

Executive Summary

Free the Slaves is an international nongovernmental organization addressing modern slavery through a community-based approach grounded in its Community Liberation Model. FTS collaborates with civil society organizations around the world to promote activities that raise awareness and mobilize communities, protect survivors, enforce the rule of law, and provide essential services that create resilience to modern slavery.

As a way of understanding the relevance of the community-based approach in the Southeast Asia region within the existing anti-human trafficking response, FTS launched a small-scale quantitative survey consisting of a semi-structured questionnaire generating evidence on organizations':

1. organizational and geographical profiles,
2. conceptualizations of modern slavery,
3. capacities to address modern slavery, and
4. interest in comprehensive approaches through prevention, the protection of victims, the prosecution of offenders, and partnerships.

The survey was piloted with 5 organizations and saw the participation of 64 representatives of civil society organizations involved in the anti-human trafficking response.

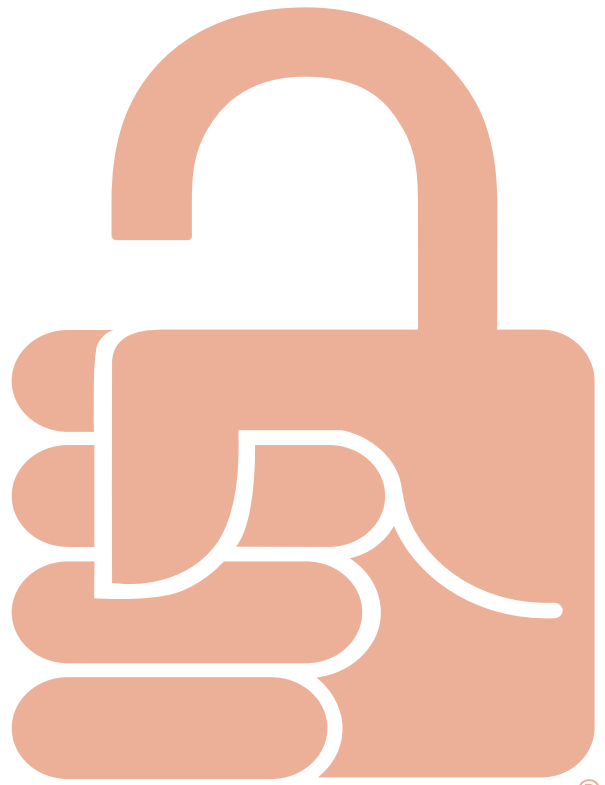
Key findings include:

- Most of the organizations address modern slavery through capacity building, advocacy, and service provision;
- Organizational priorities align with the perceived degree of prevalence of various forms of modern slavery, the exception being labor trafficking, which is regarded as the most prevalent form of human trafficking yet is second to sex trafficking in organizations' scope of work;
- The majority of the organizations cater to children (90.2%) and women (82.0%), approximately half cater to migrant workers (49.2%) and ethnic or racial minorities (42.6%), and a limited number assist the elderly (27.9%), LGBTQI+ persons (21.3%), refugees (21.3%), and religious minorities (18.0%);
- 67.2% of respondents mentioned their organization had been trained on forms of modern slavery. Among the 32.8% that had never been trained, 55% had implemented projects or activities to counteract labor trafficking, sex trafficking, and forced labor;
- Most of the respondents are familiar with international and regional instruments such as the UDHR, the Convention, which includes the Palermo Protocol, Forced Labor Convention No. 29, CEDAW, and the ASEAN Convention;
- 69.4% of respondents mentioned never having heard of Alliance 8.7;
- 71% of respondents felt they were familiar with anti-human trafficking net-

- works in their region;
- There is a consensus that exploitation and compulsion are two critical elements of modern slavery. However, only a few respondents alluded to the involuntary nature of modern slavery;
- Organizations aspire to address human trafficking through the expansion of victim-centered (70.5%) and community-centered (68.9%) approaches. Fewer organizations plan to adopt trauma-centered (36.1%), law enforcement-centered (29.5%), government-centered (29.5%), and business-centered (21.3%) approaches; and
- There is wider interest in attending a regional forum (98.4%) rather than a capacity building training (87.1%).

Based on the findings, the study highlights 10 recommendations for organizations in the Southeast Asia region to strengthen the response against modern slavery:

1. Promote multi-faceted anti-modern slavery programs that foster justice system transformation, coordination and collaboration through coalitions and networks, and advocacy at the national level;
2. Inquire into the reasons why organizations are prioritizing certain approaches (victim-centered and community-centered) as opposed to others (trauma-centered, law enforcement-centered, government-centered, and business-centered);
3. Increase resources and programs devoted to addressing human trafficking among vulnerable populations, in particular, refugees, LGBTQI+ persons, religious minorities, and the elderly;
4. Identify strategies to bridge gaps in organizations' scope of work and address the factors contributing to these for a sustainable response;
5. Undertake nuanced research on the prevalence of diverse modalities of modern slavery and the factors contributing to organizations' responses to these;
6. Ensure greater access to training and capacity building among organizations and individuals;
7. Tailor training and capacity building initiatives to discuss anti-modern slavery legislation and other instruments in-depth to facilitate greater access to justice;
8. Continue discussions at the regional level on modern slavery, its relevant terminologies, indicators, and components, especially surrounding compulsion and consent;
9. Establish greater cohesion between the regional and global movements through awareness of and involvement in global partnerships; and
10. Strengthen the anti-modern slavery movement through regional forums as well as other initiatives.



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