

# Trafficking in Persons

ANNUAL REPORT | 2016



*Trafficking in Persons (TIP), or modern day slavery, continues to be an evil affecting the lives of more than 21 million individuals each year.<sup>1</sup> More than a quarter of these are children.<sup>2</sup> Traffickers prey on people who are vulnerable: vulnerable from poverty, war, disease, or natural disaster, and living in places where governments are weak or corrupt or both. World Hope International recognizes that in order to combat trafficking, it's necessary to work at all levels in society, from door to door awareness raising in villages to advocacy at the highest levels of government. Through the generous support of donors and grants from the U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, WHI was able to make a difference in Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2016 and explore new partnerships in the Philippines.*

## Liberia

WHI established and supported the launch of Liberia's first governmental anti-trafficking hotline alongside the National Trafficking in Persons Task Force of Liberia. On July 22nd, 2016, the hotline became operational, officially launched by Liberia's Deputy Minister of Labor for Planning and Manpower Development. The hotline provides free, confidential help to callers who report suspected trafficking cases or ask questions about human trafficking. WHI trained Ministry of Labour staff to serve as operators, and continues to coach and mentor the operators to ensure that the hotline is trustworthy and responsive. WHI also negotiated with the four major mobile network operators to make the hotline accessible from all mobile phones using the same 4 digit number, and established a system for tracking and following up on calls.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup>Link: [http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2016\\_Global\\_Report\\_on\\_Trafficking\\_in\\_Persons.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2016_Global_Report_on_Trafficking_in_Persons.pdf)



**Trafficking hotline in Liberia**

In 2016, the hotline received 802 phone calls and as a result, 48 trafficked children were rescued. WHI staff accompany police on rescues and transport victims to the Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness (THINK) shelter, where they receive comprehensive medical care, mental health care, and education in addition to a safe, caring place to live. WHI social workers and counselors manage each case, conduct family tracing for each survivor, and assess whether families and communities are safe for reintegration. Quite often, parents sent their children to live with friends or relatives in the capital, expecting that they would be sent to school and cared for. The children end up being forced into domestic labor or street selling, refused education, and abused. In 2016, WHI successfully reunited 45 children with their families and provided assistance for 24 survivors to re-enter school.

UNODC. (2016, December). Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Author). Retrieved from [http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2016\\_Global\\_Report\\_on\\_Trafficking\\_in\\_Persons.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2016_Global_Report_on_Trafficking_in_Persons.pdf)

In addition to establishing a hotline and providing direct services to survivors, WHI is working hard to raise awareness of human trafficking in Liberia. Through person to person outreach in villages and radio call in shows, WHI trafficking awareness campaigns reached 4,759 people in 43 communities in five counties. Recognizing that there is a need for awareness and capacity building in the government and media as well, WHI trained 19 members of the hotline task force, 31 media personnel, and 45 police, immigration, and other law enforcement officials.

## Looking Ahead to 2017

The State Department grant will come to an end mid-year and the hotline will be fully operated by the Government of Liberia. WHI is seeking funds to continue to do awareness raising events in the rural areas to prevent more children from being trafficked to the capital. The need is great and there's much more work to be done.



## A Liberian Story

*Sackie\* is a 10-year boy from Gbarnga in central Liberia. Three years ago, his father's sister brought him to Monrovia to live with a business woman.*

*"My aunt said the business woman would give me better life and good education. When the woman and I arrived in Monrovia, I met other children in the house and was happy that I would have friends to play and go to school with. I was wrong. There was no going to school. I was made to join the other children in selling cooked meat, fried chicken, and fried fish in the streets. This is what they had been doing. The lady did not allow her own children to work or sell. I was demanded to report Liberian \$2,500.00 (\$28 USD at the time) on a daily basis. After selling I fetched water to be used to prepare the next day's business. There was no resting time for me and the other children. I worked until bedtime at 11:00 PM or 12:00 AM. I ate little food, and on many occasions I sold on an empty stomach. While selling one day, I felt asleep and someone stole Liberian \$400 (\$4.44 USD) from me. When I returned home and told the lady, she got angry, tied me with a rope and beat me to confess where I put or hid the money. She locked me up in a room for three days without food and water."*

*Sackie's rescue was made possible by one of the lady's own sons who reported the incident to some neighbors. The neighbors arrested the lady and carried her along with Sackie to the nearby police station where she admitted beating, tying the boy, and not giving him food for three days. Ultimately, the police charged the lady for her criminal act and placed her behind bars to be later sent to court.*

*"Thanks to WHI," said Sackie. "They sent me to a safe home where I received counseling, medical service, and took part in educational activities. I was well care for until my reunification with my parents in Gbarnga. WHI provided educational assistance for me, and today I am in school and happy again."*

*\*Name changed to protect privacy.*

# Sierra Leone

## Recovery Center

WHI's Sierra Leone Recovery Center, set up in 2012, provides comprehensive and safe residential care for survivors of human trafficking. The center focuses on holistic support for trafficked survivors, while maintaining a sustainable approach to addressing survivors' ongoing health and well-being needs. In 2016, the center provided residential care for 52 survivors, while providing psychosocial, physical, and social support to 72 survivors. One adult female survivor safely delivered a baby girl and continued to receive services at the shelter with her daughter. All survivors were treated affectionately, provided with regular meals, medical care, education, mental health care, and access to the justice system. WHI prepared nine female survivors of cross border trafficking and one male survivor to testify in court. And, critical to the healing process, the center took survivors on field trips to local museums, sites of interest, and the beach. In 2016, WHI successfully reunited 50 survivors with their family members and provided income generation support to 45 survivors and their family members.



## The WHI Model

*Supporting the emotional healing process of a trafficked survivor is vital for their optimal recovery. In order to cultivate such healing, individuals receive therapeutic care with a trained WHI counselor. The end goal is for clients to stabilize, gain coping skills, process the harm they have experienced, reclaim self-direction in their lives, and eventually be reintegrated into community life with family and friends. Following the initial recovery period, an assessment determines whether each survivor is transferred to ongoing care through partner organizations or is reintegrated to their home with monitoring to ensure they remain healthy, in school or with jobs, and away from traffickers. Through this process, WHI assesses a survivor's family and community to gauge the viability of a successful reintegration. Furthermore, WHI supports income generating activities for clients or their families through small grants, training, formal education, or vocational education. Once reunification happens, WHI continues to provide continued support. For instance, WHI follows-up on every client after reintegration to check on the progress of survivors in adjusting to a functioning community life.*



The success of the Recovery Centre in 2016 was not without its fair share of challenges. Due to limited governmental resources, there is limited prosecution of perpetrators of trafficking in Sierra Leone. It's an ongoing problem that survivors can't get justice. Another challenge has been the inability to find foster parents for trafficked survivors. Unfortunately, the Sierra Leonean government does not provide support for foster parents, which has resulted in a scarcity of



### Employee Spotlight

*Rhoda Gbla, the Sierra Leone Recovery Center Manager, won a scholarship by the U.S. Department of State to meet with other anti-trafficking female leaders from eighteen countries around the world and to share experiences on the trafficking situation in their respective countries and the strategies they use to serve victims. She and the other participants visited various shelters in the U.S. in several states, met with government and local officials, and learned about approaches to combating trafficking in the U.S.*

available foster parents for trafficked survivors. This can trap survivors in long term institutional care rather than a healthy family environment when their own families can't safely care for them. As in Liberia, WHI worked with the government of Sierra Leone to strengthen its capacity to fight trafficking, educating officials on how to identify and refer victims of trafficking.

### Looking Ahead to 2017

In 2017, WHI will continue to promote awareness of human trafficking and provide services to victims. A recent grant awarded from Vital Voices Partnership in the United States will be used to finish a documentary on Child Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation, and WHI will host film screenings in 10 different communities in Sierra Leone. Further awareness-raising events will aim to strengthen community awareness on human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, illicit removal of body organs and the sale of children. Through community awareness events, WHI hopes to provide citizens with the intellectual capacity to recognize forms of human trafficking and exploitation so they can be provided with the appropriate social services. WHI has received additional funding from the State Department to start working with the Government of Sierra Leone to prepare for a transition of the Recovery Center to the government for operation in mid-2018.

## Philippines

In November, WHI was joined by representatives of the Set Free Movement, International Justice Mission, and the Salvation Army on a trip to Manila, Philippines to explore partnership opportunities for fighting human trafficking. The human trafficking situation in the Philippines has taken an even darker turn in recent years. Online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) is growing exponentially, making the Philippines the number one provider of online child pornography in the world. The streaming of live shows often happens in the home, facilitated by parents or other relatives, and is exploiting younger and younger children. About half the victims are aged 10 and under. Families don't recognize the long lasting traumatic effects of this money-making opportunity.



While in the Philippines, the team met with shelters, foster care organizations, medical professionals, churches, and the government to learn more about OSEC and to begin thinking and praying about where we could make a difference.



The team also convened an inter-denominational meeting called the “Freedom Forum” which engaged over a hundred Christians from multiple denominations in discussions and prayer about human trafficking. We found that there is a real need for education about the traumatic effects of OSEC, that there are virtually no mental health services available for survivors, and that there is a dire need for shelters for boys and younger children.

As a result of the trip, WHI and partners are planning several approaches and seeking funds to assist our Filipino brothers and sisters with the fight against OSEC. First, in 2017, we’ll be developing a special curriculum to teach churches and caregivers about OSEC, and training local pastors, lay people, and seminary students as trainers. Second, to address the shortage of mental health services, we’ll be raising scholarship funds for young people willing to get social work degrees and work with abused and trafficked children, and will be identifying and training individuals who aren’t social workers but have the right education to work with survivors of trafficking. And third, we would eventually like to financially support and train existing shelters to expand to accept boys and younger children.



World Hope International is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

