

Introduction

Modern slavery is complicated. It is undoubtedly wrong, but knowing how to intervene as a philanthropist is complex. If interested in an overview of human trafficking, consider reading my article from 2019, "[Trafficking Prevention – the Forgotten P](#)." The following takes the conversation further and examines the Four P's of the anti-human trafficking (AHT) movement, where progress has occurred, where gaps still exist, and where philanthropic funding can create significant change.

The Four P's of AHT

For years, the AHT community has rallied around three tenets. These include:

- Protection – removing survivors from slavery and providing them with support to recover and reintegrate into society.
- Prosecution – holding perpetrators accountable for their crimes and/or advocating for legislation to enable more systems of justice.
- Prevention – changing the systems and cultures that enable these crimes to occur at all.

Within recent years, the AHT community has recognized and heralded the role that "Partnerships" have contributed to the fight to end slavery, making it the fourth "P".

Quick facts on modern slavery

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation, the most recent facts on modern slavery were updated and shared in 2021. An [Executive Summary](#) of these findings shares the following facts and figures:

- Approximately 50 million people are living in modern slavery - nearly one of every 150 people in the world. This has increased nearly 25% in recent years, partly due to the global pandemic.
- Modern slavery is divided into two main groupings: 28 million in **forced labor** and 22 million in **forced marriage**.
 - Among those in forced labor, 17.3 million are exploited in the private sector; 6.3 million in forced commercial sexual exploitation, and 3.9 million in forced labor imposed by state. Twelve percent (12%) of all those in forced labor are children and more than half of these children are in commercial sexual exploitation.
 - Among those in forced marriage, more than two-thirds are female, which represents 15 million women and girls. Sadly, forced marriage is often linked to economic hardship.
- Women and girls account for approximately 70% of all people held in slavery, including forced labor, commercial sexual exploitation and forced marriage. ¹

¹ [Statistics on forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking \(Forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking\) \(ilo.org\)](#)

Progress and outstanding gaps

While progress has been made in some areas of the AHT fight, there remains much more work to do. The following describes progress and gaps within the Four Ps of the AHT movement.

“P”#1- PROTECTION

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Progress consists of removing victims from the offending environment with rescue teams, providing survivors with mental health support, emergency shelters, and assimilation programs to safely and sustainably reintegrate into society. Donors are often attracted to this work because of its immediacy, clear ability to track impact, and connection to the emotional impact of intervention.

Highlighted gaps within this impact area consist of shifting mindsets to identify survivors as victims deserving of help rather than prostitutes and/or ruined individuals that are written off as “too late” to help or worse, deserving of the crime due to their caste or life choices. Additionally, post-rescue there is a shortage of offering safe transitional housing and job skills training to survivors to prevent them from falling back into highly vulnerable situations where recidivism is likely to occur.

“P”#2- PROSECUTION

Prosecution has the highest volume of government intervention and resources among the four tenets of AHT. Consequently, it is where the most progress has been made. While prosecution has seen great strides it is also wrought with great conflict. Progress and outstanding gaps are summarized below.

Progress for prosecution consists of increasing awareness and education of the scale and details of the problem. This is by far, the greatest area of progress within the last 15 years. In addition to general awareness, prosecution awareness specifically includes the education of law enforcement on 1) the need to focus government resources on trafficking crimes, 2) how survivors and sex workers are differentiated, and 3) the need to separately handle victims of trafficking from those being smuggled into new countries. Progress also consists of the education and training of frontline workers such as healthcare providers, law enforcement and transportation workers who might be able to flag and report potential trafficking scenarios. Increased support has been allocated to create systems of accountability such as national hotlines in some countries and more emphasis and resources devoted to creating laws that enable higher conviction rates of perpetrators. Lastly, more government support has been allocated to support nonprofit prosecutorial programming, more funds for free legal services, and so on.

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Highlighted gaps within prosecution efforts include a lack of international tribunals that hold countries accountable for human rights violations that offend the right to freedom and perpetuate systems of slavery. Efforts to curb demand also have been greatly lacking. Specifically, the “Decrim” movement to decriminalize prostitution restricts legal avenues to convict “Johns”, pimps, and traffickers who are often participants in sex slavery. Led by philanthropist George Soros, decrim is heralded as a progressive agenda to recognize prostitution as a “legitimate form of work.” However, this agenda has fractured the AHT movement and significantly slowed progress for greater prosecution of participants. To read more about this debate, Demand Abolition has provided the [AHT case against decriminalization](#) and Psychology Now summarizes the debate [here](#).

Another key area of failure to advance prosecution falls under effective law enforcement. Even if a country has the right laws in place where it is illegal to exploit and enslave people, enforcement of laws is often low. UNICEF summarizes this by saying, “Although basic laws to address human trafficking are in place in most countries, conviction rates remain extremely low, creating a high-profit low-risk industry.”² The ILO estimates that human trafficking and forced labor create illicit profits of \$150 billion annually.³

“P”#3- PREVENTION

Prevention of human trafficking is the least active area largely because prevention is harder to track, producing less impact data and drawing fewer donors. In my opinion, prevention is the biggest gap area receiving the least amount of attention, which is why I call it the “Forgotten P.”

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The greatest area of progress to prevent human trafficking is survivor aftercare. NGOs that focus on serving survivors holistically, including mental health, safe temporary housing, job skills training and job placement, are preventing the greater likelihood of re-trafficking, known as recidivism.

Because those who have been enslaved are easier to enslave again due to the many horrific outcomes of being exploited, preventing recidivism is highly strategic and critical to fighting human trafficking. NGOs are doing great work in this area of impact.

Unfortunately, there are more stumbling blocks than progress in the effort to prevent trafficking, hence the recent increase of those living in modern slavery. These highlighted gaps include the following.

1. **Banishing exploitation.** Developing or strengthening cultures that encourage equality and discourage the exploitation of people, especially females.
2. **Creating systems of economic equality** to alleviate poverty. Alleviating poverty is a critical strategy to prevent slavery. Regarding the aim to end human trafficking, UNICEF states, Poverty is one of the root causes of slavery and human trafficking. Situations of desperation are created when families and parents struggle to put food on the table,

² [The Sustainable Development Goals that Aim to End Human Trafficking | UNICEF USA](#)

³ [wcms_243027.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

access health care, or afford school fees to educate their children ... Many cases of human trafficking begin with an individual looking for decent work. If nations truly invest in economic opportunities over the next 15 years, we would address one of the main vulnerabilities that place people at risk of trafficking in the first place.⁴

The same is true for educating children. The more children are educated, the less likely they are to be trafficked.

3. **Focusing AHT activity in hub source regions** where people are being taken from rather than in hub crime regions where the ongoing offense continues. Often, these are not the same regions. For example, increasing AHT focus on vulnerable refugee populations can prevent slavery.
4. **Informal sector development.** Some AHT organizations have begun to focus on AHT prevention through economic development in high-traffic areas. However, these organizations are often either 1) focusing on the formal economy by partnering with companies to build out businesses and expand job opportunities or 2) doing vocational training for women who have been trafficked which focuses on learning a specific trade determined by the NGO. While there is merit in this work, there is also a challenge when NGOs are in a position to determine the job for a woman. Women are less likely to value the work and sustain the employment if, say, she is becoming a seamstress by hates sewing.

An opportunity exists to build economies in hub areas by investing in expanding informal economies.

By focusing on the informal economy, such as entrepreneurial education, microfinance, and financial inclusion programs, a greater amount of people can be reached. For example, “Informal activity is central to the economies of most African countries. By some estimates, around 50 percent of economic output and 85 percent of employment in Africa are generated in the informal sector, mostly through agriculture and trade.”⁵

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5. **Supply-chain transparency** that measures companies against one another, including their commitment against forced labor. While some have started to evaluate corporations, it has not yet been widely socialized and incorporated into consumer behaviors. For example, despite being a global leader that prevent government and businesses from sourcing products that contribute to modern slavery⁶, the U.S. exacerbates the global slavery problem by importing products, including laptops, computers, mobile phones, garments, fish, cocoa and timber, at risk of being produced through forced labor.⁷ This means that even a global leader is still lacking the

⁴ [The Sustainable Development Goals that Aim to End Human Trafficking | UNICEF USA](#)

⁵ [What do we really know about Africa’s informal economy? - The Washington Post](#)

⁶ [GSI-2018-Regional-Report-Americas-EN.pdf \(walkfree.org\)](#)- Page 5

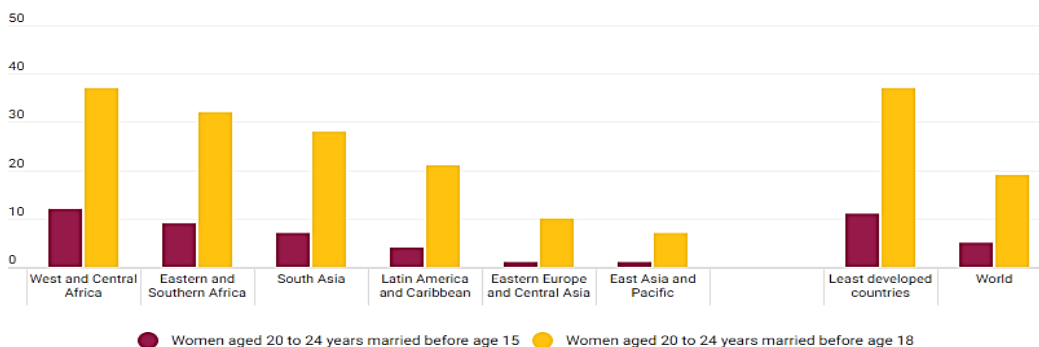
⁷ [Over 400,000 people living in 'modern slavery' in US, report finds | Slavery | The Guardian](#)

transparency needed to fight slavery. Ideally, companies would have a labor rating, much like how Watchdog organizations rate nonprofits, to educate consumers and enable socially informed purchasing and accountability.

6. **Deterring cultural practices of child marriage.** This is one of the biggest contributors to slavery. “Every year, 12 million girls are married before they reach the age of 18 and around 650 million women alive today were married as children. Child marriages expose girls to both physiological and psychological risks, including a lack of access to education and exposure to domestic violence.”⁸ The data shared by UNICEF shows the following chart:
7. **An imbalance of resources going to the U.S.** affects progress. Among the approximate 50 million people enslaved today, the United States has an estimated 400,000 including incidences of child marriage in the 12 states where it remains legal. This represents the fifth lowest amount in the world and less than one percent of the global problem yet the U.S. continues to receive large sums of the resources going to fight slavery.⁹

The highest levels of child marriage are found in Sub-Saharan Africa

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18, by region



“P”#4- PARTNERSHIPS

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Progress consists of partnering to build awareness where organizations partner to create collective action via nonprofit alliances; nonprofit-private sector collaborations where jobs are more prevalent and accessible and product development is more transparent; nonprofit-government partnerships operating to identify criminal behaviors/systems and increased convictions occur; and lastly,

⁸ [Child marriage - UNICEF DATA](#)

⁹ [GSI-2018-Regional-Report-Americas-EN.pdf \(walkfree.org\)](#)- Page 29

the incorporation of AHT into the United Nations Sustainability Goals such as SDG 5.2 (protection of women and girls against trafficking) and 8.7 (forced labor). These alliances foster collective action resulting in more impact than what would be possible if operating independently.

The gaps in partnerships highlighted here consist of enrolling the faith-based community as an evangelist for equality, and discerning which partnerships are best positioned to make the most impact. For example, as previously mentioned, the U.S. has a small fraction of slavery per capita compared to most other countries, yet NGOs in the U.S. continue to get an imbalance of funding due to better access to funding sources.

Recommendations

While each focus area would benefit from philanthropic support, some issues are riper for an infusion of philanthropic capital with stronger NGO partners available to learn from than others. Among the gaps where progress has lagged, recommendations for philanthropic investment include the following.

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- Job-skills training for survivors to prevent recidivism
- Fighting child marriage within cultures that have a higher likelihood of incidence
- Economic development programs in hub source regions, especially focusing on developing the informal sector. “Addressing decent work deficits in the informal economy, as part of broader efforts towards economic formalization, is a priority for progress against forced labor.”¹⁰
- Investing in children’s education in hub source regions, especially girls’ education which is widely neglected
- Partnering with faith-based leadership that advocates for equal rights between girls and boys - men and women
- Funding in areas of high poverty

As a next step, we can discuss this evaluation to clarify key points and identify areas of further interest within the Trust’s strategy and values. Red Philanthropy can then present the top five to seven “At-a-Glance” reports of organizations working in the ideal areas discussed here.

¹⁰ [Forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking \(Forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking\) \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/)