



Tools to support community transformation

A1 HIDDEN ISSUES – INFORMATION FOR FACILITATORS

Revealing human trafficking (slavery): information for facilitators

Tools in this section of *Reveal* provide background information on hidden issues for facilitators. Tools in other sections are designed to be used with

Questions for a facilitator to consider:

Is people trafficking something that is talked openly about in your community?

Are men and/or women from your community going missing? Are they leaving with the offer of work or a better life somewhere else? Are children going missing? Are their parents talking about it?

Which people in your community are vulnerable to be exploited by others?

Are there survivors of trafficking in your community? How are they treated? Are they loved, protected and supported by the church and other Christian organisations?

Trafficking robs women, men, girls and boys of their freedom, family, community, identity and dignity. Trafficking is very widespread but often hidden. It happens in almost every country. Most victims are trafficked close to home and the people exploiting them are often from the same country. Sometimes victims are trafficked by someone in their family. Traffickers use lies to trick people into going somewhere with them, or they force people to go with them. The victims of trafficking are then held against their will, sold and exploited.

Explaining the words we use:

Human trafficking is the transporting or abduction of people for the purposes of exploitation, using coercion, fraud or deception. It is a modern form of **slavery**.



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While most countries have laws against human trafficking, often these laws are not put into practice. Once trafficked, people are often unable to, or too frightened to, report the crime. At the community level, people may be unaware of the risks posed by people-traffickers. In other places there may be a lot of fear and confusion about trafficking, and a sense of shame felt by people who have experienced trafficking. In this way, trafficking is often a 'hidden issue' that urgently needs revealing and tackling.

What does the Bible say?

The Bible is clear that all human beings have been created in God's image with inherent value and dignity before him (Genesis 1:27–28, 31). Every person is wonderfully and fearfully made (Psalm 139), and greatly loved by God. Throughout the Bible we see God's command that the vulnerable and poor should be cared for. Abuse and exploitation of people is a sin. Isaiah 61, quoted by Jesus at the start of his ministry (Luke 4:16-19), clearly shows God's heart:

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners ...”

Christians are called to love and care for the poor and oppressed, and to challenge injustice (Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:8; Isaiah 58:6-10). The church is to model what good and true community and family looks like – loving, protecting and caring for one another, including survivors of trafficking.

For Bible studies on this issue, please see **Section B** of *Reveal*.

Understanding trafficking

Victims of human trafficking do not agree to being exploited. Traffickers often tell lies to people so that they agree to go with them, or they use force. They make the victims (and sometimes their families) feel that they can be trusted, and then they abuse that trust.

Examples of the lies they use include offers of legitimate and legal work as waitresses, in homes or in shops, and offers of marriage, education or a better life. Sometimes, young men pretend to fall in love with a girl, persuade her to move away, and then hand her over to another person along the trafficking chain.



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Sometimes, people are sold into trafficking by partners, friends, neighbours or even parents. Traffickers may offer desperate parents a large sum of money with the promise of a much better life for their children, as well as money that will meet their immediate needs.



Victims are then held against their will and are exploited in horrendous ways. Traffickers make money from their victims. They exploit people in different ways, including:

- Forcing victims to work with little or no pay, for example as domestic workers, on fishing boats, for construction companies, in factories, in agriculture or in catering businesses.
- Forcing them to work in prostitution (about half of all known cases of human trafficking are related to sexual exploitation).
- Selling their organs (body parts) for profit.
- Using victims to transport illegal drugs (sometimes called 'drug mules').

Trafficking fuels organised crime groups that usually participate in many other illegal activities.

Awareness-raising

Children & youth

Climate & environment

Conflict & peace-building

Corruption & governance

Disaster risk management

Discrimination & inclusion

Food & livelihoods

Gender & sexual violence

Health & HIV

Influencing decision-makers

Migration & trafficking

Water, sanitation & hygiene

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Poverty makes people vulnerable to human trafficking. A lack of education and understanding of safe migration makes it harder for people to recognise the lies which traffickers tell. Lack of income and livelihood opportunities can cause people to try to find work in other places. When family and community structures are weakened by disasters or conflict, people's vulnerability increases.

In general, more women are affected by trafficking than men. Approximately 70 per cent of victims are women and girls; 30 per cent are men and boys (UN Office of Drugs and Crime). Children of all ages are at risk of being trafficked.

How are migration and people smuggling different to trafficking?

Migration refers to the movement of people from one place to another, often with the intention of settling in the new location. It can be from one country to another, or within a country's borders. Illegal migration, where people do not have legal status in the country they move to, puts people at risk of being trafficked.

People smuggling involves smugglers being paid, or gaining some other benefit, to transport people into another country. Once they have arrived, they are then free to leave the smugglers – this makes smuggling different to trafficking. However, once in the new country, illegally without legal documents, the people who have been smuggled are often vulnerable to exploitation. The journey itself may also pose significant risks to the safety of the people being smuggled.

How does trafficking affect people?

Trafficking is an extreme violation of human rights. Victims of trafficking often experience horrific levels of abuse for very long periods of time. For example:

- They may be physically beaten and tortured by their traffickers.
- Their organs may be removed by unqualified people using unclean and unsafe instruments and procedures.
- They may have to work in dangerous and hazardous conditions in agriculture, factories or construction sites, resulting in severe illness and injuries.
- Victims may be denied adequate food, water and health care and forced to live in inhumane conditions. Children in particular are extremely vulnerable to malnourishment which can severely damage their growth and development.



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- Many victims are forced to work in prostitution or the commercial sex trade where they endure rape and sexual abuse and exploitation over long periods of time.
- Many victims may also suffer from substance abuse problems or addictions as a result of being forced into drug use by their traffickers or by turning to substance abuse to help cope with their desperate situations.
- Trafficking also leads to extreme emotional stress for victims. They may experience shame, grief, fear, distrust, suicidal thoughts and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Even if victims of trafficking are able to return to their home community, communities may refuse to welcome back people who have been involved in prostitution – whether they were trafficked or not. Victims then face the added trauma of stigma and rejection by their home community.



The abuse that trafficked people endure can lead to severe physical, reproductive, emotional and mental health problems.

The impacts of trafficking go much further than harming the people being trafficked. Families and communities are robbed of their loved ones. People leave and are never heard from again. It is a huge injustice in our world and must be stopped.

Churches and communities everywhere have an important role to play in revealing the dangers of trafficking, so that people are informed and it can be prevented. Churches and communities also have a calling to welcome, care for and protect rescued survivors, helping them integrate back into communities. In some places, churches and communities may also be involved in locating and rescuing trafficked people.

Awareness-
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inclusionFood &
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makersMigration &
traffickingWater,
sanitation &
hygiene

Using *Reveal*

Reveal includes tools to help you raise the issues involved in trafficking with communities. You can find these in **Section A2**. You can find Bible studies to explore what God thinks about this issue in **Section B**. And there are tools to help you address and tackle this problem in **Section C**



Finding out more

Tearfund (2015) Footsteps 96 – *Human trafficking*

http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/resources/publications/footsteps/footsteps_91-100/footsteps_96/

The Born to Fly Project is a child trafficking prevention programme that educates children and their parents about the dangers of child trafficking. All the materials can be downloaded free of charge but you will need to register on the Born to Fly website to receive a password to access the documents <http://born2fly.org>

FAAST is an alliance of Christian organizations working together to combat slavery and human trafficking <http://faastinternational.org/>

Related tools:

- A2 – Understanding vulnerability to human trafficking (slavery) [A2: *Migration & trafficking-2*]
- A2 – The lies traffickers tell [A2: *Migration & trafficking-3*]
- A2 – Life after human trafficking: understanding the journey of healing [A2: *Migration & trafficking-4*]
- B – Loving the outcast (Bible study) [B: *Discrimination & inclusion-2*]
- B – Each of us is special to God [B: *Discrimination & inclusion-5*]
- C2 – Protecting our communities from human trafficking [C2: *Migration & trafficking-1*]

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