourse and examining case studies and research.



To identify how technology presents a threat to the prevention of human trafficking and strategies for strengthening the protection of victims/survivors through technology.



To generate strategies for leveraging the opportunities presented through technological advancements to create solutions for the prevention of forced labor, sex trafficking, and other forms of modern slavery.



DAY ONE SPEAKERS OVERVIEW

- Davina Durgana, (Forum Host)
- Jose Alfaro, Lived Experience Expert
- Tanya Gould, Survivor Leader & Consultant
- James Yao
- Dr. Brook Bello, More too life
- Rosemary Mann, VR Eval
- Brenda Mezick, Assistant State Attorney/
Director of Human Trafficking
- Robert Beiser, Microsoft
- Kate Price, ACT Alberta
- Melissa Yao, National Trafficking Sheltered
Alliance
- Megan Lundstrom, Social Systems
Consulting
- Rachelle Starr, Scarlet Hope
- Rochelle Keyhan, Collective Liberty
- Cheryl Perera, One Child
- Rushan Abbas, Campaign for Uyghurs

SUMMARY OF DAY ONE



CLICK THE VIDEO ICON TO WATCH ON YOUTUBE

The first day of the North America forum explored the intersection of technology and human trafficking through panel discussions, the examination of case studies, and presentations on relevant research. Secondly, it identified how technology presents a threat to the prevention of human trafficking and the protection of victims/survivors. Lastly, it generated strategies for leveraging the opportunities offered through technological advancements to create solutions for the prevention of forced labor, sex trafficking, and other forms of modern slavery.

The session opened with Davina Durgana, the Forum's host, acknowledging the indigenous people whose lands we were on. This was followed by José Alfaro's opening remarks on the dual role of technology in solving crimes while cautioning against misuse and restrictive measures. He called for inclusive support for diverse populations, including male survivors, the LGBTQIA+ community, and migrant workers, advocating for a balanced, human-centered approach.

KEY TAKEAWAY



Inclusivity: José emphasized the importance of inclusive support for diverse populations, including male survivors, the LGBTQIA+ community, and migrant workers.

"We need restrictions when it comes to technology, but it doesn't mean that all restrictions are good... some restrictions on technology can limit youth access to information and resources they need. We must find "productive and sustainable solutions"
– Jose Alfaro - Lived Experience Expert

KEYNOTE SPEECH



An inspiring keynote speech from Tanya Gould, the Anti-Human Trafficking Director for the Attorney General of Virginia and a survivor leader, followed Mr. Alfaro's remarks. In her speech, Gould shared her journey of overcoming suffering and the violation of her rights inflicted by her trafficker. She highlighted survivors' resilience and ability to rise and emphasized the importance of listening to survivors' diverse narratives.



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“What makes me resilient is realizing that I can rise from a fall. There will be many falls in life, but because I have learned to get up, I can take what I learned and get up again.” –
Tanya Gould - Survivor Leader & Consultant

KEY TAKEAWAY

Allyship to Survivors: Gould urged participants to become active allies by listening to survivors' stories. She recognized that survivors possess invaluable insights into traffickers' operations and emphasized that their knowledge should be harnessed to warn, educate, and drive the fight against human trafficking.

WHAT IS AI AND VIRTUAL REALITY?



Tanya Gould's powerful speech was followed by a brief video presentation titled "What is AI and Virtual Reality?" by James Yao. James Yao introduced the concepts of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR)/Extended Reality (XR), explaining their applications, particularly in addressing trafficking, related crimes, and trauma. A focus was placed on Generative AI, a branch of AI that creates new content, like ChatGPT. The presentation emphasized how nonprofits can leverage AI to boost productivity, improve communication, enhance creativity, and accelerate innovation in program development, content creation, and personalized communication. The video also highlighted the ethical considerations, advising users to ensure accuracy, avoid biases, and review AI-generated content. Nonprofits were encouraged to explore tools like Microsoft Copilot or ChatGPT to address their specific challenges and create a more significant impact through responsible AI use.



"When using generative AI, use it responsibly and ethically, ensure accuracy, be mindful of potential bias, and make the content yours." – James Yao

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Benefits of AI for Nonprofits

AI, especially Generative AI, can increase productivity, improve communication, and foster creativity, helping nonprofits stay agile and innovative.

Ethical Use of AI

Nonprofits must use AI responsibly by ensuring accuracy, avoiding biases, and regularly reviewing content for compliance and appropriateness.

Actionable Steps

Nonprofits are encouraged to experiment with AI tools like ChatGPT to address pain points and enhance their overall impact.

AI, VR/ XR AND TRAFFICKING: OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS?



The video set the stage for a critical panel discussion on AI, VR/XR, and trafficking. This panel thoroughly examined the dual nature of these technologies, highlighting both their potential benefits and inherent risks in the context of human trafficking prevention. A key focus was Florida's recent statute banning AI-generated child pornography, sparking an ethical debate about AI's role in potentially desensitizing society to such crimes. Panelists stressed the need to uphold stringent privacy protections for victims as technology becomes more integrated into prevention strategies. The discussion highlighted the necessity of integrating technology into anti-trafficking efforts while maintaining a crucial human element. Panelists acknowledged the financial barriers to accessing VR technology but expressed optimism that these would decrease over time. The panel collectively recognized that while traffickers are increasingly exploiting technology for their benefit, it is imperative to empower the anti-trafficking movement with robust, sophisticated software to counter these efforts effectively.



"We have created a statute that prohibits completely fictitious images that are computer generated if they reasonably appear to be under 18," – Brenda Mezick - Assistant State Attorney, Miami Dade County

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Need for Privacy for Survivors

Panelists emphasized the importance of strong privacy protections for victims as technology becomes more integrated into prevention efforts.

AI's Potential to Desensitize People

Florida's statute banning AI-generated child pornography sparked an ethical debate on how AI might desensitize society to heinous crimes.

TECHNOLOGY & FORCED LABOR: EMERGING THREATS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS



This panel was followed by an insightful workshop on technology and forced labor led by Kate Price of ACT Alberta. Price explored how technology is being used to facilitate and exacerbate forced labor and current approaches to address these threats. The workshop discussed Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), a government-led initiative whose key features include its employer-driven nature, the requirement for employers to obtain a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA), and the provision of temporary work permits for employees. Significant risks of the TFWP were highlighted, such as workers being tied exclusively to their employers, losing support if they leave, and having limited support options. Unfortunately, employers providing housing create dependency, with no alternatives for workers who leave. Technology is a facilitator of forced labor, with traffickers using it to hide identities, target victims, sequence actions, and control victims through tracking and video reporting. Possible solutions discussed included IRIS ethical recruitment practices to mitigate risks and support victims. The session emphasized the need to address both technological and systemic aspects of forced labor to protect vulnerable workers effectively.



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"Tech against trafficking is a coalition of Tech companies that are working to combat human trafficking. They work with different companies to provide access to technology tools that can respond to human trafficking." – Kate Price - ACT Alberta

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Technology as a Tool to Facilitate Forced Labor

Traffickers exploit digital tools to hide their identities and maintain control over victims Through tracking devices, video surveillance, and communication technologies.

Technology as a Tool for Protection of Workers

Technology can be leveraged to enhance the detection and intervention of forced labor. A holistic approach is required to reform programs like Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), strengthen protections for workers, and ensure that technological advancements serve to combat, rather than exacerbate, forced labor.



INNOVATIVE PRACTICES: LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY IN THE PREVENTION OF SEX TRAFFICKING



Simultaneously, another workshop on Innovative Practices: Leveraging Technology in the Prevention of Sex Trafficking was taking place, led by Melissa Yao of the National Trafficking Sheltered Alliance (NTSA) and Rachelle Starr of Scarlet Hope. Melissa Yao discussed the Alliance Referral System (ARS), a network of 115 organizations offering services to survivors. The referral system has handled 2,223 referrals, mostly self-referrals from survivors. ARS is a non-emergency system where placement takes 8-10 days, involving a process where survivors or advocates send referrals, agencies respond, and survivors choose suitable programs. Melissa also introduced the TIRA app, developed with Microsoft, to connect victims to critical services in a trauma-sensitive and confidential manner. Rachelle Starr presented Freedom Signal, a nonprofit tech company aimed at combating the \$12 billion sex trafficking industry, where 75% of individuals are sold online. Freedom Signal provides resources to survivors. Freedom Signal also trains advocates and service providers to be respectful and kind and ensure data confidentiality, especially involving minors. Overall, the workshop highlighted the importance of integrating technology in anti-trafficking efforts to protect victims effectively.



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"We have partnered with Microsoft to create the TIRA app, which provides a safe, trauma-sensitive, and confidential way for victims of trafficking and people assisting them to find options for services that match the victim's needs." – Melissa Yao - National Trafficking Sheltered Alliance (NTSA)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Collaboration Through Technology

The Alliance Referral System (ARS) demonstrates the power of a connected network of 115 organizations, enabling coordinated service delivery for survivors through a streamlined referral process.

Empowering Survivors with Choice

Tools such as ARS allows survivors to self-refer and select suitable programs, giving them agency in their recovery journey while ensuring that placement happens in a trauma-sensitive, non-emergency timeframe.

Technology Plays a Transformative Role in Anti-trafficking Efforts

Tools like ARS, TIRA, and Freedom Signal demonstrate how technology can streamline support, protect victims, and combat the vast scale of online trafficking, emphasizing the importance of tech integration in this fight.



TECH-FACILITATED SERVICE PROVISION: EMERGING PRACTICES



Following the workshops, the Forum reconvened with a panel discussion on Tech-Facilitated Service Provision: Emerging Practices moderated by Ana Patel of The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The panel stressed the need for standardized and accessible technologies for law enforcement to build strong prosecution cases, advocating for nationwide databases to widen the scope of available evidence. Panelists highlighted the importance of cross-city collaborations and using technology to protect privacy and streamline processes, bringing private sector advancements to public sectors and NGOs. The panel highlighted the need for localized approaches and trauma-informed survivor leadership, advocating for trying cases at the local level and scaling technology into service providers to enhance the effectiveness of the anti-trafficking movement.



"Child survivors were being completely shut out or tokenized in the fight against sexual exploitation of children. At One Child, we give children the raw ingredients needed to take their place as experts and influence policies and programs based on their lived experiences" – Cheryl Perera - One Child

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Standardized and Accessible Technology for Law Enforcement

Standardized and accessible technology for law enforcement is critical in building strong prosecution cases, with a call for nationwide databases to expand the availability of evidence.

Cross-city Collaborations

Cross-city collaboration and privacy-protecting technologies are essential for streamlining anti-trafficking efforts and enhancing communication between cities, law enforcement, and service providers.

Private-sector Technological Advancements

Private-sector technological advancements should be integrated into public-sector and NGO efforts, ensuring that cutting-edge tools are used more effectively to combat trafficking.

DATA-DRIVEN POLICIES AND SECURITY FOR SURVIVORS



Day 1 of the 2024 North America Regional Forum ended with a workshop on Data-Driven Policies and Security for Survivors led by Megan Lundstrom from Social Systems Consulting. In this workshop, Megan delved into the importance of safeguarding survivors' data when implementing AI technologies. She explored best practices for ensuring privacy, consent, and secure data storage within anti-trafficking organizations, drawing insights from case studies and real-world experiences. Lundstrom also highlighted the significance of examining financial transaction behaviors during different periods of exploitation, sharing her unique perspective as a service provider and someone with lived experience. She emphasized that AI is only as effective as the humans who create it, underscoring the need for authentic intelligence to inform artificial intelligence.



"Lived experience is authentic intelligence. Artificial intelligence is only as good as we are as humans." – Megan Lundstrom - Social Systems Consulting

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Financial Transaction Behaviors

Financial transaction behaviors during periods of exploitation can provide critical insights into trafficking patterns, aiding in better understanding and intervention strategies.

AI's Effectiveness Relies on its Creators

AI's effectiveness depends on the humans who create it. Authentic intelligence is crucial to shaping and guiding artificial intelligence, ensuring that tech solutions remain grounded in human understanding and ethics.

Safeguarding Survivors' Data

Anti-trafficking organizations must prioritize privacy, consent, and secure data storage, ensuring that survivors' information is handled carefully when implementing AI technologies.

ASSESSING THE RISKS: ADDRESSING THE INHERENT RISKS AND BARRIERS OF GREATER RELIANCE ON TECHNOLOGY IN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION



Simultaneously, Robert Beiser of Microsoft hosted a workshop on "Assessing the Risks: Addressing the Inherent Risks and Barriers of Greater Reliance on Technology in Trafficking Prevention." This workshop evaluated the threats and challenges associated with the increased use of technology in anti-trafficking efforts. Beiser, technical advisor for the Justice Reform Initiative at Microsoft, highlighted the potential risks of relying heavily on technology, emphasizing that the rapid pace of technological change can exacerbate existing inequities, including unequal access to economic opportunities. He raised questions about the role of government and private companies in promoting justice, emphasizing the need for collaboration.



"We must collectively commit to meeting the opportunity and work to bring the benefits of AI to all in society. This includes considering fairness, reliability and safety, privacy and security inclusiveness, transparency and accountability" – Robert Beiser - Microsoft

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Rapid Pace of Technological Advancement

This can intensify challenges, potentially leaving vulnerable populations behind if access and support are not equitably distributed.

Collaboration Between Government and Private Companies

Collaboration between the government and Private sector is essential in promoting justice and ensuring that technological solutions in anti-trafficking efforts are fair and inclusive.

REGIONAL CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED ON DAY ONE

Balancing Technology with Human Connection

While technology facilitates efficiency and scalability in anti-trafficking efforts, the forum highlighted the irreplaceable value of human connection, particularly when working with survivors and vulnerable populations. Relying solely on technology risks depersonalizing the support process, potentially overlooking the nuanced needs of individuals affected by trafficking.

Addressing the Ethical Implications of AI

Discussions centered on the ethical dilemmas posed by AI, such as its role in generating exploitative content (e.g., Florida's AI-generated child pornography ban). Concerns were raised about AI's potential to desensitize society to the realities of exploitation and the broader implications for privacy and data security.

Securing Adequate Funding for Technology Initiatives

The cost of implementing advanced technologies, such as AI and VR, presents a significant barrier for many anti-trafficking organizations. Long-term funding models are essential to ensure the sustainability and scalability of technological initiatives.

Increasing Access to Technology for Anti-Trafficking Stakeholders

Many grassroots organizations and local stakeholders lack access to cutting-edge tools and resources needed to combat trafficking effectively. The forum stressed the importance of democratizing access to technology by offering subsidies, training programs, and open-source tools.

Ensuring Inclusivity in Access to Technology

Participants underscored the need to address disparities in technological access, particularly for marginalized communities and underserved regions. Ensuring inclusivity requires considering factors such as language barriers, cultural sensitivities, and infrastructural limitations.



PROPOSED SOLUTIONS FOR DAY ONE

01. Strengthening Collaboration

Fostering partnerships between technology developers, anti-trafficking organizations, law enforcement, and policymakers.

02. Increasing Investment

Advocating for significant financial support for research and development in anti-trafficking technology.

03. Policy Advancement

Driving the creation of policies and regulations that promote technology's ethical and practical use in combating human trafficking.

04. Raising Awareness

Continuing to educate the public about the role of technology and the ethical use of technology in addressing human trafficking.

Day Two

On Day 2 of the North American Regional Forum, discussions centered on how technology has positively and negatively impacted prosecuting human trafficking cases across the region. Participants focused on building and enhancing the capacity of stakeholders to integrate technological advancements effectively into their work by leveraging cross-sector partnerships. The Forum aimed to galvanize the North American anti-trafficking movement toward adopting more data-driven, tech-facilitated solutions to better address the complexities of human trafficking.



OBJECTIVES



To explore the various ways in which technology has positively and negatively impacted the prosecution of human trafficking cases in North America.



To build and enhance the capacity of stakeholders to integrate technological advancements in their work by leveraging cross-sector partnerships.



To galvanize the North American anti-trafficking movement toward greater data-driven, tech-facilitated solutions to addressing human trafficking.



DAY 2 SPEAKERS OVERVIEW

- Dr. Timothy Patrick McCarthy, Harvard University
- Alex Nguyen, Ulula
- Joanna Ewart-James, Freedom United
- Karen Stauss, Transparentum
- Daniel Emr, Worthwhile Wear
- Sara Woldehanna, Polaris
- Tanya Gould, Survivor Leader & Consultant
- Mark MacDonald, Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Kate Price, ACT Alberta
- Bryon Lippincott, Free the Slaves
- Sandra Christie Brown, Finding Your Light Foundation
- Melissa Yao, National Trafficking Sheltered Alliance

OPENING REMARKS

The day opened with encouraging opening remarks from Ronny Marty, a member of the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking. He thanked the participants for their dedication and impressive work combating human trafficking. He encouraged them to continue to share resources and information to support people who are affected by human trafficking. He called for educating young people on how to discern the good and the danger of technology and encouraged participants to use technology to find solutions.

KEY TAKEAWAY



Share Resources: He encouraged participants to share resources and information to strengthen support for those affected by human trafficking.

Leverage Technology: He urged participants to leverage technology to find innovative solutions to address human trafficking more effectively.

"Technology will never, ever replace human beings!" – Ronny Marty

KEYNOTE SPEECH



Dr. Timothy Patrick McCarthy opened the final day of the North America Freedom from Slavery Forum by emphasizing the importance of collective action in the fight against human trafficking. He drew parallels between historical abolitionist movements and the current anti-slavery movement, highlighting the significance of such gatherings for fostering collaboration and inspiring change. Dr. McCarthy emphasized the role of partnerships in achieving the movement's goals. He discussed the evolution of the Forum from a local initiative to a global movement and highlighted the growing focus on survivor-centered approaches. The keynote address also explored the complex relationship between technology and human trafficking. McCarthy acknowledged the potential benefits of technology in combating slavery but also warned of its risks, such as increased surveillance and privacy concerns. He called for a balanced approach to technology, using it as a tool for liberation rather than oppression.



"Let us not lose sight of this fundamental fact: when it comes to liberation, people will always be more important than platforms. Technology is a means to an end, not the end itself." – Dr. Timothy Patrick McCarthy

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Collective Action

Collective action is crucial in the fight against human trafficking. We should draw inspiration from historical abolitionist movements, which used collaboration to foster change.

Partnerships are Essential

Partnerships are critical to achieving the movement's goals, reflecting the Forum's evolution from a local to a global initiative with a growing emphasis on survivor-centered approaches.

Survivor-Centered Approaches

Survivor-centered approaches have become a growing focus, reflecting the shift toward empowering those most affected by trafficking.

UTILIZING CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE TECHNOLOGICAL CAPACITY



The keynote speech was followed by a panel discussion on Utilizing Partnerships to Enhance Technological Capacities in the fight against human trafficking, which Karen Stauss of Transparentum moderated. Panelists emphasized the importance of human-centered technology, digital presence, and strategic collaborations to maximize impact. They stressed the need to bridge technological gaps, such as using client management software and apps to track survivor progress and improve service delivery. The panel also underscored the importance of user-friendly, impactful technology, prioritizing data privacy, community engagement, and collaborative problem-solving. They highlighted partnerships as vital to developing effective tech-driven solutions to combat trafficking.



"NGO's must choose a tech partner whose values align with them" – Alex Nguyen, Ulula

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Human-Centered Technology

Human-centered technology is essential for ensuring that digital tools are designed to meet the needs of survivors and service providers, keeping the focus on the individuals they serve.

Strategic Collaboration and Partnerships

These are key to developing and implementing effective tech-driven solutions in the fight against human trafficking. They ensure that resources are shared and aligned across sectors for a more significant impact.

Bridge Technological Gaps

The need to bridge technological gaps was highlighted, with panelists advocating for tools like client management software and apps to track survivor progress, enhancing service delivery and efficiency.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: COLLABORATION IN AN EVER- CHANGING WORLD

After the panel, Tanya Gould, a survivor leader and consultant, facilitated the workshop on Stakeholder Engagement: Collaboration in an Ever-changing World. Gould emphasized the critical role of survivors in the anti-trafficking movement. She stressed the importance of establishing dedicated committees to amplify survivor voices and address their concerns. Gould also highlighted the necessity of building strong relationships with legislators and other stakeholders to raise awareness and drive change. Gould emphasized prioritizing mental well-being as a foundation for effective advocacy. Concluding the workshop, Gould expressed optimism about the future of the anti-trafficking movement. She encouraged participants to continue their work in empowering survivors and driving systemic change.



"Healing is hard; it takes work. But I don't want to stay stuck; I want to keep going to pursue what I want." – Tanya Gould, a survivor leader and consultant

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Collaboration with Legislators and Stakeholders

Collaboration with legislators and stakeholders is essential for raising awareness, building solid partnerships, and driving meaningful change in anti-trafficking efforts.

Mental Well-being Should be a Priority

The mental well-being of advocates and survivors is the foundation for sustainable and effective advocacy.

EVOLVING INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUES USING AI: A LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSPECTIVE



Simultaneously, the workshop on Evolving Investigative Techniques Using AI: A Law Enforcement Perspective occurred. In this workshop, Mark MacDonald of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Kate Price of ACT Alberta delved into the increasing role of AI in law enforcement's fight against human trafficking. Law enforcement expert Mark MacDonald shared insights into how AI is transforming investigative methods. A key focus was on the practical application of AI in identifying victims, tracking traffickers, and understanding trafficking patterns. The workshop explored how AI can analyze vast amounts of data, such as online advertisements and social media posts, to uncover potential victims and identify trafficking networks.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

AI is Revolutionizing Investigative Methods

Its practical uses include identifying victims, tracking traffickers, and analyzing patterns of trafficking activity, enhancing law enforcement's ability to combat human trafficking more effectively.

Processing Data

AI's capability to process large volumes of data, such as online ads and social media, enables law enforcement to uncover victims and trafficking networks more efficiently.

DIGITAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL LITERACY: IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO SURVIVORS INTEGRATION AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES



After a brief coffee break, participants separated to attend one of two workshops. The first workshop, Digital and Organizational Literacy: Identifying Barriers to Survivors Integration and Strategies for Improving Opportunities, was facilitated by Bryon Lippincott and Sandra Christie Brown, highlighting the critical need to equip survivors of human trafficking with digital and organizational skills for successful reintegration into the workforce. They highlighted survivors' challenges in transitioning from basic digital literacy to the advanced skills required for employment. Sandra Brown shared personal insights, noting that survivors often lose jobs due to a lack of computer skills and are further hindered by trauma, which affects their ability to learn and retain information. Participants explored strategies to overcome these challenges, including trauma-informed approaches to skill development.



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"As survivors, how can we survive out there if we are fired from jobs repeatedly due to trauma? We need assistance from these wonderful NGOs working to assist survivors in gaining communication and computer skills." – Sandra Christie Brown, Finding Your Light Foundation

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Developing Digital and Organizational Skills

Digital and Organizational Skills are Crucial for the successful reintegration of trafficking survivors into the workforce, yet many face challenges transitioning from basic to advanced digital literacy.

Trauma-informed Approaches

Trauma-informed approaches to skill development are essential in helping survivors overcome barriers and improve their employment opportunities.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO ACCESSING TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS

While the above workshop took place, Melissa Yoa facilitated another workshop on Overcoming Barriers to Accessing Technological Solutions. This workshop was a roundtable discussion that allowed participants to contribute their ideas. Participants discussed how grassroots organizations combating human trafficking often face significant obstacles in leveraging technology. To overcome these challenges, participants suggested that anti-human trafficking organizations require access to affordable and secure technology solutions. Investing in staff training on data privacy, cybersecurity, and technology tools is essential.

Additionally, developing strategies to reach individuals with limited internet access, such as mobile applications or SMS-based platforms, is crucial. Robust data protection measures must be in place to safeguard sensitive information. Collaboration among organizations to share resources and expertise can also enhance the impact of technology adoption.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Affordable and Secure Technology Solutions

Affordable and secure technological solutions are needed to empower grassroots organizations and invest in staff training on data privacy, cybersecurity, and technology tools.

Reaching Individuals with Limited Internet Access

This requires innovative strategies, such as using mobile applications or SMS-based platforms.

FACILITATED DISCUSSION: BUILDING A MOVEMENT NARRATIVE



Following two intensive days of dialogue on the role of new technology in North America's anti-trafficking movement, participants led by Dr. Brook Bello offered valuable insights into the Building a Movement Narrative document. This unified framework aims to galvanize the anti-trafficking movement. The narrative development process is integral to the 2024-2025 Freedom from Slavery Forum series, designed to foster open discussion, feedback, and collaborative refinement of the draft narrative. Input gathered from these sessions will be incorporated into subsequent drafts, culminating in the presentation of the final Narrative at the 2025 Global Freedom from Slavery Forum. The feedback suggests a need for a more hopeful, action-oriented, and visually evocative narrative.



“There’s a challenge with some of the terminology around different types of human trafficking; how do we get past that, to move the movement forward and create a narrative that the whole world can embrace?” – Dr. Brooke Bello, More Too Life

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Narrative Should Be Hopeful

Starting the Narrative with a message of hope and tangible change will be more engaging for a global audience.

Engage Businesses

To avoid alienating potential allies, businesses should be seen as part of the solution, not just contributors to the problem.

Effects of Capitalism

The Narrative must acknowledge how capitalist processes marginalize and exploit vulnerable people.

THE FUTURE OF THE ANTI-TRAFFICKING MOVEMENT IN NORTH AMERICA: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



The Forum concluded with Mr. Daniel Emr dividing participants into groups focused on prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership. These groups discussed critical takeaways from the event. Emr delivered a hopeful and inspiring closing address, encouraging participants to remain steadfast in their fight against modern slavery.

KEY TAKEAWAY

A Unified Voice

Emr reminded participants that working together and learning from each other will amplify the voices of all working to put an end to human trafficking



"This Forum is about working towards a unified voice that if in tune, if we work together in sync, we will be magnified. Now ultimately let's allow the true meaning and change to happen through our voices collectively" – Daniel Emr



REGIONAL CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED ON DAY TWO

Technological Barriers

Grassroots organizations and survivors face significant challenges accessing technology due to limited resources, data protection needs, and staff capacity. Overcoming these barriers requires affordable solutions, training, and partnerships.

AI in Law Enforcement

While AI offers transformative tools for identifying victims and traffickers, challenges remain in balancing its use with privacy protections and ethical considerations.

Lack of a Unified Narrative

Many other movements, such as the climate change movement, have a unified narrative that helps to move their movements forward. The anti-trafficking movement should also have a unified narrative advocating a clear message.



PROPOSED SOLUTIONS FOR DAY TWO

- 01.** Foster collaborations across sectors to enhance technological capabilities and resource sharing.
- 02.** There's a need to empower grassroots organizations and invest in staff training on data privacy, cybersecurity, and technology tools.
- 03.** Stakeholders should provide trauma-informed approaches to skill development to help survivors overcome barriers and improve their employment opportunities.

NEXT STEPS

Refine Narrative: Refining the new unified Narrative for the Modern Slavery Movement. Develop a more engaging, hopeful, and action-oriented narrative to unite and mobilize the global anti-trafficking movement.

Webinars: Free the Slaves will keep the conversation going through a series of webinars that aim to bring these conversations to a larger audience.



PARTICIPANTS EVALUATION

The Forum was attended by 64 people from 45 unique organizations from the United States and Canada. Participants mentioned networking as the most significant benefit of the Forum, with many expressing appreciation for the new connections made and the potential these relationships hold for future collaborations and partnerships. The opportunity to engage with like-minded individuals and organizations was a recurring theme, highlighting the importance of collective action in the fight against human trafficking. In addition to networking, several participants found the discussions on technology particularly insightful, especially the sessions focused on using AI and data scraping tools to combat trafficking.

Presentations from survivor speakers left a lasting impression, serving as a source of inspiration and a reminder of the importance of centering the voices of those directly impacted by trafficking. Some participants also noted the value of learning about other organizations' diverse approaches and strategies, which they found both educational and applicable to their work. Overall, the Forum provided a rich exchange of ideas and experiences, reinforcing the critical role of innovation, collaboration, and survivor engagement in advancing the anti-trafficking movement.

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“I have at least ten people I'll be setting up calls with to explore potential synergies.” – Anonymous

“I enjoyed learning what interests nonprofits around using technology to fight human trafficking” – Anonymous

“It was also helpful to meet with people doing this work outside the United States because the model of working together and supporting local actors instead of dictating to them hierarchically is not the most common model here in the US. It was refreshing; I left feeling empowered.” – Anonymous

“I learned about what other organizations are doing both with technology and without was really inspiring, and I could see us applying their approach in other contexts” – Anonymous

“The forum was a reminder that the fresh, passionate energy of youth should be centered and harnessed instead of dismissed.” – Anonymous



"I formed new connections that could turn into future partnerships and collaborations; also deepened connection with previous connections to discuss potential collaborations" –
Anonymous

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FreedomfromSlaveryForum.org

The Hub of the Anti-Modern Slavery Movement