Diaspora Communities As Safety Nets In Protecting Child Victims of Trafficking

Debbie Ariyo
About The Author

Debbie Ariyo is Founder and CEO of AFRUCA – Safeguarding Children, a leading UK charity she founded in 2001 to address human trafficking from Africa to the UK and provide support services for victims. Debbie holds an Executive Master degree in Public Administration from the London School of Economics and Political Science, a Master degree in Urban Policy from University of North London and a Bachelor degree in French Education from University of Benin in Nigeria. She is an Advisory Board member of the Journal of Modern Slavery. She was recently a Trustee of the EU funded and Brussels based Africa-Europe Diaspora Development Platform (ADEPT) – a pan-European agency working to improve the capacity and impact of African diaspora organisations across Europe. Debbie sits on the Boards of other charities and advisory groups and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts.

Debbie has 20 years’ practice experience in the UK anti-trafficking sector and has pioneered a number of innovative diaspora based approaches to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking as part of her role at AFRUCA. These include different models of community based victim support and rehabilitation programmes and diaspora focused anti-trafficking prevention and advocacy programmes. She is a trainer, consultant, a researcher, a writer, a public speaker, a court expert witness and an expert on forced migration and human trafficking. As a direct outcome of her Churchill Fellowship research, in 2020 Debbie founded and chairs the UK Diaspora, Black and Minority Ethnic Anti-Slavery Network (BASNET) which works to improve diversity and the inclusion of grass-root diaspora organisations in the UK anti-slavery space. As is apparent throughout this report, Debbie strongly believes that top-down approaches in tackling human trafficking on their own do not work, and that affected communities must be part and parcel of the change process.

Some of Debbie’s recommendations in this report have been incorporated in BASNET’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for the UK Anti-Trafficking sector, to underscore the important role of communities in anti-trafficking work.

Debbie has received many awards for her work and was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 2011 in recognition of her services to children and families.

Copyright ©Debbie Ariyo. March 2021. The moral right of the author has been asserted.

The views and opinions expressed in this report and its contents are those of the author and not of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust or its partners, which have no responsibility or liability for any part of the report.
Acknowledgement

I am really thankful to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and the Linbury Trust for providing me with the opportunity, support and the resources to travel for two months across Thailand and Ghana to research my project. I am also grateful to the Trustees at AFRUCA for permitting me the time to be away from work, and to the staff of AFRUCA for covering in my absence.

Many thanks to all the staff and officers of the various government agencies, NGOs and communities I visited in the various cities in both countries for giving me their time and sharing their wealth of knowledge and experience with me. I would particularly like to thank Police General Tamasak Wicharaya, Police Colonel Sam Morakot, Dorna Sukkree, Jib Tatsana, Steven Reeves, Maia Mounsher and Aarti Kapoor for their considerable assistance in Thailand and Georgette Johnson, Chief Superintendent Pamela Codjo, David Johnson, Tina Opoku, Bright Fiatsi, “Eric”, Freeman Ahegbebu and Serge Akpalou for their help and support in Ghana.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About The Author</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Terms and Abbreviations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter One – Introduction</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Background To The Project – The UK Anti-Trafficking Context</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Identification of Problem</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 About The Churchill Fellowship</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Aims and Objectives</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Purpose of The Research</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Methodology</td>
<td>10-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Outcomes and Project Benefits</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Limitations of Research</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Two – Overview Of Child Trafficking in Ghana's Fishing Sector and Thailand's Tourism Industry</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Child Labour Trafficking In Ghana's Fishing Sector</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Overview</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Policy and Legislative Framework</td>
<td>13-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Causative Factors</td>
<td>15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4 Abuse and Exploitation of Children in Fishing Sector</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.5 Government and Community Intervention</td>
<td>17-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.6 Role of NGOs</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.7 Conclusion</td>
<td>18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Child Sex Trafficking in Thailand's Tourism Sector</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Overview</td>
<td>19-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 “Zero Tolerance Against Trafficking In Persons”</td>
<td>20-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Modes of Trafficking</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4 Victim Support and Protection</td>
<td>23-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.5 Prevention</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.6 Partnerships</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.7 Conclusion</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Three – Key Findings</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Migration, Child Trafficking or Modern Slavery?</td>
<td>26-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Boys Don't Cry?</td>
<td>31-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 When Communities Lead - Anti-Trafficking Innovators</td>
<td>34-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Collaborative Approaches – Communities As Stakeholders</td>
<td>38-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Four – Conclusions And Recommendations</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Conclusions</td>
<td>42-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Recommendations</td>
<td>44-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix One List Of Agencies Involved In Research and Interviewees</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>47-51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### List of Terms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFRUCA</td>
<td>AFRUCA – Safeguarding Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATA</td>
<td>Anti-Trafficking Alert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BME</td>
<td>Black and Minority Ethnic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>Child Advocacy Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>National Referral Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>Ghana Immigration Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>UK Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP</td>
<td>Royal Thai Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDHS</td>
<td>Thai Ministry for Social Development and Human Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TATIP</td>
<td>Thailand Anti-Trafficking In Persons Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TICAC</td>
<td>Thai Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIP</td>
<td>Trafficking In Persons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Efforts to engage diaspora communities in ongoing debates and activities to address human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK are either lacking or inadequate. In particular, the conscious neglect of boys as victims – both in their countries of origin and in the UK requires intervention and this is linked to various cultural and religious beliefs about the role of boys in society.

In the UK, there is a dearth of academic research to interrogate the many cultural factors that inform the attitudes and perceptions towards child exploitation and slavery in diaspora communities from key source countries.

Current government approach to engage with communities in the UK (where this exists) is often piecemeal or tokenistic. However, such top-down approaches to engage with communities in anti-trafficking interventions do not work, as demonstrated by the examples of the two countries researched.

As a world leader, the UK ought to capitalise on the benefits of having Diasporans able to work at both ends of the spectrum – here in the UK - their country of residence and in their countries of origin to help further the government’s modern slavery agenda.

Mainstream charities and agencies supporting victims of external trafficking currently do not involve the relevant diaspora communities in their work. This shows a lack of inclusion and diversity of input in their interventions.

With the growth in different forms of internal trafficking in the UK, there is a need to address the intersecting issues – for example the links between poverty and vulnerability to child trafficking and exploitation, as well as the foster care to prison pipeline.

Therefore, existing diaspora engagement structures need to be nurtured and developed as spaces where practitioners can interact with the diaspora communities on modern slavery issues and where agencies can work in partnership with this important set of stakeholders to help strengthen and improve interventions to address modern slavery in the country.

**Executive Summary**

The purpose of this research is to help plug the gap in knowledge about the role of diaspora communities as safety net in addressing child trafficking thereby improving anti-trafficking prevention and victim support interventions in the UK, while helping to reduce the risks of re-trafficking. Based on findings from the research, my main conclusions are that:

- Efforts to engage diaspora communities in ongoing debates and activities to address human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK are either lacking or inadequate.
- In particular, the conscious neglect of boys as victims – both in their countries of origin and in the UK requires intervention and this is linked to various cultural and religious beliefs about the role of boys in society.
- In the UK, there is a dearth of academic research to interrogate the many cultural factors that inform the attitudes and perceptions towards child exploitation and slavery in diaspora communities from key source countries.
- Current government approach to engage with communities in the UK (where this exists) is often piecemeal or tokenistic. However, such top-down approaches to engage with communities in anti-trafficking interventions do not work, as demonstrated by the examples of the two countries researched.
- As a world leader, the UK ought to capitalise on the benefits of having Diasporans able to work at both ends of the spectrum – here in the UK - their country of residence and in their countries of origin to help further the government’s modern slavery agenda.
- Mainstream charities and agencies supporting victims of external trafficking currently do not involve the relevant diaspora communities in their work. This shows a lack of inclusion and diversity of input in their interventions.
- With the growth in different forms of internal trafficking in the UK, there is a need to address the intersecting issues – for example the links between poverty and vulnerability to child trafficking and exploitation, as well as the foster care to prison pipeline.
- Therefore, existing diaspora engagement structures need to be nurtured and developed as spaces where practitioners can interact with the diaspora communities on modern slavery issues and where agencies can work in partnership with this important set of stakeholders to help strengthen and improve interventions to address modern slavery in the country.
Based on these conclusions, my key recommendations are that:

• Diaspora Community Engagement should be incorporated as a core element of UK anti-trafficking and anti-slavery strategies implemented by the Independent AntiSlavery Commissioner, various government departments, especially FCDO, the Home Office as well as the Mayor of London and other cities.

• Established structures like BASNET (the UK Diaspora and BME Anti-Slavery Network) can and should be engaged as part of this process in strengthening responses to both demand and supply.

• The Modern Slavery Policy Evidence Centre and academia should partner with diaspora communities to expand the scope of research to help inform policy interventions and impactful service provision.

• The government should collaborate with key communities to develop relevant community education programmes to address drivers of trafficking demand and supply in different communities across the country, especially in relation to the impact of human trafficking on children, including boys.

• Academia can also help to build a new generation of Anti-Trafficking Innovators through the establishment of Social Innovation Training Programmes for Diasporans (or BME) Leaders. This will help to provide such innovators with the necessary array of skills to build their organisations and strengthen their capacity to intervene successfully.

• UK diaspora organisations working on anti-trafficking issues in the UK should work to transfer their knowledge and skills to their countries of origin to help tackle human trafficking at source. Such transfer of knowledge approaches could include establishing branches of their organisations in countries of origin to replicate UK work or partnership projects with local NGOs to help build capacity.

• Culturally appropriate, community based programmes to support vulnerable families where children are at risk of exploitation and internal trafficking should be established as part of early intervention and prevention strategies by local authorities.
Chapter One - Introduction

1: Background To The Project - The UK Anti-Trafficking Context

1.1.1 Human trafficking is a growing problem across the UK. Children, women and men are trafficked into the country from over 130 countries across the world to be exploited and enslaved, including for domestic slavery, sexual exploitation forced and bonded labour and criminal exploitation. In 2019, the UK National Crime Agency identified over 10,200 potential victims of human trafficking, a steep rise in the 2018 figures of over 7,000 victims. These figures also include potential victims of internal trafficking, most especially criminal exploitation through drug trafficking known as “county-lines trafficking”.

1.1.2 There has always been a definitional problem about what exactly human trafficking entails. The Palermo Protocol - The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), underlines the movement, transportation and transfer of people but lacks clarity on the scope and definition of exploitation itself. There are concerns about the lack of clarity regarding consent and being held against one's will or being forced to work against one's wish. Many UK experts increasingly prefer usage of the term “modern slavery” to conform with the sense of the 1926 Convention to Suppress The Slave Trade and Slavery and the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines emphasising: “control over a person by another such as a person might control a thing”, and similarly the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015. It is also employed to encapsulate the totality of the exploitative, cruel and degrading treatment, abusive and oppressive experiences to which victims of human trafficking are subjected. However, other experts have debunked the focus on slavery as ‘tenuous’, emphasising the difference between chattel slavery and human trafficking in which the voluntary desire in search of a better life mutates into coercion and exploitation.

1.1.3 In particular, where children are concerned, they are deemed by the Palermo Protocol to be victims of child trafficking irrespective of ‘the means of trafficking’ and whether they have given their consent or not. This is of course based on the child rights principle that for reasons of physical and mental immaturity, children cannot make informed decisions, hence are not able to give informed consent in situations where they are not aware of the possible consequences of their own actions or the actions of others.

1.1.4 Additionally, there are many themes and dimensions which help to interrogate the human trafficking question including migration, human rights, gender rights, child labour, social justice, law enforcement and so on which might only be apparent or important to an anti-human trafficking practitioner based on their own specific area of interest. These inconsistencies mean for example that countries prioritise different approaches to address human trafficking based on political or socio-economic exigencies.
1.1.5 Therefore in the UK today, while the country has played a leading role in promulgating a Modern Slavery Act – one of the first in the world, and works internationally with source countries like Nigeria and Vietnam to help address trafficking issues, UK focused government anti-trafficking policies are still largely influenced by the anti-immigration agenda. In this regard, anti-trafficking experts have underlined that the ‘fight’ against illegal or irregular migration seemed prioritised over the protection, rehabilitation and safety of victims. To counter this, charities have played a key role by focusing on human rights, social justice and social change, leading to a prioritisation of service provision to meet the needs of victims.

2: Identification of Problem

1.2.1 There is a major problem in human trafficking prevention, protection and victim rehabilitation within UK diaspora communities which is both attitudinal and definitional. This relates to the perception by many about what is known as “human trafficking” or “modern slavery”. This gap in understanding can result in victims or survivors, especially of historic child trafficking, experiencing isolation and stigma from their communities, making it difficult to integrate and rebuild their lives. This is in a large part due to the fact that victims, especially those trafficked for sexual exploitation, are reluctant to be recognised as such due to a lack of trust based on suspicion of possible complicity, minimisation of trafficking experiences, stigmatisation and even victim blaming (British Red Cross 2019). In some communities, victims of sex trafficking might be regarded as ‘prostitutes’ or ‘gays’ (a taboo) who are to be shamed, rather than vulnerable people requiring support and protection. In other situations, cases of child trafficking for domestic slavery and other forms of serious or hazardous child exploitation could be seen as ‘house chores’, ‘evidence of masculinity’ and a ‘part of our culture’, thereby dismissing the terrible experiences victims have undergone. This situation creates a double jeopardy as community denial, isolation and stigmatisation compound the negative experiences of victims, on top of systemic gaps in identification and victim support.

1.2.2 Unfortunately, in the UK not much attention or efforts have been placed on recognising the role of diaspora communities (that is – people from a different country legally settled in the UK) in human trafficking prevention, identification, contribution to anti-trafficking policy-making and in establishing or improving community based support systems for victims from their countries of origin. There are glaring examples when statutory agencies have failed to take account of the role that the sizeable population of communities from source countries like Nigeria, Vietnam, Romania, China, Eritrea and Sudan could and should play in actualising various anti-trafficking strategies. For example, the Mayor of London has an anti-slavery strategy without any role ascribed to the very diverse diaspora communities across London many of whom are affected by the scourge of modern slavery.
1.2.3 Additionally, most programme interventions in the UK are provided by mainstream charities many of whom are unfamiliar with diaspora based community engagement models and so are unable to employ these as part of their overall strategies and service provision.

3: About The Churchill Fellowship

1.3.1 The Churchill Fellowship provides overseas research grants for fellows to undertake non-academic research projects in their chosen subject by travelling to countries of interest to learn about different approaches to addressing key issues, bringing new ideas to improve UK policy and practice. In 2019, I was appointed a Churchill Fellow and was awarded a grant to travel to Ghana and Thailand to conduct my research as detailed below.

4: Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 In conducting this research project, I aimed to explore innovative community approaches helping to address the denial, stigma and isolation experienced by victims of child trafficking, while assisting them to heal and overcome their terrible experiences of trafficking and exploitation. Equally important was the need to examine diaspora engagement as a preventive mechanism in tackling human trafficking demand in source countries and supply in areas of exploitation or countries of destination like the UK.

5: Purpose of the Research

1.5.1 This research report will help to plug the gap in knowledge about the roles of diaspora communities in addressing human trafficking thereby improving prevention and victim support interventions in the UK, while helping to reduce the risks of re-trafficking. While the UK government has a support service for victims contracted to third sector organisations, and indeed many charities deliver a range of victim centred programmes, most of these services do not employ diaspora engagement approaches as part of prevention and victim rehabilitation. As such, this report will provide new ways of thinking about UK anti-trafficking interventions by advocating for the incorporation of diaspora community engagement models to tackle human trafficking as standard models of intervention in the country.

6: Methodology

1.6.1 As part of my Churchill Fellowship, I selected both Ghana and Thailand as the focal points of my research. The choice of both countries had nothing to do with their relationships with or similarities to the UK. Rather, since both countries experience different internal and external child trafficking issues, I wanted to explore the vast learning opportunities presented by studying their local interventions. I wanted to explore how local communities in both countries had been engaged in changing attitudes towards using children for hazardous and exploitative labour and had become involved in their rescue, protection and rehabilitation. The idea was to explore best practice in both countries which could be useful for UK practitioners, agencies and charities working in anti-trafficking to
improve how we intervene to prevent trafficking, protect and support victims. I also wanted to explore how these innovative ideas and practices could be transferred into diaspora communities in the UK.

In achieving the above, I conducted a qualitative research project examining child trafficking community interventions in both countries using a combination of approaches including:

- Semi-structured interviews with NGOs, government agencies, community actors.
- Tour of both countries to understand the geographical contexts that fuel trafficking
- Visits to explore wider context around migration, slavery and human trafficking
- Orientation Sessions and Community Engagement with a range of local and international NGOs to better understand their work and the challenges faced
- Desk research to understand the human trafficking sector and roles of various parties.

7: Outcomes and Project Benefits

1.7.1 I envisage that my research would help to achieve the following outcomes in our approaches to tackling human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK:

- Victims of trafficking will have better support as part of their rehabilitation process. A key missing link is acceptance by their own communities. By introducing diaspora community engagement as part of human trafficking intervention processes, agencies would be able to address the stigma and isolation experienced by victims from their own diaspora communities which sometimes makes their trafficking experience a shameful experience (Victim Rehabilitation).

- Diaspora communities will be better able to understand the ills of human trafficking and its impact and will become better engaged in victim protection, rehabilitation and prevention of demand and supply. Communities will become involved in stopping the trafficking and exploitation of their own people (Community Resilience).

- Agencies will develop better support systems, including diaspora engagement models, helping to provide more impactful interventions (Community Engagement).

- Ultimately, my project will enable government to strengthen its policies in relation to human trafficking prevention and victim support by incorporating diaspora or BME engagement models in policy-making and practice (Policy Improvement).
8: Limitations of Research

1.8.1 No child was interviewed as part of this research. This was based on the child safeguarding controls agreed with the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and non-contact agreement with the agencies and organisations visited. This was not a limitation per se, as it was of utmost importance not to re-traumatise victims by making them re-live their experiences. Instead, the contributions of shelter workers, government workers and others providing services were taken on board as adequate for the purposes of this research project.

1.8.2 This was neither a scientific nor an academic research project. I have not employed rigorous research methodologies in collecting and interpreting data. As I only interviewed a handful of practitioners in both countries, it is likely that the findings are not representative of the views of the wider population of anti-trafficking practitioners in both countries.

1.8.3 As an anti-trafficking diaspora engagement practitioner, it is possible that my interpretation of the findings as part of this research project is influenced by my thinking and perspectives on this subject.
Chapter Two – Overview Of Child Trafficking in Ghana’s Fishing Sector and Thailand’s Tourism Industry

1. Child Labour Trafficking in Ghana’s Fishing Sector

2.1.1 Overview

2.1.1 Human Trafficking within, into and out of Ghana is a growing problem. Adults and children are trafficked internally and externally for different forms of forced labour, including fishing, domestic servitude, gold mining, agriculture as well as for work in the commercial sex industry. An estimated 100,000 people are involved in modern slavery with over 1 million children involved in different forms of hazardous child labour across the country. The government has taken steps to address the problem of human trafficking in the country.

Policy and Legislative Framework

2.1.2 Ghana passed the first Human Trafficking Act 694 in 2005. This was amended in 2009 to strengthen the definition of exploitation. Regulations to the 2005 Act were promulgated in 2015. In particular and in relation to children, some of the key provisions under these regulations have been criticised, especially in the US Trafficking In Persons Report 2019. These include the provision for parents or those with parental responsibilities facilitating or engaging in child trafficking to have the option of fine, rather than imprisonment.

2.1.3 Ghana has also produced a five year National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Human Trafficking in 2017, identifying human trafficking as modern day slavery, and outlining the steps it would take over a five year period to address the needs of victims and punish perpetrators, with implementation ongoing. Ghana has established the Human Trafficking Secretariat which co-ordinates all human trafficking activities, and aims to provide sensitisation programmes targeting the public. It has produced a widely disseminated Standard Operating Procedures to Combat Human Trafficking in Ghana to most practitioners working in the sector. As part of the Ghana Immigration Service, an Anti-Human Smuggling and Trafficking In Persons Unit has been established with Ghana Police Service to investigate and arrest offenders, while building the capacity of officers to detect cases.

2.1.4 Therefore in theory, Ghana has a very good legislative and policy framework in place to enable it tackle human and child trafficking across the country. However, the country’s approaches to tackling human trafficking have been significantly hampered by lack of resources to conduct investigations and prosecutions of offenders, to deliver social protection programmes to support poor and vulnerable families, tackle corruption within law enforcement agencies, address the lack of training and expertise on trafficking within the legal profession as well as lack of services to rehabilitate and support victims.
These shortcomings led to Ghana being assessed by the US Department of State Trafficking In Persons report in 2019 and 2020 as not fully meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking (Tier 2), although making significant efforts to do so.

2.1.5 One of the most endemic forms of child trafficking in Ghana involves the trafficking and exploitation of children in the fishing industry, with an estimated 20,000 children involved at any one time and children as young as four years old found working on Lake Volta. Boys are exploited as fishermen on the lake and girls work onshore to process, market and sell fish. Reports show that majority of the children working on Lake Volta – both boys and girls, have been trafficked from other parts of the country. In debating whether such movement of children could be explained within the context of West African practice of fostering in which children relocate to live with relatives who could provide for them, Iversen (2006) contended that such boundaries between child trafficking and benign forms of labour migration are increasingly blurred and it is important to use more evidence to assess the welfare effects of fostering on young children.

Image 1: Map of Ghana
Causative Factors

2.1.6 However, what is not in doubt is the role that poverty and deprivation play in the trafficking of children from the coastal regions of Ghana to the Volta region to work on the Lake which might leave them opened to trafficking and subsequent exploitation. Although Ghana has experienced significant fall in poverty levels since 2006, over 2.4 million estimated Ghanaians or 8.2% of the population still live in extreme poverty. While much of the poverty is concentrated in the Northern part, pockets of poverty exist in the South including the Central region where majority of the population are in the fishing industry\textsuperscript{xii}. Ghana has a 73% rate of multi-dimensional child poverty. This means that 3 out of every 4 Ghanaian child lives with significant deprivation in the key areas of protection, housing, health, nutrition, sanitation and learning\textsuperscript{xiii}, with the resultant effect of lifelong cognitive and physical impairment which can also perpetuate the cycle of poverty\textsuperscript{xiv}. These statistics demonstrate the multiple disadvantages children experience, which can increase the vulnerabilities they face and become key drivers for trafficking and exploitation as discussed above.

2.1.7 In the 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report, the US Department of State criticised some of the provisions in the 2015 Regulations to the Human Trafficking Act which allowed for parents or those with parental responsibilities facilitating or engaging in child trafficking to have the option of fine, rather than imprisonment\textsuperscript{xv}. In my view, this reduced sentencing could be based on the cultural knowledge by policy and lawmakers that child trafficking is fuelled mainly by poverty and that imprisonment of parents was not the solution, especially when this would leave other children in the family at risk if parents were imprisoned.

Image 2: Cheerful Hearts Foundation Office in Kasoa
2.1.8 The community tours and orientation courses I received from staff of Challenging Heights and Cheerful Hearts were really useful in helping to understand many of the local factors influencing the high rate of child trafficking in the region, and these included other demographic, cultural and religious factors. These are the high number of out of school children and high birth rates, which meant many families have more children than they can look after. There are also high instances of single parenthood. Many women become the sole breadwinners in their families from a young age. The phenomenon of single parenthood in coastal communities is attributable to the very high mobility rates among fishermen who constantly travel for work, with the habit of engaging in multiple marriages, affairs or having multiple sex partners and child bearing in different places. For this reason, it is claimed that many children might not even be aware of the identity of their fathers.

2.1.9 Child abandonment is also a factor, in many cases due to absent fathers, with the remaining parent unable to cope with the burden of raising a child or children singlehandedly. Many grand-parents become the sole carers for their grand-children, a role which might put undue pressure on them due to age and economic difficulties.

2.1.10. Religious beliefs and practices against contraceptives usage could be major contributors to the high birth rates in the communities. Again, staff at the NGOs I interviewed discussed how some faith organisations preached against the use of contraceptives and family planning, which could be a contributory factor to the high birth rate in the region.

2.1.11. It is obvious that aged grand-parents, single parents and other vulnerable people performing parenting roles while struggling to cope are a strong attraction for human traffickers or recruiters. This is not just a phenomenon particular to Ghana, but is also the case in Thailand, as discussed below. Thus, poverty, high birth rates, absent parents, child abandonment and a high number of out of school children combine to produce an endless supply of cheap child labour helping to fuel Ghana's fishing industry.

**Abuse and Exploitation of Children in Fishing Sector**

2.1.12. How are trafficked children and young people exploited and abused on Lake Volta? NGO workers interviewed described some of the abuses including children working long hours from dawn to dusk, lack of regular feeding, physical, emotional abuse and neglect in not seeking medical care for children who are injured. Despite the government's free education programme, children working on the lake do not attend school, a violation of their rights to education. There are reports of children diving in the lake and getting entangled in the fishing nets below water and drowning, or being engorged on tree stumps, leading to serious injury and death, or drowning as a result of the boats capsizing. Social workers report the high level of trauma displayed by children witnessing the death or injury of other children in the waters, and the trauma of spending many years in exploitation or slavery.
Government and Community Intervention

2.1.13. High profile Ghanaians, including the wife of the former Vice President, Mrs Samira Bawumia, and the former Gender Minister Otiko Djaba have spoken against child trafficking on Lake Volta. Mrs Bawumia called the practice “a major problem with a prolonged history to be brought to an end through the legal means”. The National Union of Ghana Students called for perpetrators of child trafficking and child slavery on Lake Volta to be arrested and prosecuted. In 2017, the Ghana Ministry of Fisheries and Aqua-Culture Development, developed a “National Action Plan towards The Eradication of Child Labour and Trafficking in Ghanaian Fishing Communities” with a core strategic objective to achieve a 60% reduction in child labour in the fishing sector—although this is yet to be achieved. Nevertheless, this demonstrates that the practice of trafficking and exploitation of children on Lake Volta is regarded in the main as wrong and very harmful towards children with clear-cut commitment by government to address it, even if such commitment is yet to be fulfilled.

2.1.14. The government of Ghana and other stakeholders have taken steps in recent years to help tackle this phenomenon and work to rescue victims. The Ghana Police Anti Human Trafficking Agency has established local anti-trafficking units to rescue child victims, working alongside communities, NGOs, the Navy and social welfare. However, there have been some criticisms that the police units are quite inactive, relying on NGOs to do the work. The effectiveness of the police has also been called into question especially in the US TIP Report 2019, based on the reduced number of arrests and prosecutions in 2018 in comparison with the previous year as well as allegations of corruption and political interference made by INGOs and other international bodies.

2.1.15. The Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) operating under various immigration legislations, has worked with other agencies and NGOs to support child victims and repatriate them to their countries of origin. There have been children from Togo and Benin rescued from Lake Volta although the figure for this cohort of children is quite small.

Image 3: Ghana Immigration Service Poster Campaign
2.1.16. The Ghana Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection's Human Trafficking Secretariat also works with other organs of government, NGOs and international bodies to monitor and improve the provision and standards of support services for rescued victims. The government via the Ministry has only one shelter for rescued child victims of trafficking in the whole country. This shows that the government itself is very severely under-funded where the welfare of child survivors of trafficking is concerned. For this reason, the government does not provide any form of financial support for NGOs working to rescue and rehabilitate victims, even though collaborative efforts are employed in key areas with each sector playing its natural or allocated role.

**Role of NGOs**

2.1.17. In that sense, the bulk of anti-trafficking intervention – be it prevention or protection and victim support rests on the shoulders of local non-governmental organisations like Challenging Heights and Cheerful Hearts with the support and funding by their international counterparts. NGOs have been at the forefront of victim protection including provision of shelters to help with rehabilitation, psycho-therapy support, education, training and skills building as well as access to medical care. They have led on prevention activities in both sending and receiving communities, working locally with a range of “community mediators”, schools, faith and traditional leaders and other partners, as well as establishing job creation opportunities for parents in order to earn a living. However, due to reduced financial resources, these services are terribly inadequate. Also, the government of Ghana does not provide a grants programme to support the work of local NGOs addressing human trafficking.

2.1.18 However, one of the key disadvantages of the Ghanaian approach where international non-governmental organisations are at the forefront of addressing these issues (based on their resource capacity), is the risk of the principal-agent aid relationship. Here, local NGOs are beholden to the well-resourced INGOs in a top-down relationship, to access funding to sub deliver their own preferred projects even if such projects do not meet the needs and priorities of the cohort of beneficiaries local NGOs are working with. I have further discussed this issue in Chapter Three below.

2.1.19 Indeed, Ghana will benefit from substantial international financial support to place the country in a position where it can adequately address the scourge of child trafficking in its fishing industry, achieve its strategic indicator of reducing the number of children working in the sector by 60% and help to safeguard and protect these vulnerable children.

**Conclusion**

2.1.20 There is evidence that internal trafficking of children is ongoing between the Central Region and Volta Region of Ghana. This could be as a result of open and direct recruitment
and trafficking of children for the purposes of exploitation in the fishing industry or a hidden form of malignant child fostering with children ending up in exploitation rather than in the care and protection of relatives. A range of demographic, economic, socio-cultural and religious factors could be the cause of the growth in child exploitation and trafficking in this region. While the political goodwill to address this problem might be present, the Ghanaian government is incapacitated by inadequate resources to address this, leaving most of the intervention to local and international NGOs.

2. Child Sex Trafficking in Thailand’s Tourism Sector

2.2.1 Overview

2.2.1 Thailand is a known major source, transit and destination for child sex trafficking in South East Asia. Children - both boys and girls, are trafficked from the neighbouring countries of Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam and Cambodia to work in brothels, karaoke bars, or for “webcam sex tourism”. Children are also trafficked internally, especially from the ethnic minority hill tribe groups in the North East to major tourist cities across the country. There are known cases of victims of sex trafficking from African countries including Uganda and Nigeria, although these are adult victims.

2.2.2 Child trafficking from neighbouring countries into Thailand is facilitated by the long and porous borders marked by the Mekong River. Also, illegal migration into Thailand from those countries is very common and there is a very large population of migrants living in different cities across the country. Illegal migration into Thailand is driven by its wealth in comparison with its much poorer neighbours. Child trafficking into Thailand is also fuelled by the false promises of a better life, especially when linked to migration facilitated by the support of relatives who have already settled in the country. Many parents might believe their children will be helped to work in genuine sectors in one of Thailand’s tourist cities, only for them to be recruited and forced into sex exploitation. At the same time, children, in particular boys might feel responsible for providing for their families, and become easy targets for child traffickers recruiting them into the sex trade.

Image 4: Thai Government Campaign Poster on Sexual Exploitation
2.2.3 Thailand is also a major destination country for sex trafficking due to its very buoyant and massive tourism industry. In 2019, almost 40 million tourists visited the country. Tourism in Thailand contributed about 21.6% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018. Most of the customers driving the demand for sex with children are foreigners, including Westerners who are mostly men. Many of these child abusers are also known to be part of online paedophile groups sharing images of victims and information on how to circumvent Thai laws. It is estimated that 41% of human trafficking victims in Thailand are male (this figure includes not only sex work but also labour trafficking, agriculture etc), and this number is relatively high compared to the global average of 29% (UNODC 2018).

“Zero Tolerance Against Trafficking In Persons”

2.2.4 Thailand has taken key steps in the past 20 years to address the growing problem of human trafficking. In 2000, it signed the UN Trafficking Convention and the Protocol to Combat Trafficking in Persons. In 2008, the first anti-trafficking law in Thailand was promulgated. In 2015, after Thailand was twice put on Tier Three in the US Trafficking in Persons reports of 2014 and 2015, the government declared a “Zero Tolerance Against Trafficking in Persons” as a national agenda. This led to setting out a framework for its antitrafficking response including prioritising a victim-centred approach, a focus on both supply and demand reduction, cross border law enforcement co-operation as well as partnerships with NGOs and the private sector.

2.2.5 Additionally, the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand has responsibility and oversight of the country’s anti-trafficking agenda in his role as Chair of the National Anti-Trafficking In Persons Commission – an indication of the seriousness with which the subject is taken at the highest level of government. I should also add that the support I received from General Tamasak Wicharaya and his staff to carry out my research and the time he spent participating in the Round Table meeting at the Police Headquarters in Bangkok showed that leading Thai officials involved in anti-trafficking do take their roles very seriously.

2.2.6 One of the key achievements of the Thai government in tackling both demand and supply is the establishment of the Thailand Internet Crimes Against Children (TICAC) and the Thailand Anti-Trafficking in Persons (TATIP) task forces as part of the Royal Thai Police. Both agencies have been instrumental in strengthening Thailand’s capacity to prosecute child pornography, child sexual exploitation and online child sex trafficking. It has led to the identification, prosecution and conviction of notorious child sex purchasers and paedophiles, helping to disrupt the “vicious circle of sex trafficking” in the country.

2.2.7 In 2015, Thailand amended its criminal penal code (sections 287/1 and 287/2) to penalise the possession, distribution and production of child pornographic materials with different terms of imprisonment. There were amendments to the Anti-Trafficking In Person’s Act with provisions that led to the recent enactment of the Anti-Trafficking in Person’s Criminal Procedure Act 2016 especially designed for speedy trials for anti-trafficking offences.
2.2.8 In 2017, Thailand opened the first victim-centred Child Advocacy Centre in Chiang Mai. The government worked in partnership with the Hug Project to establish the centre, led by Ms Boom Mosby who was later named a Trafficking In Persons Report Hero by the US government. I was delighted to visit the CAC as part of my fellowship, and held a round table meeting with Boom and the partner agencies to learn about their approaches to multiagency working in supporting child victims of trafficking. I have also written further about the success of this approach in Chapter Three.

2.2.9 Between 2015 and 2018, Royal Thai Police investigated nearly 1200 cases of trafficking in persons, submitting recommendations to prosecute nearly 99% of the cases completed (1047). The task force also rescued 68 underage male victims of sex trafficking. These include 46 victims from 28 cases in 2018, 11 victims from 9 cases in 2017 and 11 victims from 4 cases in 2016. In 2018 alone, 304 cases were detected and prosecuted including 263 cases of sex trafficking and others. There have also been successful prosecutions of sex abusers of underage boys resulting in the conviction of 135 foreign nationals.

2.2.10 Data from the 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report for Thailand showed the government investigated 288 potential trafficking cases, initiated prosecutions of 386 suspected traffickers and convicted 304 traffickers.

**Image 5: Kredtrakarn Government Shelter for Victims of Trafficking In Persons, Kret Island**
2.2.11 As I also met with Thailand Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (TICAC), I was able to learn about their work in tackling online sexual abuse and exploitation of children and the high professional standards employed in case-work. Since the establishment of the Task Force in 2015 to 2018, for example, TICAC solved 143 digitally facilitated cases related to child pornography, and rescued 111 victims including 55 teenagers under 18 years old and 38 girls and boys less than 15 years old.

2.2.12 It is therefore correct to state that the government is cracking down on child trafficking in Thailand. However, there are criticisms that the Police and other law enforcement agencies could have identified more victims, thereby demonstrating an accurate picture of the trafficking situation. Some of these criticisms include allegations of bribery and corruption (inducement and extortion) against police rank and file in relation to protecting brothels that exploit victims. Another allegation is the facilitation of illegal immigration by Border Police officers through bribery. This was a particular issue highlighted in the 2019 US Trafficking in Person’s Report.

Modes of Trafficking

2.2.13 One of the key factors facilitating the growth in sex tourism in Thailand is that many foreigners often see Thailand as a country with a very easy to access sex industry. This is quite visible across the country as I experienced during my country-wide visit. For this reason, Thailand has a large proportion of child victims of sexual exploitation who are male. Unfortunately, the general perception is that boys cannot be victims because they can take care of themselves, so male child trafficking as an issue is not generally seen as such by the general public. Male child trafficking is therefore hidden, and many victims are unidentified.

2.2.14 The crackdown on sexual exploitation by law enforcement agencies also meant that traffickers are exploring new models of exploiting children. For example the increase in the number of teenage girls working as service girls in “Karaoke Bars” has been noted by the police. Karaoke bars are used as meeting points for men and girls by traffickers, rather than brothels. Some of the images of the girls working in bars have also been found advertised online. While the police have been able to arrest and prosecute a number of bar owners, they claimed this model of child sexual exploitation is more difficult to prosecute with little evidence of risks of exploitation and child sexual abuse.

2.2.15 Another model of exploitation, this time involving boys is street prostitution but with the discreet use of a third party “pimp” connecting the victims with a punter by telephone for follow up meet-up and sex in a hotel or other places. Sex exploitation of both boys and girls result in abuse and violence, sexually transmitted diseases as well as substance abuse.
Victim Support and Protection

2.2.16 Thailand has a good array of victim support services including 9 shelters for girls, women, men and boys ran by government’s SDHS Ministry and those operated by local NGOs. I was opportune to visit many of these facilities across the country. There were reports that some victims were reluctant to use the services provided by the government based on a number of restrictions including inability to leave the facility and lack of access to a telephone. Transgender victims might be placed in detention centres or in shelters with their assigned sex at birth, putting them at possible risk of harm. Some NGOs I met highlighted the fact that some victims are refused government support if they do not agree to give evidence in court. As mentioned in paragraphs 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above, identification of both male victims and female victims in hidden forms of sexual exploitation is a challenge affecting rescue and protection, with language barrier playing a key role. In many cases, workers may not understand the cultural issues affecting victims from other countries or other parts of Thailand and so unable to provide the right support.

Image 6:

Khru Ja and Staff of Kru Ja Shelter, Anti Human Trafficking and Child Abuse Centre, Pattaya

2.2.17 However, from my visits and interviews, it was very clear to me that strong efforts were being made to improve support and protection for victims, including training and recruitment of workers with language and cultural knowledge and less barrier on movement by victim in shelters. It is also important to note that once a victim has been accepted as such, they are provided with (immigrant visa) to help them access further support and rebuild their lives. They also receive financial support with traffickers made to pay a compensation to their victims. In most cases, victims who help to bring claims against their traffickers are placed in witness protection for their safety.
2.2.18 One key area of victims support I was interested to learn about is the provision of financial management support to victims awarded compensation. Victims work together with the supporting NGOs like MAST, their lawyer and a financial advisor to ensure they have the capacity to manage the huge sum of money awarded in compensation for their future benefit.

2.2.19 In cases where a victim is repatriated to their country of origin, this is done in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration and other international NGOs.

**Prevention**

2.2.20 The government of Thailand has embarked on a massive awareness campaign across the country, which complements the efforts of many NGOs. For example, television and radio adverts are regularly played to highlight the issue and the government's activities to combat sex trafficking. Local NGOs like Urban Light and HUGS Project in Chiang Mai and Kru Ja, Agenda 21 and Human Help Network in Pattaya, whom I visited as part of my research also regularly undertake community education programmes across both cities, helping to raise awareness of the issue among tourists and locals alike. The Centre for Girls in Chiang Khong which is a border town with Lao PDR also conducts regular education sessions with many migrant women and girls on sex trafficking.

**Image 7: Kwanruen Boonpranee, Nattakarn Noree and Suwat Leehame of Agenda 21, Pattaya**
Partnerships

2.2.21 The Child Advocacy Centres (CACs) are in my view an innovative approach to building trust, partnership and collaboration between government agencies like the police, community and non-governmental organisations in the anti-trafficking sector. These joint approaches mean that all agencies involved can work together in the best interests of the victims and it is clear the CACs have helped to address some of the trust issues in relation to police corruption and involvement in human trafficking. I have further discussed the role of the CACs in Chapter Three.

Conclusion

2.2.22 Sex Trafficking is a major problem in Thailand with most victims trafficked from poorer neighbouring countries. The country’s popularity as a sex tourism destination means that the trafficking of boys is a hidden problem. However, there is concerted effort to address child trafficking by the government and NGOs and there are collaborative approaches in place to enable joint-working in the best interests of victims. Government has focused on prosecution and conviction of traffickers but more work needs to be done. This includes the need to build more trust with partner NGOs by tackling corruption.
Chapter Three – Key Findings

1 Migration, Child Trafficking or Modern Slavery?

3.1.1 During my visits across both Thailand and Ghana, it was clear to me that poverty is the main driver of migration in both countries. In Ghana, poverty is the chief reason children are being given away to others in a different part of the country to live, work, and earn an income thereby putting these children at risk of human trafficking and exploitation.

3.1.2 In Thailand, poverty is also the reason children in neighbouring countries are migrating to the country. Children are sent or given away by their parents to others to facilitate their travel and migration so they could earn an income and support their families back home.

3.1.3 In both instances, third parties are involved as agents or smugglers, their role being to help the movement and transportation of children, which in many proven instances has led to them ending up in situations of exploitation and abuse. In that sense, these agents or smugglers are really another step on the child trafficking ladder. However, in both Thailand and Ghana, there was little evidence that organised criminal gangs are involved in these trafficking situations, but that individuals or groups of individuals were able to take advantage of the vulnerability of poor families seeking a better life or financial returns to traffic and exploit their children.

3.1.4 Whether we are looking at instances of internal migration (Ghana) or external migration (Thailand), for many reasons, children are led into trafficking situations where they become exposed to coercion, exploitation and abuse. This shows that both phenomena are inextricably linked, leading experts like David Feingold\textsuperscript{xxxix} to conclude that: “ Trafficking is migration gone terribly wrong.”

3.1.5 As I toured the coastal communities in the Central region of Ghana, it was really easy to observe the very high levels of poverty and deprivation. Coupled with other socio-cultural factors including high birth rates, high levels of unemployment and the influences of both culture and religion as I outlined in Chapter Two, it is then really easy to understand why child trafficking is so rife. These push factors are very similar to those involving the young victims of trafficking from different African countries that I work with in the UK at the charity AFRUCA.

3.1.6 These migratory patterns are not necessarily benign. This is simply because traffickers understand the desperation of poor families in this part of Ghana and in poor countries like Lao PDR, Vietnam and Cambodia – all neighbouring countries to Thailand, and capitalise on these weaknesses to deceive families with false promises of a better life for their children.
3.1.7 Further, in Ghana itself, there have been debates whether the movement of children from the Central to the Volta region to work on the lake is the result of a culturally based, voluntary decision-making by poor parents seeking support from extended family members in the form of benign child fostering and apprenticeships or a result of insidious child trafficking. Most of the NGO workers and community mediators I interviewed were certain that child trafficking was occurring in as much as parents were being offered money for their children to relocate and work on the lake, with promises of regular income which hardly materialises. On the other hand, I also interviewed an NGO worker who believed there was nothing wrong in the practice of children or their families being offered money to go and work on Lake Volta. “This is simply child labour, they are doing it to support their families”.

3.1.8 Cultural reasons were also alluded to by this worker as a factor: “It is their culture. There is nothing wrong with it”.

3.1.9 However, these viewpoints ignore the growing number of documented cases where children have suffered devastating impact, including injury, even death, from working on the lakes. This is in addition to other reported abuses and infringements of human rights including beating, starving, lack of sleeping arrangements, lack of medical care following injury, denial of access to (free) education, denial of contact with family and sexual abuse.

3.1.10 In many cases of the children in the shelters I visited, the workers remarked that sometimes they are too young to remember their own origins, and are not able to return home to their families. At the same time, once the children depart from their families at the point of trafficking, many of the parents are unaware of their subsequent whereabouts and are unable to travel to search for them, since they cannot afford the transport costs. Many children therefore spend years in exploitation and abusive situations without the chance of being rescued or saved, and with devastating impact on their overall health and well-being.

3.1.11 There have been somewhat similar situations to this phenomenon here in the UK. This involves many children and young people from Nigeria who were trafficked into the country for domestic slavery, sometimes by their own extended family members under the guise of fostering or providing the children with a better life. Just like the practice in the Central Region of Ghana, poor family members living in the rural areas or poorer parts of cities are approached by richer relatives with promises of looking after their children “in London”, including sending them to school. In many instances these children end up being exploited and abused. My charity AFRUCA over the past 19 years or so has provided support and rehabilitation services for hundreds of these young people to help them rebuild their lives. Some of these cases have also been successfully prosecuted in the UK criminal courts including the first child trafficking conviction in the UK which involved Pastor Lucy Adeniji1, and that of another victim who was enslaved for about a decade by her abuser2.

---

1 https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1368173/Eleven-years-evil-pastor-tortured-child-slaves.html
2 https://www.standard.co.uk/news/modern-slavery/fraud-investigator-wails-as-she-is-jailed-for-enslaving-house-girl-a3654211.html
3.1.12 Could these experiences fall under the category of what is termed “modern slavery”?

3.1.13 As mentioned in paragraph 1.1.2, there are ongoing debates especially in academia in relation to the dichotomy between what constitutes human trafficking and modern slavery. These debates stem from the belief that the Palermo Protocol of 2000 which is the UN instrument addressing all aspects of human trafficking does not truly capture the totality of the experiences of victims. In this sense, some experts prefer the use of the 1926 Slavery Convention which emphasises slavery as “control over a person by another such as a person might control a thing”, in the belief or conviction that this piece of international legislation better encapsulates the totality of the negative experiences to which victims of human trafficking, even modern slavery, are subjected.

3.1.14 As an anti-slavery practitioner, many of the cases involving the young girls I work with at AFRUCA as described in para 3.1.11 above are so extreme, in my view the term “trafficking” as we know it does not really capture the essence of these experiences. Aside the terrible levels of exploitation, these experiences also include gross physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect but also the denial of access to education, medical care, food, menstrual sanitary products and refusal to allow the young people make contact with their families back home. These young people are prevented from leaving the homes so are completely isolated from the outside world. There have been many instances of threats with police arrests, detention or deportation. Some have been trafficked with juju and oath rituals used as a form of psychological control, meaning the victims are unable to escape even if they could due to fear of the brutal effects of the juju. This is a serious form of psychological torture.

3.1.15 Therefore, I believed the experiences of many of these young victims are akin to a life of slavery. Subsequent rescue and the provision of therapeutic and other rehabilitation services will help to an extent. However, the journey towards healing is usually very long, arduous and painful. Sometimes the damage is permanent with the victims struggling to cope for the rest of their lives. This is in addition to living with the stigma and shame caused by their experiences. Therefore based on my own personal work experiences, I am of the opinion that the use of the term “modern slavery” to describe many forms of human trafficking in the UK today is justified.

3.1.16 This brings me back to my research in Ghana. At the shelters I visited across the coastal region in the country, I asked the workers to tell me what they thought of the children’s experiences working on the lake. A worker responded as follows:

“I remember the case of a 12 year old boy we had here. His hands had wounds all over them. His hands were so shrunken and dried out they looked like the hands of a 60 year old man. How can you tell me that this child is joyfully and freely doing this work?”
3.1.17 Another worker lamented:

“It is like the feelings of the child does not matter. Signs of trauma are seen as the child being disrespectful, instead of people acknowledging it and supporting the child to work through it.”

3.1.18 As I toured the Gomoa Nyanyano seaside community and observed children working on the shore, a local NGO community mediator talked to me about his work and about the case of a 12 year old child returned to his family now in the care of the NGO:

“We have the case of a child beaten by his slave master with a paddle, leading to this child becoming bent and deformed.”

3.1.19 I also had a relevant experience outside the scope of my research but which totally demonstrated that perhaps the impact of child trafficking on Lake Volta was a lot more far reaching than originally thought. This was in relation to an incidence on one of my travels with my driver “Eric” asking me about the work I was doing in his country and me explaining to him about child trafficking on Lake Volta.

3.1.20 I noticed that “Eric” started to shake uncontrollably. He managed to manoeuvre the car to the side of the road where we stopped. I asked him what the matter was:

“Madam, what you are talking about happened to me. I was about 10 years old when my mother gave me away. It was the worst time of my life and I still remember what I went through at the hands of those men. I saw with my own eyes a boy that went with us on the boat. He went down to retrieve the net and he did not come back. We left him in the water.”

3.1.21 I asked him if he thought this was slavery.

“Of course it is slavery. They never treated their own children like that. They did not give us food. They did not send us to school. They did not give us money. They always beat us. I am still very angry with my mother for giving me away.”

3.1.22 Since “Eric” had told me he was 45 years old in previous conversations, I deducted it had been about 35 years since his experience, yet he was still largely traumatised by it.\(^3\)

3.1.23 These examples help to drive home the point that whether we call it human or child trafficking or modern slavery, we are referencing the terrible experiences that many children have gone through with long term, even permanent damages to their overall wellbeing.

---

\(^3\) Eric (not his real name) consented to my use of his story in my report.
3.1.24 Therefore, it is important to emphasise how essential it is for communities to be engaged in these debates, in order to become part and parcel of the process of change. My experience from my work at AFRUCA shows that many people in the diaspora are oblivious to the nature of trafficking and exploitation, even slavery that those like the young people we support at AFRUCA, or the children on the lake or in the shelters in Ghana, even “Eric”, have gone through. This means that such experiences can be downplayed, minimised or denied by those who are unfamiliar with them. This ‘culture of disbelief’ is quite pervasive and in a way helps to normalise harmful practices like child trafficking and exploitation.

3.1.25 Many people in the UK diaspora from certain countries like Nigeria or Ghana might believe other people’s experiences of migration mirrors or should be similar to theirs (that is – get a visa, get on a plane…), being unlikely to accept that people can go through extreme experiences like human trafficking on their journeys to Europe. This is why community education is crucial to enable those in the diaspora understand the nuances of human trafficking and their own roles in addressing it. This role is not limited to the destination countries of exploitation but also to source countries like Ghana. The knowledge and understanding gained by those in the Diaspora can definitely be transferred into addressing human trafficking in their countries of origin.

3.1.26 Furthermore, not much work has been done to capture the many issues I have identified above in relation to diaspora communities in the UK. These include the many cultural factors that inform people's attitudes towards the practices of child exploitation and even slavery. It is interesting to note that there is little or no form of academic research exploring human trafficking in the UK Diaspora communities of key source countries – Albania, Vietnam and Nigeria, even though there is a plethora of research done by UK institutions in those countries. This is more crucial since these countries have dominated the UK human trafficking league table for over a decade. Therefore, there is a huge gap in knowledge in relation to the role that Diaspora communities in the UK play in human trafficking and modern slavery from their countries of origin. It is important that this knowledge gap is bridged to help inform policy and practice.
2. Boys Don’t Cry?

3.2.1 In much of literature on human trafficking and modern slavery, there is always a tendency to over-state the involvement of women and girls as victims – especially where it involves sexual exploitation. While women and girls form the largest cohort of victims of trafficking world-wide (UNODC 2018\textsuperscript{xlii}), the vulnerability of boys to different forms of child trafficking has been ignored for many years in the UK, internationally\textsuperscript{xliii} and in the two countries I visited, meaning that the levels of victim identification and disclosure have been quite small in comparison with girls and women. There is a need to explore the trafficking of boys and the link with community approaches in addressing child trafficking.

**Case Study One: Working With Boys - Urban Light**

3.2.2 In Thailand, I interviewed Maia Mounsher, the Country Director of Urban Light, an NGO based in Chiang Mai. The NGO is the sole service provider specifically tailored for male victims of sexual exploitation in the country. Chiang Mai is a popular tourism destination. Many foreigners often see Thailand as a country with a very easy to access sex industry. This, coupled with demand from within the country (from Thai nationals and foreign people living in Thailand long term) creates a demand for the sex tourism in Chiang Mai. Perhaps surprisingly, around 90% of ‘Freelance’ or ‘Survival Sex Workers’ who attend Urban Light’s Drop-in-Center self identify as heterosexual. Most of these are migrants from Myanmar, the ethnic minority “hill tribe” groups and people from other areas of Northern Thailand. Since Chiang Mai is a popular tourist destination, many of the customers driving the demand are foreigners-tourists, including Westerners and Chinese people, who are mostly men. There is also demand from domestic tourists or local people, hence both Thai nationals and foreign residents are also involved. It is estimated that 41% of Human Trafficking Victims are male (including not only sex work but also labour trafficking, agriculture), and this number is relatively high compared to the global average of 29% (UNODC 2018\textsuperscript{xliv}).

3.2.3 Urban Light (UL) provides a drop in centre for victims and vulnerable males, providing services such as meals, education and vocational training, basic legal support, health-care, especially for those experiencing substance abuse, transitional housing for those who want to live independently, and other forms of care based on the needs of the individual. Most of the users have experienced severe trauma from the abuse and violence suffered, so UL provides a psychologist to provide clinical support, in addition to using art therapy and group counselling. UL also conducts outreach programmes in bars, massage parlours and high risk communities to help raise awareness and reduce harm to males in the sex industry.

3.2.4 Maia also talked about some of her NGO’s work in public awareness raising about the plight of the boys and the effect of prolonged sex work on their health. For this purpose, UL works with the local community and local government to conduct public or community awareness activities. This is crucial because the topic of boy trafficking is very often overlooked. Maia believes that NGOs cannot solve this problem alone. Structural changes
are necessary across Thailand and internationally to draw attention to the plight of boys who have been trafficked for sex. Males can face a lot of discrimination, stigma and judgement, in the general community just for being victims. This can make it even harder to seek help. Even though many boys and men come forward to use UL services, there are many others who will not come in for help and support. Self-destructive behaviour is common among such boys especially substance abuse.

3.2.5 According to Maia:

“Most people don’t consider boys as victims. Men and boys are ‘supposed’ to be masculine and strong. When we talk about human trafficking and particularly sex trafficking, the stereotype that people tend to imagine is that of a girl or a woman. Once we start to examine the problem in more detail, we see that in reality, of course boys and men can be victims too. We see too many examples of this in our work at Urban Light. But we are still at the stage globally where we need to raise awareness about this cause.”

3.2.6 I had met with other NGO workers across Thailand who, even though do not provide exclusive support for boys, talked about the high level of abuse and discrimination they experience. This is because of the general, even cultural belief that boys cannot be victims or that their sole motivation for selling sex is money. In other instances, boys are viewed as criminals on the streets to be arrested and prosecuted, rather than victims requiring support and protection. This perhaps explains why there are few services and shelters in place to support male victims of sex trafficking across the country.

3.2.7 The minimisation of the experiences of boys who have been trafficked and exploited in Ghana’s fishing sector is also very apparent as I have reported in paragraph 3.1.9 above. The cultural perception that boys are strong and resilient, are masculine and agile and can be providers for the family in the absence of a father figure is perhaps a key reason many people do not view such dangerous and hazardous labour as abusive or exploitative, and rather consider it to be ‘mere child labour’, thereby exposing children to unnecessary risks of harm.

3.2.8 There are parallel instances in the UK today where boys who have been trafficked for various purposes are exposed to forced exploitation and sex trafficking. For example, a 2016 Report by the Children’s Society focused on the lack of attention paid to the potential for trafficked boys and young men in the UK to be sexually exploited, leading to nonidentification by agencies and for a variety of reasons, a lack of disclosure by victims themselves.

3.2.9 Much has been said about the criminal exploitation of Vietnamese boys in Cannabis farms where houses have been converted and used for growing Cannabis. There have
been so many instances where the victims are arrested and prosecuted by the Police, instead of providing support and protection, especially against their traffickers. The 2018 report by the UK Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group, for example, highlighted a case where the UK government was said to be in breach of its obligations under Article 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights when a Vietnamese child trafficking victim was “lost” by the authorities after he was released without any form of protective measures to an address where he subsequently went missing and could not be traced by the police\textsuperscript{xlvii}.

3.2.10 We see similar instances in relation to the involvement of boys in the so called “County Lines” child trafficking in which children are groomed and then trafficked to move drugs across the UK. Rather than offered protection as victims, there are instances where the children are actually arrested and prosecuted by law enforcement agencies\textsuperscript{xlviii}.

3.2.11 This issue is pervasive when considered in relation to male victims of sexual exploitation in the UK. A 2014 study\textsuperscript{xl} by University College London (UCL) revealed the high number of male victims of sexual exploitation than previously thought and concluded that “male victims have largely been overlooked amid growing interest in child sexual exploitation in recent years”.

3.2.12 Up till recently, there were hardly any shelters for male victims of trafficking in the UK with most facilities catering just for young girls/women. This demonstrated the reduced awareness about the plight of male victims and the inadequate efforts to meet their needs.

3.2.13 There are key roles here for communities to help address this ‘conscious neglect’ of boys – either in sending countries or diaspora communities in the countries of exploitation like the UK, to better understand the plight of boys who are victims of trafficking. Such understanding is necessary to ensure people do know that boys too are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, that they feel pain and that they are children first and foremost. This knowledge will assist in prevention efforts, to ensure boys do not become at risk of trafficking in the false belief that they are “masculine” and “strong” and can be providers for the family. Furthermore, at places or countries of destination and exploitation, such awareness of the vulnerability of boys will assist with identification and protection, ensuring communities can act to safeguard victims rather than subject them to stigmatisation, criminalisation, discrimination or even a denial or minimisation of the abuse and exploitation experienced.
3. When Communities Lead: Anti-Trafficking Innovators

3.3.1 The fight against child trafficking in both Thailand and Ghana has been led in a large part by local individuals I would refer to as “anti-trafficking innovators”. When the government of Thailand faltered in addressing the growing incidences of human trafficking across the country, earning two consecutive “Tier Three” failings on the US Trafficking In Persons Report in 2014 and 2015, it was the local anti-trafficking innovators who kept up the pressure by setting up local NGOs to provide protection and support services for victims while carrying out prevention programmes and pushing law enforcement agencies to act to arrest and prosecute offenders. Where there were gaps in service provision, it was also the innovators who stepped in to fill those gaps by developing ideas into liveable projects through resource mobilisation – all before government intervention occurred, leading to collaborative efforts as described below.

3.3.2 In Ghana, with the reduced government efforts to tackle child trafficking in the fishing sector, despite this being recognised as a major problem in various government action plans, it was also the anti-trafficking innovators who stepped in to take action, providing the much needed support for neglected and poverty ridden communities, creating training and employment programmes for families, even before the intervention of international non-governmental organisations. In particular, without the leadership of these innovators, many operations to rescue children on Lake Volta in partnership with the police and other government agencies would not have occurred as I have alluded to in paragraph 2.1.14 above. Since the government of Ghana itself has only one shelter for trafficked children in the whole country, suffice it to say that without the intervention of these various leaders and their organisations, many children in exploitation and abuse will remain in perpetual bondage.

3.3.3 I was opportune, even excited to meet some of these remarkable individuals in both countries as part of my visit. For example:

**In Thailand…**

3.3.4 I visited the shelter for trafficked and abused children established by the respected Palisorn Noja, popularly known as Khru Ja in Pattaya. The shelter was set up in 2007 and provides housing, education and life skills for up to 40 children age 8 to 15 years at any one time. The main objective is for the children to gain enough support and healing to be able to return to their families.

3.3.5 In Chiang Mai, I met Boom Mosby the Founder of the HUGS project which she established in 2012. In 2015 she opened the first Child Advocacy Centre in South East Asia, to enable victims access multi-agency service provision in a safe and secure environment. I visited the CAC, met the staff and observed the facilities and services provided victims.
Based on her work with victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation, Boom was made a Trafficking In Persons Report Hero in 2017 by the US State Department.

3.3.6 Pia started the Hand to Hand Network Foundation in Pattaya in 2010 as an organisation using Christian principles and ideologies in the provision of support to families living in the slums of Pattaya, most of whom are migrants from neighbouring countries. She also runs a shelter providing nursery schooling for children from the slums, and a Kids Club for older children, enabling their parents to work while providing additional protection and safety for the children.

3.3.7 P’Loi Nunnaree Luangmoi founded the Centre for Girls in Chiang Khong in 2012 initially using her own home and resources to provide support and services for the users, many of whom are migrants from the neighbouring Lao PDR. The main aim was to help remove girls from situations of commercial sexual exploitation or early marriage by providing them with the resources to go to school or access vocational education. She also works with migrant families in the communities around Chiang Khong providing home and personal items, supporting women with skills acquisition while working with the local police and immigration agencies to identify and arrest child traffickers.

3.3.8 Khru Na works for the NGO Child Protection and Development Centre in Pattaya. As an innovator, he designed the Child Protection card game for children to teach them how to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation.

In Ghana…

3.3.9 The NGO Challenging Heights in Winebba was founded by James Koffi Anan in 2002. James is well known as a survivor of slavery, having been trafficked before primary school to work on Lake Volta. Having turned his life around, he worked as a banker before establishing Challenging Heights to help rescue and protect other children from going through similar experiences as he did in childhood. The NGO has a shelter for about 60 children which I was opportune to visit, a school providing vocational training for at risk youngsters and a cold store for fish preservation so indigent women could derive income through selling fish. CH also has a social enterprise element with income made from trading put back to run the NGO.

3.3.10. But not all the innovators I met had a background in anti-trafficking work. Abeyie Bonsu is a Lawyer and Tech Innovator at Ghana Technology Lab who lived and studied in England before returning to Ghana. Abeyie was concerned about the level of child exploitation he saw on return to Ghana he decided to: “develop an App to leverage on technology to end human trafficking”. For this reason, he created the ATA – the “Anti-Trafficking Alert”, a mobile app to enable people report human trafficking incidents “easily and securely” (www.traffikalert.com). Also, the app serves as an education tool for users
so people can learn about human trafficking and how to protect themselves. Abeyie plans to work with the government, especially Ghana Police to ensure the App becomes universally rolled out and used across Ghana. Abeyie, with his expertise in Law and Technology has shown that everyone has a role to play in addressing human trafficking, deploying their unique skills to enable this happen. Equally important is the proof here that Diasporans can play a key role in combating human trafficking in their countries of origin.

3.3.11. These are people leading change in their various communities, finding solutions to the intractable problem of human trafficking affecting vulnerable and helpless people, without necessarily waiting for outside intervention or for others to act. This is why I refer to them as “Anti-Trafficking Innovators”.

3.3.12. In the book “Prosperity Paradox” (2019)', Christensen et al, explored the idea of innovation as “a process by which an organisation transforms labour, capital materials and information into products and services of a greater value”. They contend that innovation can be borrowed from one firm to another and then improved upon.

3.3.13. Christensen et al (2019) identified three types of innovation which in my view can be applied to the global anti-trafficking sector as follows:

- **Sustaining Innovation** – where there are improvements to existing services delivered by various agencies and charities, so they can remain competitive or retain their ‘market share’ or ‘niche’ in the anti-trafficking sector.

- **Efficiency Innovation** – where the charity or agency does more work but with fewer resources, reaching more victims of trafficking in order to provide services.

- **New Market Innovation** – where the charity extends its services to a new cohort of users for whom no services existed or existing services were not accessible. These new services help to create new jobs and a culture change in the sector. The culture changes induce new ways of working or thinking about anti-trafficking, leading to improvements in the approach to address human trafficking.

3.3.14. These three modes of innovation can be observed in the Anti-Trafficking Innovators I identified above. For example, having founded their NGOs over a decade ago, James Kofi Annan, P’Loy and Khru Ja have employed a range of methods to sustain their organisations, improving services to meet the needs of their users, so they are Sustaining Innovators. Abeyie and Khru Na are Efficiency Innovators, creating new ways of addressing human trafficking. For example, Abeyie’s main aim was to use “Anti-Trafficking Alert” to enable people report human trafficking incidents “easily and securely” thereby ensuring more victims can be identified and offered protection. Boom in my view is a New Market Innovator. Having visited Dallas and observed the Child Advocacy Centre there in action, she felt Thailand should have similar services and collaborated with the Royal Thai Police and others to make this happen. Of course it is very likely that an Innovator will straddle these different models of innovation in the course of their career as an NGO founder and CEO.
3.3.15. As an Anti-trafficking Innovator myself, having established AFRUCA, a UK charity 20 years ago and launched a series of innovative programmes and services to help meet the needs of victims while creating employment opportunities and changes in diaspora communities, I see myself as a multiple innovator. I have worked to ensure the organisation remains competitive and not stale after 20 years of existence, provided improvements to our services to ensure they continue to meet the needs of our users and the diaspora communities in which we work, employ new ways of working to safe costs especially in view of reduced sources of income, and I still produce new interventions to reach new cohorts of beneficiaries excluded from existing main-stream services.

3.3.16. It is important to underline how challenging it must be for all the innovators I met to keep their organisations going, mobilise resources, devise interventions “that work”, address internal challenges and deal with external threats, which are quite numerous. From my personal experience, the role of an Anti-Trafficking Innovator is a very challenging one indeed, and could be a factor in the very limited number of Diasporans in the UK working in the anti-trafficking sector as Innovators. Therefore, I am of the opinion that the Anti-Trafficking Innovator role needs to be nurtured and supported via a formalised and structured leadership programme to help improve the impact made.

3.3.17. Innovators like Abeyie have further demonstrated the benefits of Diasporans working at both ends of the spectrum – here in the UK, their countries of residence and in their countries of origin. This is a unique role enabling Diasporans to bring the knowledge, experience and expertise gained in the UK to influence change in source countries and regions.

3.3.18. Diaspora engagement is currently being employed by a number of multi-lateral organisations across the world as a key response to international development issues. For instance, the European Union has developed a programme called EUDiF – The EU Global Diaspora Facility to engage diaspora members in the EU as development actors in their countries and regions or origin. Such positive approaches can be replicated here in the UK, specifically tailored to the modern slavery agenda.

3.3.19. Therefore, it is critical that in addressing the myriad of human trafficking and modern slavery issues across the UK and specifically in the many affected diaspora communities in the country, we can help to build and support more Innovators, who will be sustaining, efficient, and market creating. These innovators can also be empowered to utilise their skills-set to bring about change in the countries and regions of origin, especially in efforts to address human trafficking and modern slavery. As a world leader, the UK certainly has a key role in supporting such Innovators to effect changes for the betterment of society.
4. Collaborative Approaches: Communities As Stakeholders

Principal-Agent Aid Relationship in Ghana

3.4.1 My findings in Ghana are quite different from what I observed in Thailand in relation to collaborative approaches and partnership working. Even though the Government of Ghana works collaboratively in many ways with the local NGOs, the government does not provide any major grants or financial support to the local NGOs. There are limited opportunities to raise funds for their work. This is where the international nongovernmental organisations come in. Awashed with donor funding to deliver development projects, they also sub-contract some of their work to the local NGOs. This means that sometimes local organisations compete with each other to access funding for short-term project delivery from the international organisations. This much was clear to me as I learnt about the work of various local NGOs in the country.

3.4.2 The use of donor funding to tackle social or development problems determined by foreign governments without taking account of the real needs and priorities on the ground has been criticised by many experts. This has been referred to as the “principal-agent aid relationship". The principal agent problem is well known in International Development and describes the conflict that may occur when the objectives of the funding body (principal) and the actions of local organisations (agents) contracted to deliver programmes diverge. In this instance, not only are Ghanaian NGOs underfunded, they also have to contend with a top-down approach to addressing issues which may or may not even be a priority for the cohort of beneficiaries they support, to attract some income since this is one of the few sources of funding available to them. Of course, it also means that local NGOs, beholden to the international organisations, are unable in most cases to offer criticism of any ill-conceived programmes or act counter to the demands of these agencies in order not to lose favour or be refused financial support for their work.

3.4.3 This model of international development is untenable on the long run because it removes the ownership of the problem and solution from affected communities, denying them the tools and resources to help make sustainable change.

3.4.4 There are variations of this approach here in the UK too, where some agencies seeking to 'engage' with diaspora communities on anti-trafficking matters employ a top-down approach in doing so. Needless to say that these negative approaches do not work, and rather than help to address the subject of human trafficking, they actually alienate the same communities who are essential to creating change for the benefit of those we aim to help.
Building Partnerships: The Child Advocacy Centres in Thailand

3.4.5 Without doubt, everyone I met in Thailand spoke with pride about the network of five Child Advocacy Centres established by the government as a victim-centric multi-agency hub for receiving and conducting forensic interviews for children. I was opportune to visit two of the CACs in Chiang Mai and Pattaya co-ordinated by the HUGS Project and Agenda 21, both jointly operated with the Police. I held round table meetings with the staff and panel members of the CACs while touring the facilities used to support children.

3.4.6 The government, through the Royal Thai Police has been quite opened with showering praises on Boom Mosby whose idea it was to establish the CACs. According to Boom herself:

“I opened the first child advocacy center in Southeast Asia in March 2015. I was inspired because of my story of when I took the victims to the police station and felt that I couldn't help my client very well. So when Vital Voices took me to Dallas Children Advocacy Center, I just loved seeing a place where victims were treated really well and with respect. And I saw the police actually working hand in hand with NGO's and working alongside and supporting victims. I wanted that system in my country. So when I went back to Thailand, I talked to my police friend who was crazy enough to get the students together. So we opened the advocacy center in Thailand, and now two more child advocacy centers in Pattaya and also in Phuket. This year we'll hope to open two more.” (culled from: https://www.thefemword.world/her-story/boom-mosby)

3.4.7 The CACs in Thailand provide a veritable example of how government can work hand-in-hand with communities to improve anti-trafficking interventions, with better impact on victims. Using the 3Rs model:

REACH⇒RESCUE⇒RESTORE

3.4.8 The A21 CAC Hub in Pattaya engages in “Reach” efforts to identify vulnerable children in the community through a series of prevention, awareness and education programmes. This is similar to the HUGs project’s focus on “Prevention” with emphasis on educating children on self-protection. Various activities are delivered under this model by both organisations including work in schools to increase awareness of online safety and prevention of child sexual abuse. There are also tools produced and disseminated to schools to enable teachers, home staff and other practitioners better understand issues like attachment theory, positive discipline. There is a lot of focus on at risk children, many of whom are from the migrant communities. The HUG project, for example undertakes prevention efforts through the provision of an afterschool programme to engage the children by teaching them English, sports, sciences and holding special events like art therapy to engage them. It has worked with schools to install internet filters on computers.
to prevent access to pornography. Both organisations also collate statistics from their activities to inform government action.

3.4.9 In terms of Rescue or Protection, both A21 and HUGS Project conduct fact-finding activities, talking to victims and families. They collaborate with prosecutors, the police and immigration services in the investigation of cases, especially to help build trust in victims. Rescued children are referred to NGO shelters – there are criticisms that the government run shelters are like “military schools”. In some instances, boys do not want to be rescued as they prefer to have their freedom, or don’t think they are victims, so do not require support. In this instance, they would rather co-operate in prosecutions but otherwise be left alone. As substance abuse is a major problem among boy victims, sometimes they do not want to give this up. Only 1 in 5 victims agree to go to rehab.

3.4.10 As part of the “Restoration” process, a team-around-the-child is involved as part of the HUB from the point of referral and forensic interview until after-care and independent living or family re-integration. This team includes the social worker, police, doctor, the NGO worker, psychologist and the nurse all providing services to meet the needs of the child.

3.4.11 One of the key benefits of the CACs is the opportunity to build trust between the victims, the police, other practitioners, and among practitioners themselves. Trust, a core element of anti-trafficking collaborative work had been missing. The police were suspected of corrupt practices and having ulterior motives in pursuing traffickers. However, by working together as part of the CAC, NGOs and others are able to develop better knowledge and understanding of police-work, helping to build trust and confidence in each other.

Image 8: Boom Mosby, Founder and Director of HUGS Project and CAC team, Chiang Mai
3.4.12 Such positive partnership approaches can be useful for us here in the UK anti-slavery sector in developing better collaborative efforts between mainstream NGOs, statutory agencies and diaspora communities. In this sense, diaspora communities are not just invited to ‘consultative meetings’ or interviewed as part of research projects, or featured in media programmes, but are regarded as stakeholders and veritable change partners. There is mutual respect, co-operation, trust and partnership in which diaspora communities can take ownership of the problem of human trafficking and the responsibility for addressing it.

3.4.13 To achieve the above, structures like BASNET – the UK BME/Diaspora Anti-Slavery Network need to be nurtured and empowered as spaces where practitioners can interact with the diaspora communities and where agencies can work in partnership with this important set of stakeholders as part of their interventions.

Image 9: P’Loy Nunanarree Luangmoi, Director, Centre for Girls and staff, Chiang Khong
Chapter Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

4.1 This research project focusing on two different countries has revealed a number of key issues similar to those experienced in the UK, in relation to diaspora community engagement methodologies. Many of these factors hamper the ability of the communities to perform their role as a safety-net for children at risk or as victims of human trafficking and modern slavery. Therefore, my main conclusions from this research are that:

• Efforts to engage diaspora communities in ongoing debates and activities to address human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK are either lacking or inadequate. Many people in the diaspora are oblivious to the nature of trafficking and exploitation, even slavery that those like the young people I support at AFRUCA, or the children on the lake or in the shelters in Ghana and Thailand, even “Eric”, have gone through. This means that their experiences can be down-played, minimised or denied by those who are unfamiliar with these phenomena. On the other hand, known victims can be viewed negatively, isolated, stigmatised or shamed as a result of their experiences. This ‘culture of disbelief’ is quite pervasive and in a way helps to normalise harmful practices like child trafficking and exploitation. It therefore needs to be addressed in the best interests of victims.

• Allied to this is the role of diaspora communities to help address the conscious neglect of boys as victims – both in their countries of origin and in the UK. Such intervention is necessary to ensure people do realise that boys too are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, that they feel pain and that they are children first and foremost.

• There is little academic research available exploring human trafficking in the UK diaspora communities from key source countries like Albania, Romania, Vietnam and Nigeria, even though there is a plethora of research done by UK institutions in those countries. New evidence sources are required to interrogate the many cultural factors that inform people’s attitudes and perceptions towards the practices of child exploitation and even slavery. This point is very crucial since these same countries have dominated the UK human trafficking league table for over a decade.

• The fight against child trafficking in both Thailand and Ghana has been led in a large part by local individuals - “Anti-Trafficking innovators”. While we need more of such actors here in the UK too, the role of an Anti-Trafficking Innovator can be quite challenging. Therefore, this role needs to be nurtured and supported via a formalised and structured leadership programme to help improve impact.
• As a world leader, the UK ought to capitalise on the benefits of having Diasporans able to work at both ends of the spectrum – here in the UK, their country of residence and in their countries of origin to help further the government’s modern slavery agenda. This is a unique role enabling Diasporans to bring the knowledge, experience and expertise gained in the UK to influence change in source countries and regions. Diaspora engagement models are now employed by a number of multilateral organisations across the world as a response to international development problems.

• Current government approach to engage with communities (where this exists) is often tokenistic. However, such top-down approaches to engage with communities do not work. Rather than help to address the subject of human trafficking and modern slavery, they actually alienate the same communities who are essential to creating change for the benefit of those we aim to help.

• Existing diaspora engagement structures need to be nurtured and developed as spaces where practitioners can interact with the diaspora communities on modern slavery issues and where agencies can work in partnership with this important set of stakeholders to help strengthen and improve interventions to address modern slavery in the country.

• At the same time, mainstream charities and agencies supporting victims of external trafficking do not have strategies to involve the relevant diaspora communities in their work. This demonstrates a lack of inclusion and diversity of input in their interventions.

• With the growth in different forms of internal trafficking in the UK, there is a need to address the intersecting issues – for example the links between poverty and vulnerability to child trafficking and exploitation, as well as the foster care to prison pipeline. Just like in Thailand and Ghana, many children who are involved in county lines trafficking are from poor, deprived or troubled families. These multiplicity of causative factors should be addressed holistically, so vulnerable children are protected and supported.
Recommendations

5.1 These recommendations are aimed at helping The UK government, mainstream charities and diaspora community organisations take appropriate action to strengthen the role of Diaspora Communities affected by human trafficking, ensuring they become more engaged in prevention and the protection of victims of trafficking in the country.

Statutory Agencies

- Diaspora Community Engagement should be incorporated as a core element of UK anti-trafficking and anti-slavery strategies implemented by the Independent AntiSlavery Commissioner, various government departments, especially Department for International Development and Foreign Office, the Home Office as well as the Mayor of London and other cities. Established structures like BASNET (the UK Diaspora and BME Anti-Slavery Network) can and should be engaged as part of this process in strengthening responses to both demand and supply.

- The UK should establish a UK Diaspora Engagement Programme to engage diaspora members as development actors in their countries or regions of origin, with a focus on addressing modern slavery and human trafficking. This will further boost the UK’s position as a world leader in efforts to eradicate modern slavery. There are many ways Diasporans can be supported to work in their countries or of origin. Firstly through playing an advisory role to relevant agencies; or through programme partnerships with local NGOs or by establishing programmes and services themselves.

- The government works in partnership with the relevant communities to implement a community education programme to address drivers of trafficking demand and supply in different communities across the country, especially in relation to the impact of human trafficking on children, including boys. One of the most effective ways of doing so is through the use of community educators or Anti-Slavery Champions, as done by AFRUCA in collaboration with Manchester City Council (‘Manchester Against Modern Slavery’ campaign). This will help to change attitudes and perceptions of trafficking and its victims and turn communities into allies against those damaging the general reputation of the people. It will also help to build community resilience against modern slavery and human trafficking.

- A holistic approach to addressing new forms of child trafficking in the UK is essential. Children from poor, deprived and troubled homes are very vulnerable to exploitation, as is the case with country lines trafficking. Efforts to address these new forms of trafficking should also take account of other intersecting factors, linking prevention efforts with early intervention in at risk families to strengthen parents’ capacity to protect their children from exploitation and trafficking.
Academia

- There is a dearth of UK academic research projects assessing the attitudes of various Diaspora communities (from the top source countries of Nigeria, Albania, Vietnam, China and Romania toward human trafficking, the impact on victims and the role of Diaspora communities to address both demand and supply. The Modern Slavery Policy Evidence Centre and academia should therefore partner with diaspora communities to expand the scope of current research to help inform policy interventions and impactful service provision.

- Academia can help to build a new generation of Anti-Slavery Innovators through the establishment of Social Innovation Training Programmes for Diasporans (or BAME) Leaders. Modern Slavery Centres of Excellence like the Rights Lab at Nottingham University, the Bakhita Centre for Research on Slavery, Exploitation and Abuse at St Mary’s University and the Wilberforce Institute at Hull University all have the facilities, structures, knowledge-base to help impact this cohort of social innovators.

Charities

- A Handbook or Guidance document on Diaspora Community Engagement for Professionals and NGOs needs to be designed and developed to inform workers on how to work with diaspora communities in prevention, victim support and rehabilitation.

- Mainstream charities and statutory agencies working in anti-slavery should establish Community Stakeholders Forum to inform their various interventions and approaches. These forums would be sounding boards of ideas to help inform and critique intervention at the design stages, but also as part of programme implementation, monitoring and impact assessment.

Diaspora Organisations

- Diaspora organisations in the UK should be proactive in addressing different forms of human trafficking in their communities. These efforts should include community education programmes to enable people in the communities understand what constitutes “human trafficking” and “modern slavery”, how people can be vulnerable, and how they can be protected and supported by community members.

- Culturally appropriate, community based programmes to support vulnerable families where children are at risk of exploitation and internal trafficking should be established as a form of early intervention and prevention activities.

- UK diaspora organisations working on anti-trafficking issues in the UK should work to transfer their knowledge and skills to their countries of origin to help tackle human trafficking at source. Such transfer of knowledge approaches could include establishing branches of their organisations in countries of origin to replicate UK work or partnership projects with local NGOs to help build capacity.
Appendix One - Agencies Involved In Research and Interviewees

Ghana

> Abena Asare, Deputy Director Ghana Anti-Human Trafficking Secretariat, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Accra
> Abeyei Bonsu Schmutz, Innovator, Anti-Trafficking Alert Mobile Application, Accra
> Alberta Ampofo, Head of Anti-Trafficking, Ghana Immigration Service, Accra
> Bright Fiatsi, Co-Founder, Cheerful Hearts Foundation, Kasoa
> Emmanuel Addo, Community Mediator, Cheerful Hearts Foundation
> Eric Peseah, Founder and CEO, Born To Be Free, Accra
> Freeman Ahegbebu, Child Labour & Trafficking Programme Manager, Cheerful Hearts Foundation
> James Koffi Annan, CEO Challenging Heights Foundation, Winneba
> Serge Akpalou, Project Worker, Challenging Heights
> Rafiq Khan, Head Of Child Protection, UNICEF, Accra
> Victoria Wunake, Recovery Officer, Challenging Heights

Thailand

> Aarti Kapoor, Chief Consultant, Embode, Bangkok
> Boom Mosby, Founder and Director of HUGS Project and CAC team, Chiang Mai
> Doodee Sirisopa Teansamruey, Social Worker, Kredtrakarn Shelter, Centre for VoTs, Kret Island
> Dorna Sukkree, Lawyer and Director of MAST Thailand, Bangkok
> Police General Tamasak Wicharaya, Deputy Secretary General to the Prime Minister for Political Affairs
> Jib Tatsana, Operation Underground Railroad (OUR), Pattaya
> Jurgen Thomas, Director, Anti Trafficking Alliance, Bangkok
> Khru Ja and staff of Kru Ja Shelter, Anti Human Trafficking and Child Abuse Centre, Pattaya
> Maia Mounsher, Country Director, Urban Light, Chiang Mai
> Nathalie Hanley, Migrant Programme Director, IOM
> Officers of TICAC and TATIP, Royal Thai Police
> P’Loy Nunanarree Luangmoi, Director, Centre for Girls, Chiang Khong
> Khum Pia, Founder. Hand To Hand Foundation, Pattaya
> Kwanruen Boonpranee, Nattakarn Noree, Suwat Leehame of Agenda 21, Pattaya
> Radchada Chomjinda, Director, Kru Na and staff, Human Help Network Foundation, Chonburi
References


Ghana Business News: About Two Million Ghanaian Children Affected By Child Labour. 2017


https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/ghana


Iversen V. Children’s Work In Fisheries – A Cause For Alarm? Food and Agriculture Organisation. 2006.

https://thebftonline.com/2018/headlines/6-8m-ghanaians-live-on-less-than-us1-a-day-gss-report/


xxv My Joy Online: Prosecute Perpetrators of Child Trafficking – Samira Bawumia. 2018


xxvii Ministry of Fisheries and Aqua-Culture Development: Strategy On Anti-Child Labour and Trafficking In Fisheries: Towards The Eradication of Child Labour and Trafficking In Ghanaian Fishing Communities. 2014.

xxviii ECPAT: Sex Trafficking of Children In Thailand. 2014


xxx Reuters News: Demand For Child Webcam Sex In Mekong Outstripping Supply, UN Says. 2017
https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-asia-trafficking-sexcrimes-idUKKBN1AQ0PU

xxxi Trafficking in Persons From Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar To Thailand. 2017.
http://www.thaiwebsites.com/tourism.asp

Knoema: Thailand: Contribution Of Travel and Tourism To GDP As A Share of GDP. 2018

Presentation By General Tamasak Wicharaya, TATIP Office, Thai Police Headquarters. 20 August 2019


UN Actions Against Trafficking In Persons: Thailand National Trafficking Trends. 2012
http://un-act.org/thailand/


Reuters News: Look, Don't Touch: Thai Bars Raided For Trafficking and Child Entertainment. 2019

Feingold D: Think Again Human Trafficking. 2009


AFRUCA: Breaking The Cycle of Fear: Witchcraft, Juju and Safeguarding Victims of Human Trafficking. 2010

UNODC: Global Report On Trafficking In Persons. 2018

UNODC: Global Report On Trafficking In Persons. 2018  

Leon L and Raws P: Boys Don’t Cry: Improving Identification and Disclosure Of Sexual Exploitation Among Boys and Young Men Trafficked To The UK. 2016  

The Guardian: Trafficked Vietnamese and The Lure of UK Nail Bars and Cannabis Farms. 2019  

The Anti Trafficking Monitoring Group: Before The Harm Is Done: Exploring The UK’s Response To The Prevention Of Trafficking. 2018  
https://www.ecpat.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=78f97e97-336c-4146-8f43-26b604581dad

The Guardian: Gangs Still Forcing Children into “County Lines” Drug Trafficking:  

University College London: Study Reveals Scale Of The Sexual Exploitation Of Boys. 2014  
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2014/aug/study-reveals-scale-sexual-exploitation-boys


Nwogu V: Anti-Trafficking Interventions In Nigeria and The Principal-Agent Aid Model. Anti-Trafficking Review. 2014.  
https://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atrjournal/article/view/64/62