



Zero Traffick Circle: Dialogue on the UK's Response to Human Trafficking

Hosted by Shiva Foundation

29 November, 2014

Shiva Foundation is hosting a series of Zero Traffick Circles with key stakeholders within the anti-human trafficking field. The Foundation hopes to gain valuable insight into the gaps that exist in the response to this problem, and to better understand what collective steps may be taken now to address these challenges.

The Circle is an action-oriented platform where its participants can cultivate a shared vision for meaningful change and work towards a systemic response to the global problem of human trafficking.

On 27 November 2014, Shiva Foundation hosted its inaugural dialogue on the UK's Response to Human Trafficking. The Foundation extends its gratitude to all those who attended, for their openness and willingness to engage in this endeavour.

Individuals in attendance were:

- Bharti Patel, ECPAT UK
- Lucinda Hardwick, ECPAT UK
- Nick Grono, The Freedom Fund
- Terry Tennens, International Justice Mission UK
- Peter Cafferkey, Geneva Global
- Divya Mukarjee, British Asian Trust
- Anne Kazimirski, New Philanthropy Capital
- Angela Kail, New Philanthropy Capital
- Gayathri Rajarathinam, iPartner India
- Tobias Masterton, Homestrings
- Lucy Beresford, BBC London Broadcaster
- Simran Chawla, Global Networking Consultants
- Sonal Sachdev Patel, GMSP
- Meenal Sachdev, Shiva Foundation

The dialogue was led by Nishma Jethwa, Shiva Foundation.

Summary of Participants' Observations

Objective: To understand the gaps and key challenges within the anti-human trafficking space.

The focus for this Circle was the UK's response to trafficking both within the state and globally. The following questions were used as prompts for discussion.

- *As a "developed country" how appropriate is our system in terms of the response to trafficking?*
- *How are our legal, political, social, medical systems faring?*
- *Where lies our responsibility as a global nation/ as individuals/ as communities?*
- *What meaningful actions are we actually taking?*

Note the discussion did not focus on governments alone but also on nonprofits, civil society, businesses, academics, lawyers, law enforcement, public health officials etc. A short summary of the the key observations follows.

1. Shifting Current Public Discourse

One of the key challenges participants face is trying to shift the current discourse from focussing on prosecution and protection to prevention. The key push and pull factors on the demand side, including socio-economic and political power imbalances, were discussed as vital considerations that were often not factored in at all or put aside due to the complexities involved. It was also suggested that although some prevention work is being done, it is not of a good enough quality to make the desired long term impact.

2. Education

Related to the topic of shifting public discourse on the issue, it was recognised that limited resources are being put into educating potential victims. In particular, the resiliency model, which focuses on identifying and building up protective factors for young people at risk, was discussed. Participants thought that education and resilience-building is seen as a “soft issue” and thus a hard sell to funders and the education system.

3. Awareness

It was suggested that the issue was so complex that it is difficult for an average citizen to navigate the space in such a way that made sense or empowered them to act. It was felt that communications around the issue lacks a clearly defined message. Moreover, it was thought that oftentimes the educators themselves are not adequately informed to be able increase visibility of the issue.

4. Data and Evidence

It was thought that there is a massive lack of “big data” that accurately and meaningfully quantified the true extent of the issue or the actual impact of anti-human trafficking projects across the world. Similarly, it was thought that there is a lack of understanding (due to a lack of data) around who was doing what work, where they were doing it and how it linked together. This lack of evidence and research was seen to be hindering the scaling up of projects in an effective way. On the other hand, participants also considered the suggestion that some of the work simply will not be quantifiable. An example given was that of “changing attitudes”.

5. Legal Structure

Participants shared their experiences regarding the lack of legal protections currently present in the UK for trafficked survivors who are non-UK citizens. The lack of guidance or regulations around training of public officials on this issue was also considered to be problematic.

6. Transnational Responsibility

There was a focus on the transnational nature of the crime and the need for a transnational set of organisations (or governments) to take responsibility for it. With respect to governments, it was thought that whilst engagement had been good in the UK, in particular with respect to the Modern Slavery Bill, there is still a lack of holistic thinking in terms of the interaction between policy. For example, participants posed the question, *how does immigration policy effect and relate to the government's strategy to fight human trafficking in the UK?* They felt that, outside of the UK, social protection systems are much weaker and need to be strengthened across the board to make a real impact.

7. Business Case

Considering the issue from a business perspective, it was thought that while anti-human trafficking efforts worked within “vertical” power structures (government → local councils → NGOs → survivors/victims), traffickers worked horizontally whereby if one set of traffickers were arrested, another set would pop up somewhere else.

It was suggested that businesses need to be engaged in this fight, since they are the ones who hold the power and money that potentially ends up funding trafficking endeavours. The question posed was, *how can we make human trafficking a high risk and low profit business?*

8. Challenge of Success

Finally, participants identified an unusual problem encountered when a project has, in fact, been successful in a given region. In the experience of some, organisations that find success in a project can be overwhelmed by the level of response or requests to scale up they receive. Such requests may not necessarily be accompanied by funding which can be problematic for smaller organisations which end up shouldering a large amount of the work, often with limited support from the public systems.

Next Steps

These responses will be reflected in the development of the Zero Traffick Circle dialogues which will be hosted by Shiva Foundation in 2015.

You are encouraged to continue sharing knowledge, information, and recommendations on the UK's Response to Human Trafficking through the Zero Traffick Circle Google Group at zero-traffick@googlegroups.com.

For more information regarding the Zero Traffick Circle or to join, please contact Nishma Jethwa, Programme Manager at Shiva Foundation, at nishma@shivafoundation.org.uk.