

### **HUMAN TRAFFICKING POLICY AND RESEARCH IN AFRICA**

#### **Policy engagement in Africa**

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

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

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

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

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

#### **The powers of African government in regards to policy development**

West Africa has very high levels of human trafficking with 80% of the total amount being subjected to forced labour and 75% of that being young children. In light of the fact that nations

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

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

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

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

### **Prevention of contemporary slavery**

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

### **Protection of the affected and afflicted**

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

### **Partnership**

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

### **Monitoring and assessment**

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

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

<sup>1</sup>40515-wd-policy\_on\_the\_prevention\_of\_trafficking\_in\_persons\_in\_africa-\_english.pdf (2022) 40515-wd-POLICY\_ON\_THE\_PREVENTION\_OF\_TRAFFICKING\_IN\_PERSONS\_IN\_AFRICA-\_ENGLISH.pdf | African Union. Africa Union. Available at: <https://amert.au.int/en/document/40515-wd-policyonthe preventionoftraffickinginpersonsinafrica-englishpdf> (Accessed: November 28, 2022).

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

<sup>3</sup>Allais, Carol. (2006). AN OVERVIEW OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.

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

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

<sup>6</sup>Achibra, G. (2022) “Freedom From Slavery Africa Regional Forum,” in *Modern Slavery in Mauritania*. Kigali: Free The Slaves. Available at: Modern Slavery.