SURVIVORS AND ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TOGETHER AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING: INSIGHTS FROM EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

FREE THE SLAVES

HAART
Awareness Against Human Trafficking

Awareness Against Human Trafficking (HAART) is a Kenyan non-governmental organization dedicated to fighting trafficking in persons. HAART was established on the backdrop of the growing crisis of trafficking in persons that has seen Kenya become the central hub for trafficking in East Africa. Founded in 2010, HAART works exclusively to eradicate trafficking in persons and has acquired extensive knowledge about the multidimensional nature of cross-border and internal trafficking in persons in East Africa. Since then, HAART has identified and assisted more than 1,000 victims of trafficking, held hundreds of grassroots workshops reaching more than 100,000 people and continues to fight human trafficking through a multidisciplinary approach.

Free the Slaves (FTS) was founded in 2000 and has since committed itself to the mission of ending modern slavery. Through its work, FTS has assisted individuals in situations of slavery to regain their freedom, has helped officials bring slaveholders to justice, and has supported survivors to rebuild their lives. To advance its mission further, FTS has developed a multi-dimensional strategy that rests on four main pillars: policy and advocacy, to advocate for the reform of laws and regulations; engagement of local communities, to provide training and resources to vulnerable communities; movement building, to encourage knowledge-sharing and collective action; and continuous learning, to produce research that enhances understanding and guides responses.

Research and authoring team

Dr. Marta Furlan, Dr. Dorothee Hasskamp, Wanja Kimani, Dr. Radoslaw Malinowski, Dr. Fatuma Mohamed, Jackline Mwende, Brenda Odhiambo, Shivan Pavin Alungnat, Lianet Rosado.

Acknowledgments

We extend our gratitude to the survivor advocates and survivor leaders who took part in this research project, generously sharing their time and insights. We also thank the anti-trafficking organizations that answered the proposed survey questionnaire, sharing their perspectives on survivor engagement: Kituo Cha Sheria, Religious Against Human Trafficking (RAHT), Trace Kenya, Candle of Hope, Rahab Uganda, Platform for Labour Action, Wote Sawa Tanzania, People Supporting Girls at Risk (PSGAR) Malawi, Legal Aid Forum (LAF) Rwanda, Survivors Network Cameroon, Coalition of Anti-Slavery Civil Society Organizations (COSCAE) Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), New Life Ministry Sudan and Lift up the Vulnerable (LUV). Finally, we express our gratitude to the researchers from the University of Leeds who engaged in training survivors for this research.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments 3

Executive Summary 6

Glossary 8

Part I. Introduction 12

1.1. Human Trafficking: Root Causes, Forms, Numbers 12

1.2. Engagement with Survivors: The Need for More Inclusive Approaches 13

1.3. Research Objectives 17

Part II. Methodology 18

2.1. Research design 18

2.2. The Interviewees 20

2.2.1. Number of interviews 20

2.2.2. Gender 20

2.2.3. Age 20

2.2.4. Period of Engagement 21

2.2.5. Formal Education 21

2.2.6. Contracts 21

2.2.7. Selection Bias 21

Part III. Survivor Engagement and Anti-Trafficking Organizations: The Perspective of Survivors of Human Trafficking 24

3.1. Distinctive relevance role of lived experience 25

3.2. Prior activism 29

3.3. Sharing lived experience 30

3.4. Finances and employment 32

3.5. Learning, qualification, personal growth 37

3.6. Survivor networks 42
3.7. Mental health support 44
3.8. Security and safety 47
3.9. Teaming up with an organization 49
3.10. Recommendations from survivor advocates and leaders to other survivors 55
Part IV. Survivor Engagement and Anti-Trafficking Organizations: The Perspective of Anti-Human Trafficking Organizations 56
4.1. Service provision as a form of engagement 56
4.2. Alternative forms of engagement 57
4.3. Engagement selection process 60
4.4. Compensation for survivors' work 61
4.5. Engagement Processes and Policies 43
4.6. Human Resources 64
4.7. Limitations of organizations' engagement with survivors 65
4.8. Towards best practices for survivor engagement 66
4.9. Paving the way for a standardized approach 67
Part V. Recommendations 68
Summary: List of Recommendations 75
Recommendations from survivor advocates/leaders to other survivors 75
Recommendations to organizations 79
Recommendations to Researchers 54
Endnotes 80
References 82

Executive Summary

Survivors of human trafficking are the ones who best know the root causes, the consequences, and the implications of this abuse. They are also the ones who best know what the solutions may be, what affected individuals and communities need, what kind of support would be helpful, whether a program is ultimately beneficial, and how responses might be improved

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Focusing on East and Central Africa:

Which gaps and challenges limit inclusive survivor engagement?

How are organizations currently engaging survivors?

How can organizations in East and Central Africa improve their inclusion of survivors?

KEY FINDINGS

Survivors

Most survivors were already active before engaging with an organization

Lived experience is a main motivation for engagement

The first activity of survivors upon starting engagement was sharing their lived experience

Lack of finances is the biggest barrier to engagement

There is great interest in - and hope for - job opportunities

Survivor participants indicated a need for more funding for education opportunities

Survivor networks are highly valued

Many survivors feel the need for continuous psychological support

Security ranks among the concerns of survivor advocates

Survivor participants identified a great need for policies on part of anti-trafficking organizations

KEY FINDINGS

Organizations

Most organizations provide survivors with services

For many organizations engagement is synonymous with service provision

The majority of organizations hire survivors as volunteers, community mobilizers, and interns.

Most organizations see survivors as "role models" with unique influence

The majority of organizations reported compensating survivors through stipends. Only a few provide salaries.

All organizations provide survivors with opportunities to volunteer.

The majority of organizations lack procedures guiding survivor engagement.

Organizations are interested in engaging survivors in a wide range of other capacities.

Organizations would like to see survivors take diverse leadership

RECOMMENDATIONS

Refer to page 51

Glossary

Exploitation - The act of taking advantage of something or someone, in particular the act of taking unjust advantage of another for one's own benefit (e.g. sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs) (IOM Glossary on Migration, 2004).

Forced labor - All work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily. (ILO Forced Labor Convention 1930 (No.29)).

Human trafficking - Trafficking in persons is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004).

Inclusion - The proactive and continuous practice of sharing power with the aim of creating an environment in which everyone's identities, experiences, knowledge, and needs contribute to shaping the outcome and everyone is treated with respect and dignity. (Authors' definition).

Intersectionality - Intersectionality recognizes the complex ways in which social identities overlap (e.g., gender, race, class, religion, sexual identity and other) and can create compounding experiences of discrimination and concurrent forms of oppression. In more positive contexts, these multiple sources of the self can be enabling and enriching. (Definition based on UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 2022).

Lived experience - In the anti-trafficking movement, lived experience refers to the direct, first-hand experience of human trafficking. It implies a unique and profound knowledge of human trafficking that comes from the direct exposure to this severe violation of human rights. (Authors' definition).

Modern slavery - Status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. The slave trade includes all acts involved in the capture, acquisition or disposal of a person with intent to reduce him to slavery; all acts involved in the acquisition of a slave with a view to selling or exchanging him; all acts of disposal by sale or exchange of a slave acquired with a view to being sold or exchanged, and, in general, every act of trade or transport in slaves. (Slavery Convention, 1926).

Sexual exploitation - An actual or attempted abuse of someone's position of vulnerability (such as a person depending on you for survival, food rations, school, books, transport or other services), differential power or trust, to obtain sexual favors, including but not only, by offering money or other social, economic or political advantages. It includes trafficking and prostitution. (UNHCR).

Survivor - In this context, a survivor is someone who has survived being exploited into one or more forms of modern slavery. However, many people with such experiences do not define themselves as survivors, for complex and valid reasons. (Authors' definition).

Survivor advocate - A person who has survived human trafficking, is actively supporting the anti-trafficking cause, is channeling the voices of survivors, and is working to advance the interests of survivors. (Authors' definition). However, this term was not discussed with survivors prior to the interview process, suggesting that survivors might have understood it differently at the time of participating in the interviews.

Survivor leader - A person who has survived human trafficking, is making an empowered choice to engage in anti-trafficking or other related fields, and is acknowledged – and respected – as a source of knowledge. (Authors' definition). However, many of the interviewees understood this term differently, as indicating a position of a survivor who leads and influences other survivors.

Survivor-led organization - An organization that is founded by and/or run by one or more survivors of human trafficking.

Trafficker - Any person who commits or attempts to commit the crime of trafficking in persons or any person who participates as an accomplice, organizes, or directs other persons to commit the crime of trafficking in persons. (International Organization for Migration, 2019).

Victim of trafficking - A legal term for any natural person subject to trafficking in human beings, regardless of whether the perpetrator is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted. (International Organization for Migration, 2019).

Vulnerability - Susceptibility of an individual, or group, to being trafficked that is determined by environmental or contextual factors. These factors are generally agreed to include human rights violations such as poverty, inequality, discrimination and gender□based violence. More specific factors that are commonly cited as relevant to individual vulnerability to trafficking include gender, membership of a minority group, lack of legal status, lack of registration at birth, and unaccompanied movement. (UNODC, "Abuse of a position of vulnerability and other 'means' within the definition of trafficking in persons", Issue Paper, 2013).

Freeing yourself was one thing. Claiming ownership of that freed self was another.

Toni Morrison, Beloved

Part I. Introduction

1.1. Human Trafficking: Root Causes, Forms, Numbers

Human trafficking is an umbrella term that includes a wide range of practices in which one (or more) individual controls, abuses, and exploits another individual, or group of individuals, for material or immaterial benefit. It denotes all those situations in which a person is forced to provide labor or sexual services under the threat of violence or other serious harm, for little to no pay, and with no possibility of walking away.

Vulnerability to human trafficking is determined by various social, economic, political, and cultural factors such as, poverty, lack of employment, lack of access to education and healthcare, gender inequality, domestic violence, racial inequality, migration and displacement, conflicts, food and water insecurity, and harmful cultural norms. Importantly, these drivers of vulnerability are not mutually exclusive, but rather they can (and often do) coexist and reinforce each other. An example in this regard is observed in contexts of conflict, when armed confrontations often drive people into poverty and internal displacement/ international migration. In addition to these, crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the climate change emergency exacerbate and/or create further vulnerabilities that expose individuals to heightened risks of exploitation by human traffickers.

Human trafficking can take different forms, for example forced labor, forced marriage and child marriage, commercial sexual exploitation, debt bondage, domestic servitude, forced criminality, and the recruitment of child soldiers. What is important to emphasize is that these forms of human trafficking can coexist, as in the case of forced marriage, domestic servitude, and sexual exploitation.

Significantly, human trafficking affects nearly every country globally, which can be a source of human trafficking flows, a transit route, a destination, or a combination thereof. Human trafficking is a pervasive phenomenon that counts 50 million victims worldwide, with women and children representing the majority thereof.[1] However, considering the illegal nature of human trafficking, the number of people in situations of exploitation is probably larger than what is reflected in official statistics. Migrants and displaced people, as well as individuals belonging to minority groups (such as religious minorities and ethnic minorities) and to marginalized groups (such as low/"untouchables" castes and Indigenous communities) are also disproportionately affected by modern slavery.

1.2. Engagement with Survivors: The Need for More Inclusive Approaches

People who have been directly affected by a certain issue are the ones who best know its root causes, consequences, implications, and dynamics. They are also the ones who best know what the solutions to that issue may be, what affected individuals and communities need, what kind of support would be helpful, whether a program is ultimately beneficial, and how responses might be improved.[2] Thus, people who have been directly affected by human trafficking know better than anyone else how trafficking and exploitation happen and what devastating impact they have on individuals, families, and communities. At the same time, they know better than anyone else what affected individuals truly need, how to translate evidence into impactful programs, and what initiatives at the individual and community levels could contribute to eradicating this grave violation of human rights.[3] In other words, survivors of human trafficking have unique knowledge and insight into the reality of trafficking, as well as an unrivalled understanding of what survivors need and what risks they face once they (re-)gain freedom.[4]

In virtue of their unique knowledge through lived experience, survivors should be at the heart of approaches to combat human trafficking. In fact, research has documented successful outcomes of survivor engagement in areas such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, and child soldiering.[5] On the background of these success engagement stories, it is widely recognized that organizations that invest in the engagement of people with lived experience reap significant benefits in terms of programming, policy, and practice.[6] Conversely, when initiatives are developed and implemented under the leadership of people who have not been directly affected by the issue that an organization aims to address and solve, they are far less likely to succeed and far more likely to cause additional, unintended harm.[7]

However, in the anti-trafficking movement, engaging survivors is a practice that still suffers from a series of major limitations.[8] To better understand these limitations, it is useful to think of survivors' engagement as a spectrum ranging from limited engagement to inclusive engagement (Figure 1). In other words, survivors' engagement is best conceptualized as a spectrum of practices varying in inclusivity, rather than as an on-off activity. Within the anti-trafficking movement, engagement of survivors is still largely leading towards the end of the continuum where engagement efforts are less meaningful, less inclusive, and – ultimately – less effective. Indeed, studies show that survivors are often still treated as *helpless victims* in search of assistance, as *needy recipients* of services, as *lucky beneficiaries* of the anti-slavery movement's largesse, and as *trauma-bearing individuals* who are exclusively defined by their trauma. Understood as such, survivors are often expected to provide free labor as public speakers, fundraisers, ambassadors, and consultants. Conversely, they are excluded from the design and implementation of policies, they are excluded from conversations about the impact and effectiveness of relevant programs, and they are excluded from discussions on how anti-slavery initiatives could, and should, be improved.[9]

Therefore, even when driven by commendable intentions, the anti-trafficking movement is not immune against replicating the very stigmas, power dynamics, and biases that make people vulnerable. Under these circumstances, the risk of unintended harm taking the form of survivors' re-trafficking is not remote.

Figure 1. The Survivors Engagement Spectrum[11]

The tendency to limit survivors' engagement stems from several assumptions that have typically dominated the anti-trafficking movement. These include the assumption that people with lived experience can only be approached through the lenses of their trauma, that people with lived experience need to tell their stories in order to usefully participate in the anti-slavery movement, that people with lived experience do not have (and cannot learn) skills to engage in leadership activities, that there are enough people with lived experience working in the movement already, and that having people who work with impacted populations is as good and as meaningful as having people with lived experience.[12]

In recent years, however, voices (and especially voices of survivors themselves) have risen that criticize the dominant approach to survivor engagement and call for a substantial change throughout the movement.[13] For instance, during the 2022 edition of the Global Freedom from Slavery Forum, participants expressed the belief that organizations working in the modern slavery and human trafficking space need to engage survivors beyond rescue, rehabilitation, story-telling, and awareness-raising and that a more inclusive and comprehensive approach is needed. In fact, it is increasingly understood that anti-trafficking initiatives led by survivors have a series of unparalleled benefits: greater credibility with vulnerable individuals and communities, greater relevance, greater sustainability, and greater capacity to address the root causes of exploitation.[14]

Moreover, it is increasingly acknowledged that engaging survivors in an inclusive way can lead to a wide range of benefits for survivors themselves, such as developing new skills, improved confidence and self-esteem, social inclusion, financial stability, professional development, reduced vulnerability, and reduced risk of further exploitation.[15] As a movement committed to the empowerment of survivors, the anti-trafficking movement cannot ignore the benefits that survivors can derive from a more inclusive engagement.

Driven by the recognition of the limits and inadequacies of their traditional approaches, organizations and stakeholders within the anti-trafficking movement should situate survivors at the forefront of the effort to eradicate human trafficking and involve survivors in developing, implementing, and evaluating strategies as well as in making decisions.[16] As argued by one of the most prominent voices among survivors, anti-trafficking organizations should partner with survivors and ask survivors not just about their stories, but also about their policy recommendations, their ideas for improved intervention, as well as their hopes and concerns for the movement.[17] Ultimately, there is a need to recognize the capacity of survivors to be engaged in a multitude of roles (e.g. direct service professionals, executive officers, board members, trainers and community educators, policy advocates, contractors and consultants, volunteers) and assist survivors to engage in those roles.

There is a need to think of survivors not as traumatized clients but rather as empowered leaders who can, and should, participate at all levels of an organization. Doing so requires not only a change in approach but, most importantly, a shift in organizational culture.[18]

1.3. Research Objectives

Building on these considerations, this research project aims to provide organizations in the anti-trafficking space with recommendations on practices of inclusive survivor engagement that may be standardized through an organization's policy. To do so, this research explores the survivor engagement practices of key counter trafficking organizations, investigates the survivors' own assessment of their participation in the anti-trafficking movement, and proceeds to offer a series of actionable recommendations on how inclusive engagement of survivors can become more standardized (and ultimately more beneficial).

Specifically, the research questions that this research aims to address are:

1. Which gaps and challenges limit inclusive survivor engagement?
2. How are organizations currently engaging survivors?
3. How can organizations in East and Central Africa improve their inclusion of survivors?

Embracing the consideration that processes of research, discovery, and discussion need to be context-based,[19] this research project focuses specifically on Eastern and Central Africa - a region that is a source, route of transit, and destination for trafficked men, women, and children. As such, this research project differentiates itself from existing studies that have explored survivor engagement in a de-contextualized fashion. In fact, while slavery can (and often does) happen across borders, the unique needs and characteristics of each region require context-specific and locally informed recommendations.

Part II. Methodology

2.1. Research design

The research adopted a mixed method approach combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Specifically, the following methods of data collection were employed:

I - Review and analysis of secondary sources (e.g., guidelines, policies, academic papers, reports) detailing survivor engagement practices in the anti-trafficking movement;

II - Semi-structured interviews with 18 survivors from Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda and South Sudan. Participants with lived experience were purposely selected, targeting survivors who are active against human trafficking and who encompass a diverse range of backgrounds. While we did our best to engage with a representative group, we do acknowledge that the study saw a greater participation of women and Kenyan nationals with respect to men and individuals from other Central and East African countries.

III - Online survey questionnaire for anti-trafficking organizations. Purposive sampling was employed to thoughtfully select organizations based on their involvement in anti-modern slavery work and engagement of survivors. Here, a total of 20 representatives of organizations responded to the survey, but one survey was excluded due to its irrelevance. The great majority belong to organizations that have existed for more than 6 years. Only 27.8% of the organizations surveyed were survivor-led.

IV - A validation workshops with those survivor advocates who participated in the research to collectively review the findings, discuss the recommendations, channel the perspectives and insights of survivors into the final report, and minimize the risk that researchers would inadvertently bias or misinterpret the data. This one-day validation meeting convened most of the survivors that had previously participated in the research. The discussions during the validation workshop were

guided and facilitated by the three survivor leaders who sat in the research team. To initiate the workshop session, the research team shared findings from the interviews and presented a list of recommendations that were derived from those findings. In a lively and trustful atmosphere, the presentation sparked interesting discussions that revealed strong agreement on certain issues while bringing to light diverging opinions on other topics.

From a methodological perspective, a distinctive contribution of this research was the active, multifaceted, and continuous participation of people with lived experience. On the one hand, survivors contributed as researchers. They underwent training in qualitative research skills and participated in conducting the interviews, analyzing the data, identifying key findings, and developing recommendations. On the other hand, survivors contributed as respondents, sharing their personal experiences, insights, and perceptions regarding survivor engagement practices. An important consideration to add in this regard, is that the role of survivors as active participants and contributors to the research has evolved and deepened over time: while their engagement started off as research assistants, they gradually took on more roles and responsibilities, truly affirming themselves as researchers and co-authors.

By means of encouraging survivors' active participation, empowerment, and leadership throughout all phases of the research, this project stands out as unique in its approach. It is our hope that future research projects will derive inspiration from this and replicate our participatory research approach.

Throughout its duration, the research conformed to the highest ethical standards of research. Participants were afforded comprehensive information and provided voluntary informed consent forms before the interviews, assuring them of their agency and autonomy. Professional psychological support was offered during and after the interviews. Audio recordings were handled with utmost sensitivity, solely deployed for transcription purposes, and promptly deleted once transcripts were obtained. Participants' privacy and confidentiality were scrupulously maintained, respecting their perspectives and experiences. The training of survivors in research methods and interview skills was conducted with utmost care, ensuring their well-being and consent.

2.2 The Interviewees

2.2.1. Number of interviews

We conducted 18 interviews with survivor advocates who at the time of the interviews were engaging with at least one organization. Among those, 2 interviews were ultimately not included in the evaluation as it became apparent that they did not meet the criteria for this research.[20]

As allowed by our research protocol, some interviewees chose not to answer a particular question. In other cases, the interviewee simply did not know how to answer a certain question, or an answer did not allow for interpretation and therefore remained uncategorized.

2.2.2. Gender

All but two interviewees identified as female. The strong participation of women in this study is partially explained by the fact that, globally, women are more easily identified as victims (UNODC 2022 statistics of human trafficking documents 60% women and girls).[21] Consequently, women tend to cooperate more with anti-trafficking organizations in service provision and beyond. Moreover, cultural perceptions in East and Central Africa, especially stigmatization of male survivors, whose masculinity is often questioned by the environment, contribute to a general under-representation of males among the identified survivors of human trafficking, which is inevitably reflected in the study. Another possible explanation is that women might be more inclined to commit to social or volunteer community work, especially if it is unpaid. Finally, it could also be that the organizations had a selection bias when connecting the researchers with survivors for the interviews.

2.2.3. Age

All interviewees were adults at the time of interview, according to the selection criteria defined by the researchers. No other age criteria were applied.

2.2.4. Period of Engagement

There is no generalizable information about the time elapsed between (self-) rescue from the situation of trafficking and the start of the commitment against human trafficking. However, most interviewees mentioned that a certain time needed to pass before any activity or engagement was possible - for their wounds to heal, to open up to others, and overcome depression. However, those periods differ individually and were not a main focus question of research. Equally, the period of time that interviewees engaged with the organization varies greatly, from engagements that have been ongoing for many years to more recent ones.

2.2.5. Formal Education

The formal education of interviewees varied greatly. Some survivors prior to the study recently acquired literacy, some went through primary education (finished or unfinished), three interviewees hold university degrees. Tellingly, the few who have regular paid employment in the movement are those with secondary education or above.

2.2.6. Contracts

Five interviewees hold contracts - three of them as regular employees, two as volunteers. Most interviewees without contract receive minor compensation/token for activities, or travel allowances. Four survivor advocates reported that they do not receive any travel allowances. They made clear that this is a major problem.

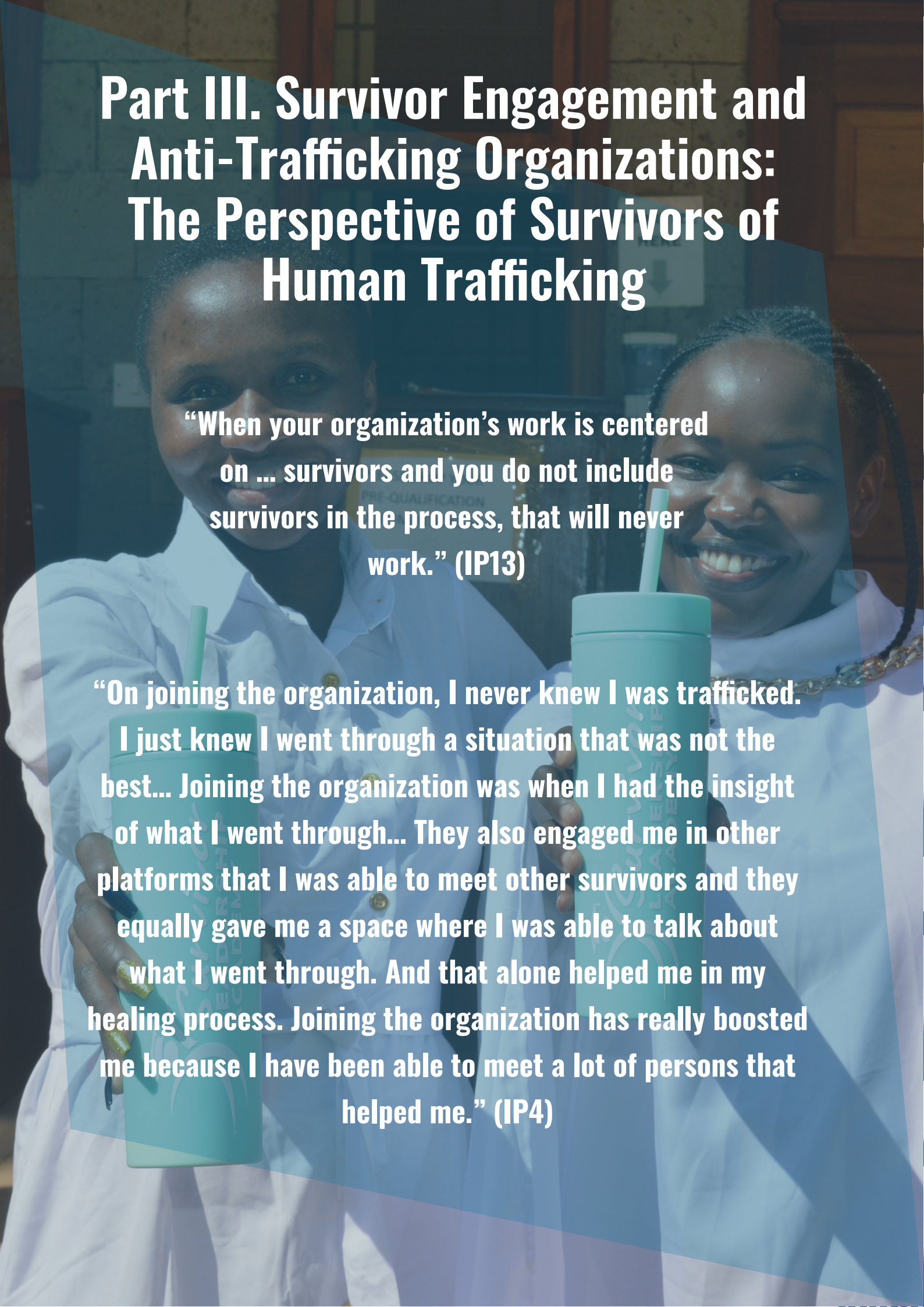
2.2.7. Selection Bias

Before looking at relevant topics and findings of the interviews, it is important to reflect on the fact that interviews might hide a selection bias. All the interviewees whose input informs this research are survivors of human trafficking who managed to become and remain active as survivor advocates and join an organization. The extent of their engagement in the movement is such that it was the organizations with which survivors work that linked them with the researchers for the interviews.

This reveals the - perhaps uncomfortable - reality that, as organizations, we might have a tendency to invite to participate in our research activities those survivors whom we already work well and easily with. Conversely, those survivors who might have more difficulties engaging with the movement are more hardly reached by researchers.

Therefore, the findings emerged from this research should not be generalized. Respondents also mentioned that several survivors who were interested to be active dropped out on the way, and we still need more research on the reasons why that was the case. In a future study, it would be helpful to research the experiences of those survivors who were interested, or willing, to take action against human trafficking, but were kept away or withdrew. This might help to further identify existing barriers. In this research, we find good evidence on good practices that motivated and supported engaged survivors to join an organization and remain active over a period of time.

Part III. Survivor Engagement and Anti-Trafficking Organizations: The Perspective of Survivors of Human Trafficking



"When your organization's work is centered on ... survivors and you do not include survivors in the process, that will never work." (IP13)

"On joining the organization, I never knew I was trafficked. I just knew I went through a situation that was not the best... Joining the organization was when I had the insight of what I went through... They also engaged me in other platforms that I was able to meet other survivors and they equally gave me a space where I was able to talk about what I went through. And that alone helped me in my healing process. Joining the organization has really boosted me because I have been able to meet a lot of persons that helped me." (IP4)

3.1. Role of lived experience in survivors' engagement

There is a shared perception among all survivor advocates who were interviewed in this research that their lived experience of trafficking has significant consequences for their counter-trafficking work. Interviewees expressed the conviction that, being survivors, their actions and testimonies add value, impact, and credibility to the fight against human trafficking. This reportedly emerged in their interactions with other victims, survivors, persons at risk, organizations, and the general public. Their personal experiences help to build trust with other survivors, add credibility to awareness raising, and influence and shape organizational interventions and programs:

"I have the point of view that if you have been through something, you'll be able to understand somebody who is going through what you went through... So your approach to intervene is different from somebody who has not been a victim and is just intervening. So working as a team of survivors, we have... the same focus because we have been in that same situation. .... It's a different kind of passion, it gives a kind of joy, because we are all working towards the same goal." (VM)

For the survivor advocates and leaders who participated in this research, lived experience is at the center of their motivation. It is what drives every interviewee to take action. Both during the interviews and the validation workshop, survivor advocates named their individual experience of trafficking as their main motivation to take action against trafficking. "I don't want anyone else to go through what I went through" is a sentence that in those same, or similar, words was found in almost every interview.

Other driving factors behind the commitment are the feeling of having been blessed for escaping trafficking and receiving assistance:

"I am the lucky one from the experience that I have undergone in the Middle East [the region where the person was trafficked]. I am very happy to help somebody who experienced the same thing that I experienced, even more than that. They call me, they need help, I help them." (IP8)

When asked about those skills that they consider particularly useful for their engagement, some survivor advocates referred to their lived experience of trafficking or their ability to speak about it:

"The experience I have and the non-self-contentedness." (IP5)

"The first is being the survivor… I've been through the experience, so I talk from my heart, I'm not guessing. And the other one is the passion." (IP1)

"I can freely speak about my experience." (IP18)

"I was a victim. So it's very easy for someone in Saudi Arabia [where the person was trafficked] to speak to me. And they would trust you more to pass the information than them communicating directly, until I tell them, it's okay, we are a team. You can also speak freely, you can talk to the person. Then I'll give the number [of the organization] to them." (IP2)

Although it can be very difficult to share these experiences, for many survivor advocates that is the starting point of their engagement. Some survivor advocates do not only see it as an important tool for creating awareness, but also for accompanying other survivors in dealing with their experiences:

"My story has … helped me to work with other survivors because most often, survivors want to see what you've been through before they can say theirs. Most of the survivors I've worked with, they are not able to talk. But when I shared with them my experience, they're able to speak about what they've been through." (IP4)

Also, the credibility of lived experience carries special weight in awareness raising:

"You cannot tell a story better than someone who lived that story. It's good to be a human trafficking fighter, but you will get more involved when you have been through the same situation…. You have the keys, you know what to do, what to say to people to help them not to live the same situation you lived. And you will convince them easily because they know: she cannot lie to us because she knows how it was. […] As a survivor leader, …. I already have an ability to talk about my story freely. There are people who have been passing through this and can't talk about that because it's still affecting them. And talking about my story, I believe I can help them (other survivors) and encourage them to talk about their story." (IP13)

Based on the observations by several survivor advocates that opening up about their own experiences of human trafficking makes it easier for other survivors to speak out about theirs, this seems to open avenues for professional qualification in peer-counselling and mentorship.

Overall, interviews and discussions in the validation meeting confirmed that the inclusion of survivors in organizations will benefit the organization's efforts on different levels, making direct assistance more approachable for survivors, adding credibility and impact to awareness creation for the public, and rendering organizational and political interventions more effective.

"When your organization's work is centered on … survivors and you do not include survivors in the process, that will never work." (IP13)

3.2. Prior activism

As the research looked into the engagement of survivors with anti-trafficking organizations, it was relevant to investigate the starting point of such engagement. It emerged that in most cases, organizations did not initiate the activism of those survivors whom they engaged with. Almost all survivors in this study took action themselves, and only at a later point joined an organization. Noteworthily, almost all interviewees were engaged in social work or human rights activities prior to teaming up with their respective anti-trafficking organization. Some were active against human trafficking in their individual capacity, some were active in other social justice activities, others had been socially engaged even before their trafficking experience. Two of the few interviewees who did not have prior engagement experience gave as a major motivation for their participation in an anti-trafficking organization the wish to "give back" to those organizations that had supported them with direct assistance.

Some of the most common activities in which survivors were already engaged included:

- Sharing the number of a helpline
- Raising awareness in private conversations and/or on social media
- Participating in investigative journalism, appearing prominently as a survivor on TV
- Creating an online platform for the empowerment of women in professional spheres
- Using one's artistic talent to create awareness
- Traveling throughout the country to help victims of trafficking on an individual basis
- Being in contact with victims abroad and organizing help for them
- Engaging with the chiefs in one's community to institutionalize advice for young people who want to travel
- Helping children who were at risk of trafficking
- Pursuing and reporting a trafficker to the police

The interviews seem to suggest that organizations can open space, support, and structure for social and human rights defenders in a mutually beneficial way. This includes not only looking for ways in which to include survivor advocates in the existing processes and activities of the organization, but being willing to support (with the know-how and resources of the organization) activities that survivors are already engaging in. Not only might this influence outreach, but it might also encourage a more innovative and inclusive organizational culture in the long term.

Most interviewees were already taking action in their own way, and there seem to be less ways to engage with persons who are not yet experienced social justice advocates. The motivation for engagement offered by two survivor advocates ("giving back to the organization who came through for me") indicates that it is a challenge to offer opportunities to non-activists without playing, even unwillingly, on a notion of obligation or gratefulness towards a trusted organization. With caution, organizations could invite more survivors into activism and engagement.

3.3. Sharing lived experience

Almost all interviewees reported that the first activity they took against human trafficking was individually sharing their personal lived experience as a warning to others. They did so in conversations with friends, acquaintances, and peers, in songs, on social media, or through engagement with different media. For most survivor advocates, this activity preceded their cooperation with any organization. Several interviewees mentioned that they found healing in opening up and using their own experience to help others. For some, sharing their experience is a defining aspect of what they do as survivor advocates.

Over time, some survivor advocates proceeded to include further activities – awareness raising among the broader public, economic empowerment for women or other vulnerable groups, active support for current victims of trafficking or bereaved families, and many more. No one expressed the wish not to share their experiences or to stop sharing them. Only one survivor advocate stated that, due to the threat of stigma, she does not share with anyone in her vicinity her trafficking experience, nor any details of her engagement with the organization as survivor advocate. However, it was not clear from the interview if she does share her experiences in her work as a means of generating awareness.

While most survivor advocates revealed that sharing their experiences is an important part of their engagement, some admit that it is hard for other survivors to speak about their stories. As part of this study, researchers initially conducted an interview with a person who is a survivor but was not active as a survivor advocate at the time of the interview. The interviewee reported that she did not engage actively against human trafficking because she did not want to share her experience.[22] Based on this assessment, and in combination with most other answers of survivor advocates, it appears that sharing one's lived experience is the most common way of becoming active as a survivor. Conversely, it seems that an alternative path to actively join the movement is missing for those survivors who would like to be active against trafficking but do not want to share their stories. While there is growing awareness within the movement that survivors should not be limited to sharing their experiences,[23] there is also a need for creating different entry options.

In the validation meeting, story-telling was thoroughly discussed, revealing that all participants are familiar with story-telling as part of their engagement with the anti-trafficking movement and further suggesting that it is hard to become a survivor advocate without sharing one's experience:

"For most [organizations] it is only about telling our stories and not about empowerment and capacity building." (VM)

"There is the problem of organizations collecting stories for 1000 Kenyan Shillings and giving no feedback." (VM)

"Many survivors do not know how to share their stories. Build their capacities and anticipate the risks." (VM)

"Educate survivors on how to share their stories, and also about the risks e.g. on what they say about the government. Make sure people are aware of the risks when they go out." (VM)

"Exposure [in the media] is really traumatizing". (VM)

"Be aware of the many identities a person has beyond being a survivor." (VM)

As the above quotations from the validation workshop indicate, sharing lived experiences is deeply linked to a variety of other issues that concern counter-trafficking organizations in their interactions with survivors. Related necessities go far beyond ethical storytelling training for survivors and staff. They also impact security, mental health, guidelines and policies, as will be reflected in the recommendations below.

3.4. Finances and employment

Lack of finances is the biggest barrier to engagement. As a consequence of the interview selection criteria whereby the focus was restricted to active survivor advocates, none of the interviewees in this research were prevented from engaging by a lack of finances. However, almost all interviewees mentioned financial worries as an important issue in their lives and as a barrier to (more and deeper) engagement. Some respondents also referred to other survivors who did not become, or remain, active due to a lack of financial means. It is therefore safe to conclude that many survivors are unable to act as survivor advocates due to financial constraints.

One survivor advocate who was economically empowered by an organization through skills-development as a tailor reported pursuing her counter trafficking activities independently from that organization. She emphasized that it was only due to her newly gained financial stability as a tailor that she could do any activities against trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Only two interviewees stated that their engagement with the organization and their engagement as survivor advocates had a positive impact on their financial situation. Both have a contract and receive salaries. But even among them, one stated that she had previously been at the edge of dropping out due to financial constraints. Artists and freelancers also said that they face a challenge on how to reconcile their profession with their work as survivor advocates and a position in existing organizations.

"I started with 2,500 and now it's 20,000. So income has definitely changed." (IP7)

However, for almost all survivor advocates in this research, finances are a significant barrier to their engagement.

"I'm exhausted, I have challenges to meet daily needs." (IP3)

"When your business is in trouble and you need to help someone, what would you do?" (IP6)

"The barrier is the economic status." (IP9)

Most survivor advocates said that their engagement neither improved nor worsened their financial situation. Whereas some said that they will be active with or without monetary compensation, several volunteers mentioned that there were times when they had to refrain from activities because they could not afford the travel costs.

"When I was called for an engagement, I couldn't make it because I did not have transportation to come." (IP17)

"The other 31 stopped coming since they wanted provision for transport and lunch. With me, I just used to go." (IP8)

"Like before, I would be having a meeting, but because of transport, I'd fail to show up for the meeting." (IP1)

All interviewees have found ways to harmonize the economic necessities with their engagement, but only those with a steady employment contract mentioned any financial advantage. Among those with a full contract, one mentioned that it did not even improve her situation compared to when she was successfully running her own business and it was still a hard decision to turn down other offers.

Several interviewees said that they hoped for regular employment or financial compensation when they started cooperating with the organization. One survivor advocate said she had hoped for financial support not for herself but for the victims she supports, and this expectation had been fulfilled.

At least one survivor advocate voiced her discomfort at the inequality between paid staff and unpaid volunteer work of (other) survivor advocates:

"Some are being paid while others are not, yet we are doing the same work." (IP9)

Another respondent started with hopes for a regular job, but found out that the organization was fully relying on unpaid volunteers. The realization that everyone in the organization was working as a volunteer made it easier for her to accept that her initial hope for payment was disappointed.

Finances are the omnipresent, most limiting factor mentioned in the interviews. They are the most significant barrier that prevents survivor advocates from engaging further, and exclude others from engaging at all. Travel allowances, or the lack thereof, are decisive for engagement or exclusion from engagement. This is a factual limit even for those who do not expect any financial compensation for their contributions. Offering travel allowances can only be the minimum step, but it is a decisive one.

As for financial hopes coming with the engagement, some survivor advocates would like to have a position in their current profession in the organization where they volunteer. Other survivor advocates aim at higher-level paid positions in the movement. These, however, require professional and formal education that they do not yet possess – e.g., as human rights lawyer, social workers, counselors, or project managers.

Although several interviewees were hoping for a job in the movement, hardly anyone ever applied for a position in a counter-trafficking organization. Those who receive a salary were approached directly by the organization and offered the position. There is no mention of special invitations going out to survivor advocates to apply for positions.

In the validation meeting, there was an extended discussion on the lack of employment opportunities for survivors in the movement.

"I do not have a degree or diploma. But deep down you know: you can do this." (VM)

"Organizations need to increase capacity building and inclusive employment opportunities. See at the inclusivity of your whole system. Not only give opportunities

for survivors to apply, but employ them and then build their capacities that are needed. Set up a budget for survivor engagement as you employ more survivors. Also make your inclusivity not only about one survivor. Don't tokenize." (VM)

"Include 'shadowing' in your project proposals. When setting up proposals, budget for those education and learning opportunities for survivors within your organization. A survivor could do an internship with someone in the project for several months and then support the project actively and receive remuneration for it." (VM)

"Create multiple ways of access to organizations and do not only limit engagement to 'we are looking for survivor leaders', but listen to a community of survivors." (VM)

Interviewees present at the validation workshop agreed to the suggestion ventured by one participant whereby "at least 30% of an organization should be made up of survivor leaders." This spontaneous number was not discussed or analyzed further. Overall, there was strong agreement on the need for more survivors within organizations. At the same time, however, there was a shared understanding that, regardless of the specific number of survivors within an organization, meaningful representation of diverse perspectives can only be ensured when accompanied by other mechanisms of inclusion and power-sharing.

A detailed discussion evolved around affirmative actions and how to make sure that survivors of human trafficking benefit from those. Agreement was reached that screening of specialized organizations interacting with survivors of trafficking would serve as a sufficient proof of eligibility, however anyone who had not undergone such a screening should do so.

"Be aware that sometimes even perpetrators appear and pose as survivors." (VM)

"Upcoming organizations need training to see who has survived human trafficking and who just had an unpleasant experience abroad." (VM)

"Organizations are not just to believe the claim of being a survivor. They should make that person interact with other survivors, because we will know." (VM)

"As a survivor-led organization, we want to hear your story before you join. Also we then know where to send you, as we work against different forms of trafficking." (VM)

To create an engagement that is financially more sustainable for a greater number of survivors, several participants suggested engaging survivors to train other survivors on their economic and entrepreneurial skills, thus creating synergies in financial sustainability and widening the diversity of the movement. This way of training could also be applied to survivor advocacy and leadership.

"Have projects by survivors for survivors. If it is on woodwork, for example, have it from survivors to survivors, to make it truly sustainable." (VM)

"Create sustainability by empowering survivors to teach other survivors. Make the movement more diverse and richer." (VM)

3.5. Learning, qualification, personal growth

For many interviewees, the realization that what they experienced was human trafficking was highly significant for their decision to become active. Many learned this from the organization they are engaged with.

"I had no understanding that this was human trafficking before. After joining the organization, that was when I said wow, so this thing is really massive, it is big." (IP4)

"After saving me, they taught me human rights and existing laws." (IP7)

"The knowledge I got now helps those who are helpless, those who are going through this human trafficking." (IP3)

"Information is power. What I have to share is the information that there is danger ahead. There is hope ahead. There is good ahead. Don't follow this, avoid this." (IP2)

Learning about human trafficking constitutes the basis, but the eagerness to learn and opportunities to grow contribute to upholding the commitment. The opportunity to learn and grow through the cooperation with an organization is recurrently named as a strongly motivating factor. Many interviewees testify their enthusiasm for learning. Interviewees show high appreciation for formal capacity building through workshops, but also for the learning opportunities and social benefits that arise from networking, traveling to different communities, and engaging in new interactions. Those social benefits are highly valued and keep many survivor advocates motivated to continue their engagement. As noted above, only few experienced a significant improvement of their financial situation due to their engagement. However, when asked about their motivation, many mentioned the benefit of learning opportunities and chance for personal growth.

Learning opportunities are not necessarily provided by the organizations themselves, but sometimes emerge and evolve by linking survivor advocates to the capacity building initiatives of third parties.

"We are working on building a community of survivors and I hope in the near future we will have survivors who have the skills to attend some positions that you know of, this decision, so that we can have a great community of leaders. It's in the process and I'm happy because I'm part of this." (IP13)

"I have attended their trainings. They have helped me a lot, not only for benefitting the organization, but also me as a leader in the society." (IP9)

"I learned a lot. It (the organization) was also making me a leader. Seeing something in me that I can do and they are helping me do it. I feel like I was empty before, and now I am full." (IP1)

"It has helped me socially and has given me knowledge that I can use to help other people fight human trafficking… I have education now, and I'm a better person." (IP5)

"I have gotten to driving school through them." (IP2)

Several interviewees hope to attain the education they feel they still need for the position of their choice within the movement.

"I would like to be a spokesperson, because I come with the experience. And I would like to improve my English." (IP18)

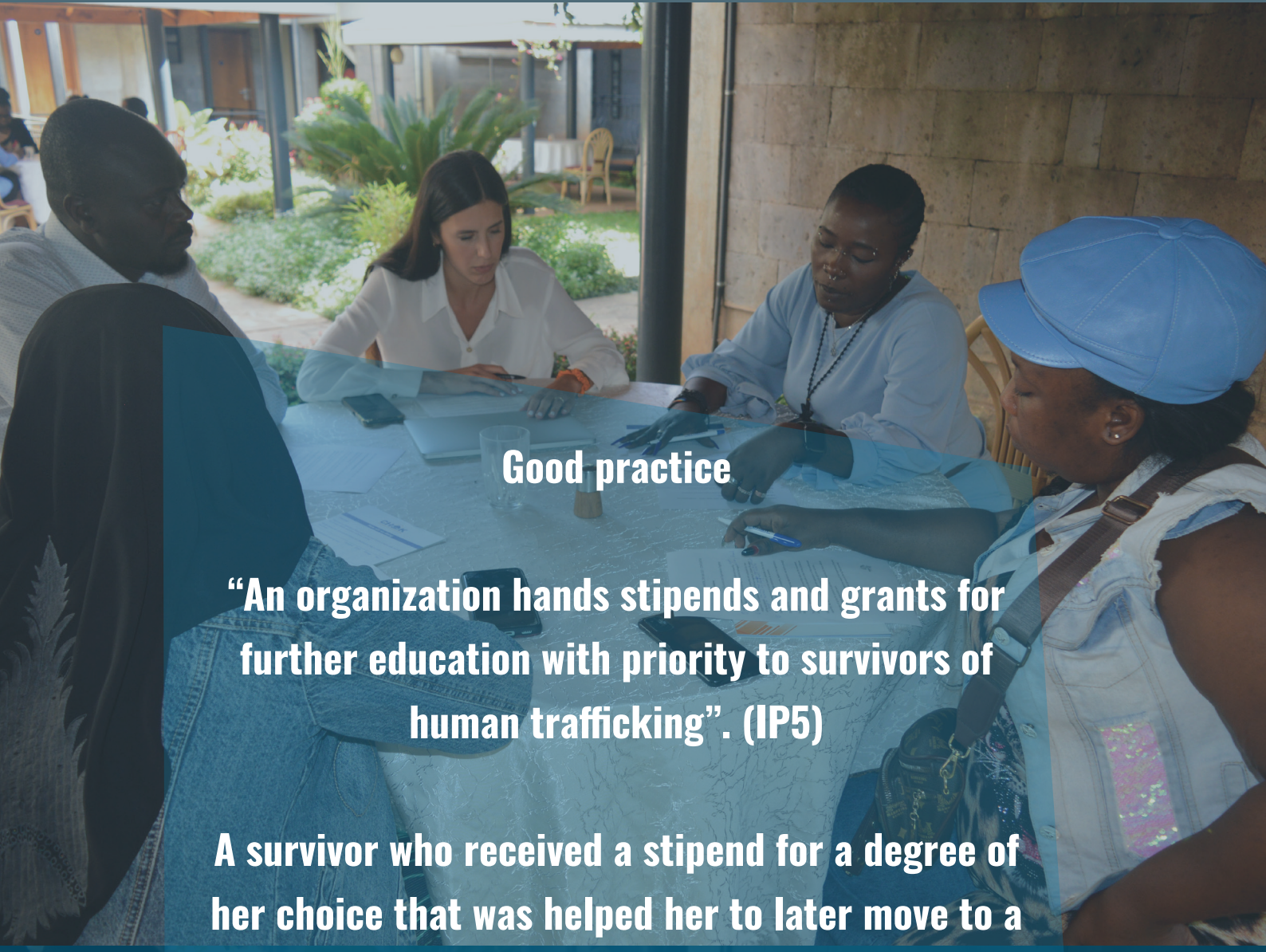
"I would like to be given more opportunity to study for myself, here or abroad, I really like it….I would like to study law or about human equality, so that I can help many girls who are going through a problem like the one I went through."(IP7)

"I want to learn more. I need to have more experience and I need to go to school." (IP8)

"I would like to be taken to university to advance my knowledge, so that I can come back and work better." (IP5)

"(I) would love to learn a skill that would enable me to train other survivors and that will enable them to become self-reliant and to take care of themselves." (IP4)

Similar to IP4, IP15 sees survivor-to-survivor training for economic empowerment as an essential part of her activity as a survivor advocate and seeks further qualification on this. Her educational goal is to become a trainer on those vocational skills she has received from the counter trafficking organization. Apart from speaking publicly for survivors' rights, economic empowerment to other survivors is her most important way of taking survivor leadership: empowering women in order to protect them and their children from the risk of being trafficked into sexual exploitation, as had happened to her. Her vision is to multiply the effect of vocational trainings through a snowball-system: herself teaching friends, who will then teach other friends, and so on.



Good practice

"An organization hands stipends and grants for further education with priority to survivors of human trafficking". (IP5)

A survivor who received a stipend for a degree of her choice that was helped her to later move to a leading position in an anti-trafficking organization reported that:

"The monthly stipend was really supporting me a lot. If it wasn't for them, I don't know how I would've been managing to go for the classes. But I went to the classes until I completed my course. And I managed to pay my child's school fees and also feed my stomach and that of my child. Yes, it really impacted me financially." (IP1)

Interviewees indicated the need for more funding and scholarships for education and qualification opportunities. This comes from a desire - and a need - to get the professional education and degree in the field of one's choice, so as to be more active in the movement and to qualify for certain specific positions.

As was noted in the validation meeting, a scholarship alone is no magic wand to compete with qualified applicants without lived experience of trafficking who might come from more privileged backgrounds, while many survivors of trafficking still face marginalization.

"Even if you have a government-sponsored scholarship, you still face challenges at home that keep you from scoring greatly or doing it continuously." (VM)

Nonetheless the interviews showed that in the rare cases where scholarships for survivors were provided, they have been a successful way of qualifying survivor advocates for leading positions in the movement.

3.6. Survivor networks

Meeting other survivors is one of the most powerful means to uphold commitment and motivation. Whenever the encounters with other survivors are mentioned, it is without any exception in a positive, often enthusiastic way.

A respondent from a survivor-led organization reported that:

"It's impressive and encouraging, because we all work together, share our various experiences, and we're trying to help the society not to fall victim to such things." (IP14)

Meeting other survivors also refer to survivor networks as one of the great benefits and ongoing motivating factors:

"Socially, it helps me to associate with such people because I have really been wanting to meet people who are survivors, too, or even people who have not experienced [human trafficking] to talk to them... Now I do have these opportunities." (IP14)

Even on the level of receiving assistance, the knowledge of other survivors of human trafficking being present and getting support from that same organization, is a beneficial information:

"It feels good to know that I am not the only person in the country who faced this problem." (IP 11)

Even more so, when it comes to encouraging, creating, building, supporting, and financing networks among survivors.

"It all began at [name of the organization]. This is where we first met. So it makes me feel like I'm not alone. We are encouraging so many, and many have hope now." (IP2)

In the words of other respondents:

"And sometimes when we are in trouble, we help each other. We usually go for walks, but in my case movement [i.e., travel expenses] is a problem." "I always feel very happy [meeting other survivors], we share stories and I just feel okay." (IP3)

"I hope I inspire my other survivors to join me. I would like in the near future to have a community of survivors who can leas. The community of survivors who can even stand in front of millions of people and tell their story and inspire them. That will make change and that could be so powerful." (IP13)

"I feel kind of excited [to work with other survivors]. It's a different kind of passion, it gives a kind of joy, because we are all working towards the same goal." (IP4)

What emerged clearly from our interviews was that survivor networks play a leading role in encouraging survivors to become active in the movement and supporting survivor advocates to remain active therein.

This finding received a strong confirmation during the validation meeting. Participants unanimously agreed on the importance of survivors learning from other survivors, survivor networks, and support for those interactions. They also reminded organizations that different training for survivors - e.g., practical skills for economic empowerment and vocational training - might be conducted by other survivors, thus combining employment, survivor connections, and capacity building.

From the validation meeting, two direct recommendations for organizations emerged in this regard:

"Set up a budget for survivor engagement." (VM)

"Support survivors in doing their own thing." (VM)

3.7. Mental health support

Many interviewees confirmed the need for psychological support not only after the trafficking experience but even when the direct assistance is completed and reintegration is achieved.

"Psychological assistance and psychosocial support was given to me and gave me the opportunity to be able to even speak out." (IP4)

However, most indicated that the need for free and accessible psychological support exceeds the availability of these measures.

"I wish survivors could get free counseling, because I feel like I usually need it. […] And now that I am trafficked and I am back, it does not mean that I am fine"" (IP1)

Many survivor advocates attested that they needed time – and, if they were able to take it, counseling - before they took up action.

"The wounds were still fresh, the people in her community were discriminating against her… So she wasn't free to talk about that" (IP11)

"I think what I needed the most [after trafficking experience] was a psychologist to help me to move on, but I didn't…" (IP13)

Some respondents, reported sharing experience as a way to move out of depression:

"I was really traumatized, I was devastated, wasn't thinking straight…. I was in a depression, crying every day. For months I was not myself. I thought maybe I should just die. I was not worth it. I was not comfortable around my parents. I was thinking: How do they see me now? But after months, I decided no, I cannot continue like that. I should put my past behind me and I should advise my younger ones…." (IP14)

"There was a time I could not even talk and I could not even say that you were wronging me, I just swallowed everything… But right now I'm just happy that I can speak up, and not only for myself, but also helping someone." (IP1)

The latter respondent was later linked to work with an anti-trafficking organization:

"They helped me a lot in healing, in discovering myself and discovering my worth, and understanding myself more and not blaming myself of what had happened, because I used to blame myself… I just felt appreciated, respected and understood." (IP1)

This is a positive example on how a supportive environment can influence the process, similar testimonies mention the important role of family who can either be helpful or be hindering.

For other participants, the mental health consequences of the work as a survivor advocate shine through:

"[A case of child trafficking] affected me like I was hurt… like they are people who have been so close to me, it seemed like it was happening to me." (VM)

Another survivor advocate reports how she is texting with victims abroad and will not shut down the phone any night, as they need her help. There is no mention of any support available to deal with this psychological pressure.

"More organizations should offer counseling sessions." (IP11)

Interviewees also suggested that organizations should offer counseling and psychosocial support and give room to survivors to express themselves as a part of creating a secure and safe environment. As it emerged from the interviews, in fact, it can be very hard for survivors to balance the need for self-care with the drive to help others who are going through a situation similar to one's own experience. It is not clear if all organizations offer support through psychological specialists that are able to accompany survivor advocates who are dealing with the resonances and challenges that come with their work.

In the validation meeting, survivor advocates and leaders elaborated on the need for continuous access to mental health support as they are active in the movement.

Participants also agreed that having free psychological support for survivor advocates and leaders is crucial. While this was not entirely clear from the initial interviews, it emerged in the plenary discussion during the validation workshop. All participants agreed on the importance of psychological support and shared the idea of a focal point for psychosocial support for survivor leaders and advocates.

"Because of the triggers, it can be especially exhausting. You are having compassion, because you are healed." (VM)

"Organizations should allocate funds for self-care especially for employees who work with survivors." (VM)

A following discussion on whether survivors - especially those who are not in the anti-trafficking space to share their experiences - would be well placed to console other survivors did not lead to a clear conclusion. There was agreement that professional counselors are needed, and that survivors who are interested should have chances to professionalize in this field.

3.8. Security and safety

Security ranks high among the concerns of survivor advocates, and organizations are advised to take security issues seriously. Noteworthy, traffickers were rarely mentioned as a main security risk by the active survivor advocates and survivor leaders during the interviews.[24] However, one survivor advocate explicitly referred to the hardships of facing the traffickers in her community on her return, and another interviewee advised survivors who want to become active against human trafficking:

"Prioritize your security and do tough research on what actions you can take against the people that take us illegally, so you know how to fight back." (IP18)

Most security risks that were shared in the interviews resulted from interactions with community members and upset families of deceased victims that a survivor advocate was close to. However, during the validation meeting participants clarified that the risks posed by traffickers as well as governmental repression were prominent among their security concerns. They also drew attention to the dangers of perpetrators who pose as victims. In order to deal with those threats, policies (e.g., on ethical storytelling and risk assessments for survivors) were recommended as organizational responses.

"Be aware that sometimes even perpetrators appear and pose as survivors." (VM)

"Educate survivors on how to share their stories, and also about the risks e.g. on what they say about the government. Make sure people are aware of the risks when they go out." (VM)

"Many survivors do not know how to share their stories. Build their capacities and anticipate the risks." (VM)

"Differentiate with whom you share a story, which content creators and media you trust." (VM)

A survivor advocate explicitly advises organizations to take security concerns seriously, another one specifies that organizations should:

"Prioritize and train security personnel, and prioritize their [survivors'] security and wellbeing, for instance through safe transportation to and from." (IP18)

However, security is more than the defense from threats or mitigation of risks. Some survivor advocates point to the holistic component of security and recommend organizations in this context:

"Have some sort of funds that survivors can access to help them get on their feet, like capital, capacity building, and jobs for those that can work in these organizations." (IP18)

Another interviewee linked security to counseling and psychosocial support, saying offering more counseling in organizations will increase the security for survivors.

3.9. Teaming up with an organization

Most survivor advocates know the organization they engage with from prior engagements in service provision. All interviewees attest their organization to be a safe and respectful environment. Equally, all say that they can give feedback. Without elaborating on whether this is a must or a volunteer decision, all interviewees stated that they would inform their organization if they wished to work with another organization. Some already work with more than one organization – and enhancing co-operation among organizations is one of the most frequent recommendations interviewees gave for the movement.

"There is security, and people are free." (IP5)

Factors that also contribute to the environment being experienced as safe and respectful are trust, confidentiality, passion for their work, respect. Several times, the freedom to speak their minds is acknowledged by interviewees. Most interviewees describe their organizations in a way that indicates that basic principles of a trauma-informed environment are observed.

Guidelines

As for guidelines or policies on how organizations engage with active survivors beyond service provision, the question created some confusion during the interviews. One interviewee remembered signing guidelines attached to a document without reading them, another seemed to confuse guidelines for interactions with clients in service provision with guidelines for organizations and survivor advocates. For a survivor advocate who has a contract, the job description is understood as the guideline for engagement. While there might be guidelines in place, they do not seem to have raised a great deal of awareness or practical significance for the interactions between survivor advocates and the respective organizations. In the interviews, there was no indication that guidelines were greatly missed. However, the validation meeting added significantly to this question.

Contrary to what emerged in the interviews, in the validation meeting survivor leaders and advocates identified a great need for policies on part of anti-trafficking organizations. At the same time, there was hardly any mention of best practices, indicating that those policies - if they existed - had not yet gained significance.

"Organizations who put out survivor leaders [to the public] must have a framework on how to protect them." (VM)

"[Organizations should] put out a policy on ethical storytelling. Train employees on ethical storytelling. [...] Organizations should conduct according to their ethical storytelling policy. And make sure that survivors can make an informed decision on their steps. This is also part of security measures." (VM)

Choice of Organization

Most survivor advocates are engaged with the organization they know from service provision. Mostly, they only engage with that one, although they wish for more cooperation with other organizations, both at an individual level (as an opportunity for further learning and exchange) and at a movement level. Some organizations have approached survivor advocates who already had high visibility and experience and offered them positions. As noted, none of the survivors took the initiative of applying for a paid job in the organization.

Organization	What they offer	Observations
Category 1	Step1: Emergency services.	There is no engagement beyond service delivery. This is mostly in organizations that offer specific support like legal aid or rescue.
Category 2	Step 1: Emergency services Step 2: Education (formal/ informal) Step 3: Livelihood support/ Reintegration	These are organizations where the initial encounter was driven by the need to offer emergency services to the survivor, e.g. shelter, food, etc., followed by the provision of some form of formal/literacy/vocational training geared towards establishing a sustainable livelihood. There is an opportunity for organizations to include training on survivor leadership/advocacy in step 2.
Category 3	Step 1: Emergency services Step 2: Education (formal/ informal) Step 3: Livelihood support Step 4: Opportunities for survivor leadership and advocacy.	Some organizations are active on several levels including offering opportunities to survivors for leadership and advocacy. Interestingly organizations covering the whole range of engagement activities do not necessarily involve all survivors in all steps. Depending on different aspects and different needs of each survivor, the 'weaning off' can happen at any stage.

Individual inclusion

Inclusion is determined by the presence of multiple mechanisms of power-sharing, representation, and participation. However, what makes people feel included is also very much personal, and interviewees commented on that too. All interviewees felt well included in their respective organizations. Their assessment on inclusion aligned closely with their perception of the organization as a safe and respectful environment.[25] For their own successful inclusion, interviewees identified a wide range of diverse factors that contributed, most of them taking into account their individual situation and needs.

As one relevant area, inclusion in meetings and communication is highlighted several times.

"There is no discrimination. They involve me, they explain to me, we go together. There are people who are scholars, but they don't leave me behind, even though my education is low." (IP7)

"I don't even know what they are talking about and they just invite me to know what's going on… I am very happy with the consideration they gave me in that organization." (IP13)

"I feel welcomed, safe and considered. They are friendly, they are engaging me… I am interacting with different nice people and learning a lot." (IP1)

Being aware of individual needs and taking affirmative action to allow full participation was highly effective to foster inclusion.

One survivor advocate was enabled to take her baby and her nanny to an international conference and concluded that "that is something to know that somebody can take care of you." (IP13)

"If they realize that you live far from work, there is a house where they will accommodate you. And they also assist in one way for transport and food." (IP14)

Inviting thoughts, taking ideas into consideration, and acting on them was another key to inclusion:

"To talk about how we can eradicate human trafficking, what we think should be done, makes me feel involved." (IP1)

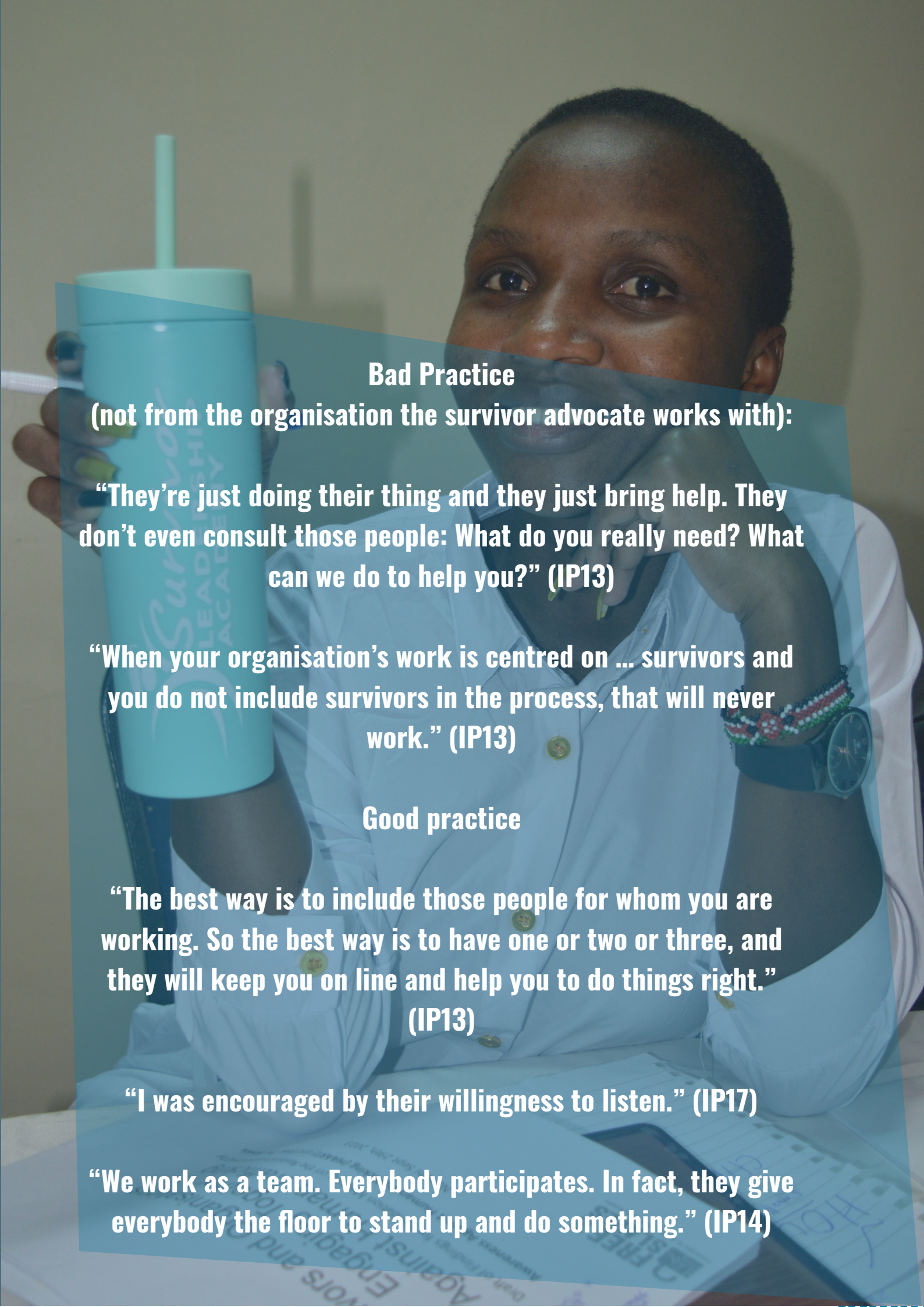
"When they took me to the position (a paid position in the organization), there wasn't a community of survivors and it still doesn't exist, so with the help of my teammates, I've tried to build a committee to build a community of survivors who can lead the sensitization and everything, and that idea was received with much enthusiasm." (IP13)

"Within the organization, there is freedom to speak for yourself… they listen to us. I enjoy everything." (IP3)

As the examples above indicate, successful inclusion of individuals was achieved through a wide range of areas: respect, active listening, equality in communication, invitation of ideas, participation in discussions and decision making, show of care for individual needs and affirmative action, e.g., in regard to one's family or housing situation. Making information accessible – not only the flow of information, but also sensitivity to the choice of language and jargon used - and being aware of the social environment and individual needs of survivor advocates and leaders ranks highly among the factors that are identified as enabling inclusion. Many factors that were named as good practice for individual inclusion are in alignment with trauma-informed working culture.

In the validation meeting, inclusion was discussed on a more general basis, as the entire set of recommendations from this study is aiming at more inclusion. Organizations were strongly encouraged to seek engagement not only with a few survivor leaders, but with survivors as a community, so as to better embrace and reflect their different perspectives, and were called upon:

"Check your whole system on inclusivity and intersectionality!" (VM)



Bad Practice
(not from the organisation the survivor advocate works with):

"They're just doing their thing and they just bring help. They don't even consult those people: What do you really need? What can we do to help you?" (IP13)

"When your organisation's work is centred on … survivors and you do not include survivors in the process, that will never work." (IP13)

Good practice

"The best way is to include those people for whom you are working. So the best way is to have one or two or three, and they will keep you on line and help you to do things right." (IP13)

"I was encouraged by their willingness to listen." (IP17)

"We work as a team. Everybody participates. In fact, they give everybody the floor to stand up and do something." (IP14)

3.10. Recommendations from survivor advocates and leaders to other survivors

(a) For survivor advocates and survivor leaders in decision making positions

"If the chances put you there, if God put you there, if life put you there (inside an organization, ed.), it's because they want you to be the light of other people who are behind you. That's what survivors who are in an organization and have some higher position are never to forget." (IP13)

"Due to a lot of work maybe, you can forget that you are a survivor. So always keep in mind that you have the responsibility to make sure everything is on the benefits of survivors like you." (IP13)

"Keep pushing, never give up!" (IP9)

(b) For survivors who are not (yet) in an organization

"Even if they (other survivors) are not in any organization, they can do it their way.... Let's say about dancers. Yes, it will be great for them to be in the organization. But most important is not to be in an organization. The most important is to understand that... they need to share with others so they do not pass through that life. They don't need to be first in an organization to understand that they must fight against that." (IP13)

"It will be good if they get involved as they have the experience. This is someone who when you talk to, it will be easier for them to relate since it is something that they have gone through." (IP9)

"Work, start your own business and engage with the community." (IP9)

Part IV. Survivor Engagement and Anti-Trafficking Organizations: The Perspective of Anti-Human Trafficking Organizations

4.1. Service provision as a form of engagement

Among the organizations that took part in the survey, almost all (88.9%) provide survivors of human trafficking with services. The most common services provided include rescue, basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing, rehabilitation, livelihood support in the form of business grants, job training, and vocational training, advocacy, referral, and reintegration. The services least commonly provided include formal education, legal aid, employment, travel assistance, psychological assistance, and skills enrollment in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs. Interestingly, organizations that have been working with survivors for 6 years or longer indicated a higher commitment to providing survivors with livelihood support and formal education.

Interestingly, there was a high degree of variance in terms of the number of survivors provided with services to date: one quarter of the organizations have provided services to more than 500 survivors, another quarter have provided services to 101-500 survivors. The remaining half of the organizations have provided services to 100 survivors or less. The number of survivors engaged through service provision is consistent with the length of time that an organization has been working with survivors: those that have been working with survivors for 5 years or less have not been able to engage more than 100 survivors, while those that have been working with survivors for 6 years or more have provided services to up to 500 survivors. Importantly, most of the organizations engage with both child and adult survivors of human trafficking. Only 1 organization engages exclusively with child survivors and only 3 organizations engage with adult survivors only. One organization that has been working with survivors for more than 11 years even indicated having a transition plan for survivors that become adults during the engagement period.

4.2. Alternative forms of engagement

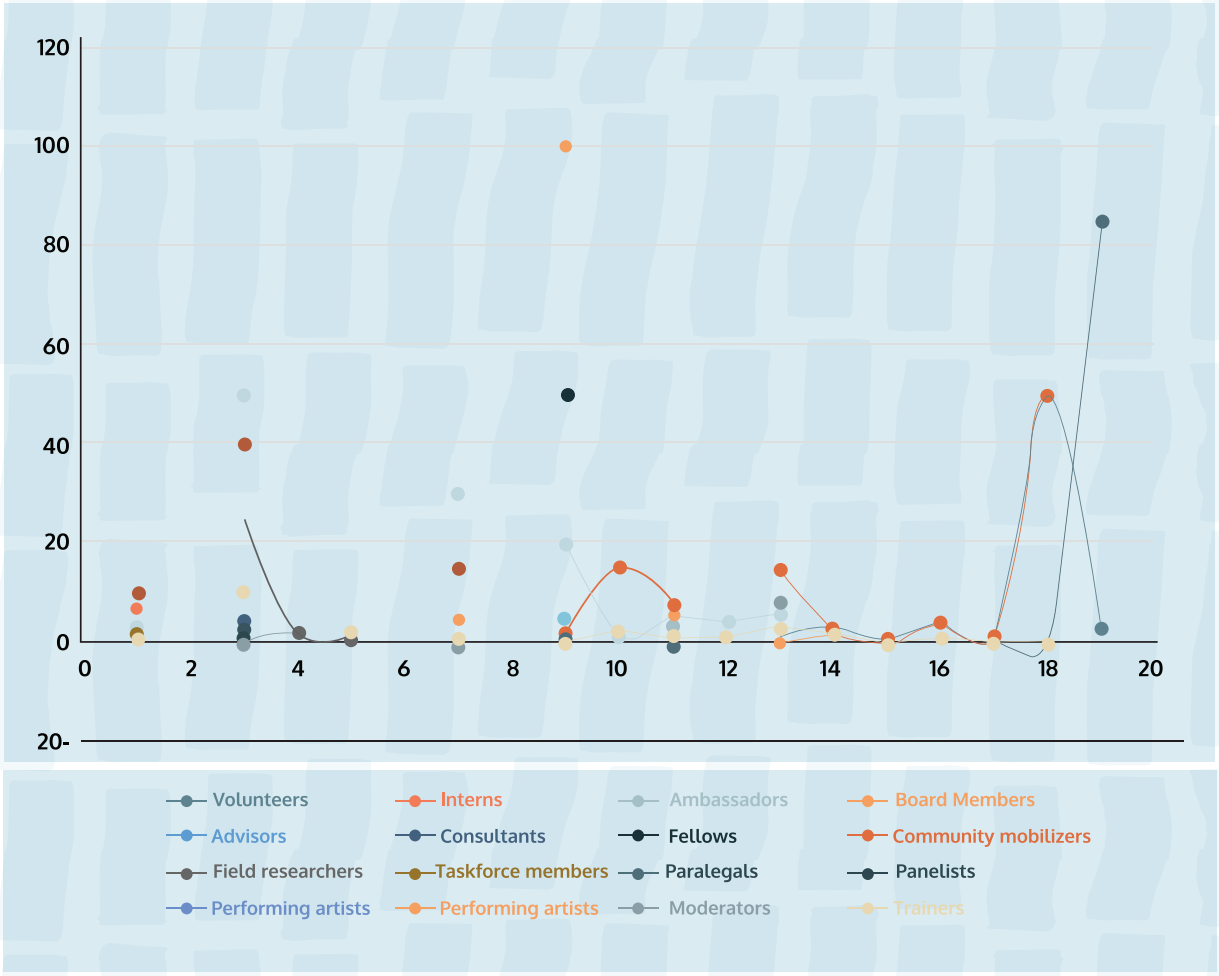
The great majority of the organizations that participated in the survey (89.5%) attested engaging survivors beyond the provision of direct services. However, the majority of representatives still referred to other services provided as a form of engagement, indicating that for these organizations, engagement is synonymous with service reception.

The majority of organizations hire survivors as volunteers, community mobilizers, and interns. Other positions include: staff, advisors, consultants, fellows, field researchers, paralegals, panelists, performing artists, moderators, and trainers. However, these are less prevalent. The least common capacities in which survivors have worked with organizations include board members, taskforce members, ambassadors, and event master of ceremonies.

Among 18 organizations, around 5 of them expressed engaging survivors in other capacities that had not been specified. A survivor-led organization that participated in the survey engages survivors as staff in the areas of child protection, human resources, project management, shelter supervision, and executive management.

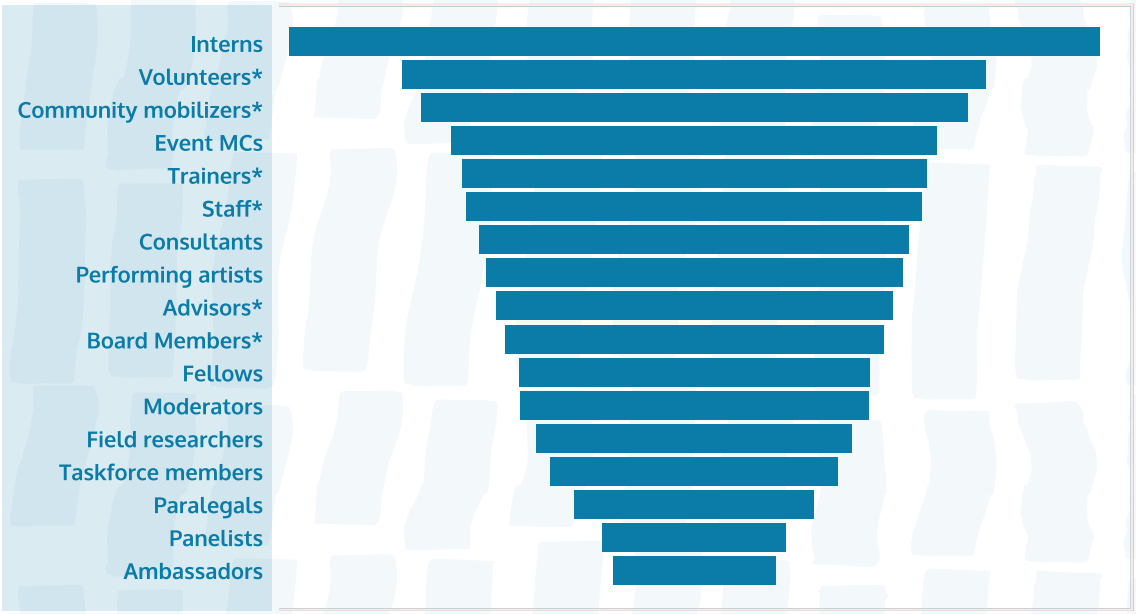
The figure below shows that for each category, it is typical for organizations to engage between 0-20 survivors. Only a few organizations have engaged more than 20 survivors for any category. The standard deviation for these figures is highest for interns, volunteers, community mobilizers, and fellows. This indicates that there is a high degree of variance between organizations regarding the number of survivors engaged in these positions.

Figure 2. Number of Survivors Engaged by Organization



Organizations have been engaging survivors in these positions anywhere from 1 to 22 years, irrespective of the role. However, it appears that hiring survivors as interns, volunteers, and community mobilizers has been an established practice for almost a decade, while hiring survivors as ambassadors, panelists, and paralegals has started to gain traction only in recent years. This seems to be a positive indication that organizations in the region have been re-thinking and re-shaping their engagement with survivors over time. However, given the limited number of responses for most of the categories, these considerations are only preliminary and need further confirmation.

Figure 3. Average number of years that organizations have engaged survivors by position type



One of the motivations guiding survivor engagement is the perception that survivors are "role models" to those who are still trapped in forms of trafficking. They are perceived to have the power and influence to encourage others to engage in behaviors that reduce their vulnerability to exploitation. In the words of one organization:

"The survivors help us in community mobilization and awareness creation. Some have carried out training sessions after assigning them. Their input carries more weight due to the live shared experience."

The majority of the organizations that participated in the survey (15) work with survivor leaders or advocates. Among those, 12 have been in operation for 6 years or longer. Among those who do not work with survivor leaders or advocates, the majority have been in operation for less than 5 years. Some organizations have full-time staff who are survivor advocates and engage in coordination activities for national anti-human trafficking networks. Another organization, primarily survivor-led, employs survivors in executive management, human resources, case management, and child protection. Some survivors have specialized roles within organizations, such as trainers who facilitate the healing process for other survivors, provide mentorship, and build survivor networks. Survivors are not always compensated for these activities. In some cases, they may be paid minimally for the work.

4.3. Engagement selection process

The organizations' decision to engage survivors as advocates or leaders is the outcome of a complex and nuanced process that is not necessarily linear over time.

Sometimes, survivors initiate contact with an organization regarding a potential collaboration and interest in a specific role. Organizations may provide those survivors with training and capacity building to excel in leadership as trainers, activists, community mobilizers, or other roles. Some organizations establish predetermined roles that they would like survivors to fill. Organizations may also connect with a survivor whom they met previously and whom they believe could succeed as advocate or leader.

Organizations may form a relationship with a survivor and dedicate resources for him/her to grow as leader and into certain specific roles. However, this does not always occur, and it seems that some organizations may implement a probationary period and make a performance-based determination as to whether to officially bring survivors on board once the probationary period expires. Other organizations ensure that survivors are selected based on pre-established criteria such as relevant experience, level of prior activity, and knowledge.

The diversity in responses reflects the wide range of practices among anti-human trafficking organizations in the region. When considering establishing a standard for survivor engagement, as it is the objective of this research project, it is important to acknowledge this diversity and ensure that standards maximize rather than suppress the potentially diverse ways in which survivors engage with organizations.

4.4. Compensation for survivors' work

When asked how they commonly compensate survivors, the majority of organizations answered that they compensate survivors through stipends. Only 5 organizations provide them with salaries. The remaining organizations provide alternative forms of payment such as an honorarium, a grant, in-kind goods, or a service such as skills development. One organization indicated that they do not provide any compensation.

All organizations, except 2, provide survivors with opportunities to volunteer. Some organizations indicated a lack of current opportunities to bring survivors on board as volunteers. Some indicated that no survivor has ever offered to volunteer with them. One organization shared being linked at the global level with survivors who provide it with advice.

Volunteers serve as peer educators and share their testimonies to encourage others: they may participate in speaking engagements, often discussing human trafficking through their personal experiences. Survivors may also participate in the provision of services through the distribution of in-kind goods such as educational materials, food, and hygienic products or through the coordination of logistics. In another organization, survivors provide mentorship, care services at an organization-run shelter, and engage in outreach to identify victims of human trafficking. They may also be involved as research assistants.

The costs incurred during the volunteer process are reimbursed by 13 of the organizations, meaning that within some organizations survivors incur costs that they must cover out of their own pocket.

Once survivors are brought on board, they are likely to engage with the organization until they terminate the engagement. The majority of organizations do not have reasons for terminating an engagement. A minority of representatives indicated a few exceptions where an organization might want to terminate an agreement, such as when conflicts between survivors' interests and the organization's interest occur, when lack of funding threatens the sustainability of certain programs, when a survivor misconducts by violating organizational policies or placing others' safety in jeopardy. For instance, two respondents indicated that an engagement was terminated upon discovery that a pre-established rule was broken. Two respondents also mentioned that, as a result of limited resources, their organizations can no longer engage with survivors. Another mentioned that engagement also comes to a halt in the event that a survivor becomes self-sufficient and no longer needs services from the organization.

It seemed to be more common for survivors to terminate an engagement, as 6 respondents referred to such cases. According to the organizational representatives, survivors have terminated their engagement for a number of reasons, which included establishing their own organization, an inability to have their needs met by organizations, and a job opportunity elsewhere.

Among the organizations surveyed, 10 require survivors to inform them if they would like to engage with other organizations, while the others enable survivors to work for other organizations without permission needed:

"[Our organization] believes in the spirit of partnership, cross learning and sharing of experiences to make survivors more engaged, informed and empowered. Their involvement with other organizations is a welcome development and strongly encouraged as the lessons learnt can also help to strengthen the organizations approaches in the thematic areas."

With respect to conflicts of interest or differences in opinions or approaches between an organization and a survivor, the majority of representatives expressed that these conflicts have never taken place. A minority recalled

incidents involving polite arguments in the context of decision-making within the organization, arguments about survivors receiving services from multiple organizations, and grievances due to the organizations' inability to provide additional resources for their engagement. To resolve these, the dominant strategy was to come together to discuss the issue in-depth and ensure that the organization was transparent about available resources and communicated its desire to continue to support survivors despite this limitation.

4.5. Engagement Processes and Policies

The majority of organizations (12) lack procedures guiding survivor engagement. Some of the organizations with procedures explained that these stem from internal policies or specific terms and conditions that are devised for each scenario. Two organizations expressed having an "open door" policy whereby survivors with an interest in partnering with the organization in any capacity are welcome to do so. Another expressed that, although not enshrined in a formal organizational policy, collaborations within networks or partnerships are a practice used to strengthen engagement with survivors and other stakeholders.

Standard Operating Procedures and Policies related to safeguarding, gender, risk, human resources, and sexual harassment are some of the ones mentioned as guiding survivor engagement.

When asked which principles guide survivor engagement, organizations mentioned care, dignity, do no harm, impartiality, empathy, solidarity, honesty, integrity, and loyalty. Gender-responsive, victim-centered, and child-centric approaches were also mentioned with respect to survivor engagement. Survivors, for their part, are also expected to engage in a manner that is respectful of the organization's mission, vision, and goals.

4.6. Human Resources

Survivors are engaged primarily in entry level positions, followed by junior management level, external consultant, senior management level, and oversight positions. Asked whether they take into account if an applicant is a survivor of human trafficking, 10 respondents indicated that their organization does not take this into account in the hiring process. Among those who make these considerations, they require survivors to have lived experience of modern slavery, possess basic education, or be healthy (mental and physical health). Throughout the hiring process, some organizations shared adopting an inclusive and equal opportunity approach and ensuring that survivors' privacy is protected and that they are not harmed.

Among respondents, 12 also expressed that their organization lacks training on survivor-informed methodologies. Among those with training, some indicated that the sessions revolved around economic development, legal training, human trafficking and modern slavery, and the organization's background and policies. Two organizations specifically alluded to trauma-informed responses, safeguarding, and mental health.[26]

Also, 14 organizations do not run programs to support survivor-led advocacy and leadership. Among the organizations that offer such programs, one representative explained that these intend to promote survivors' voices in processes like decision-making and policy development. Another expressed supporting survivors in their advocacy on the implementation of anti-modern slavery legislation.

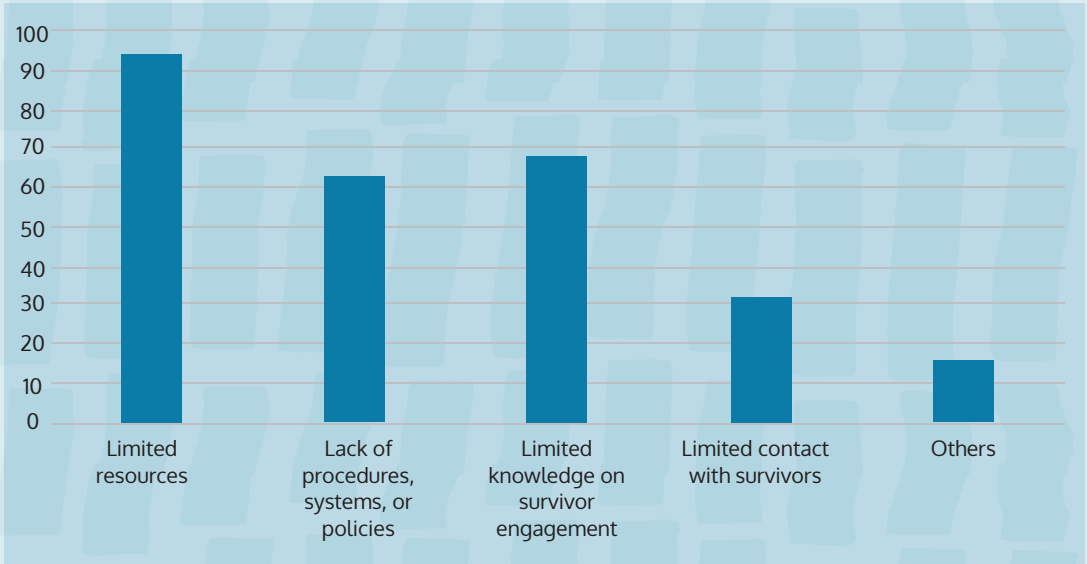
When asked whether their organization has a policy or guideline on intellectual property rights for works produced by survivors, 15 representatives acknowledged the lack thereof. Among the few organizations with such guidance, one mentioned that this is guided by the gazette policy on victim protection found under Kenya's 2015 Trafficking in Persons Act.

4.7. Limitations of organizations' engagement with survivors

Some organizations have not had an opportunity to engage with survivors. One organization mentioned an inability to engage survivors in their day-to-day operations given the lack of clear policies on how this should be done as well as a lack of standardization and accepted practices. Other limitations noted include a lack of safe spaces for survivors and resources for service provision, including repatriation services, the lack of shelters, and the lack of funding. One organization, for instance, expressed that with additional funding they would involve survivors in programs to a greater extent, particularly as staff. However, they are currently limited by financial constraints to the provision of services rather than alternative forms of engagement. Survivors' expectations surrounding engagement with an organization may also limit the practice. One organization expressed that survivors may not want to build networks if they are not able to reap immediate benefits. As a result, organizations may be unable to engage them.

Two organizations expressed not feeling limited by their current approaches. However, these organizations appear to be exceptions since one is a survivor-led organization that has provided direct services to over 500 survivors for 6-10 years and another is an organization that provides only one kind of service to survivors.

Figure 4. Factors influencing survivor engagement



4.8. Towards best practices for survivor engagement

Organizations are interested in engaging survivors in a wide range of other capacities, especially as staff (84.2%), speakers (84.2%), volunteers (78.9%), community mobilizers (78.9%), interns (68.4%), ambassadors (68.4%), and field researchers (68.4%). The categories that were specified least include consultants (26.3%), fellows (26.3%), and paralegals (36.8%). Moderate interest was expressed for survivors as board members, advisors, moderators, and panelists. Additionally, some organizations expressed an interest in engaging survivors in other positions such as trainers, protection officers, storytellers, policy advisors, and network coordinators.

The organizations surveyed have an interest in establishing policies and codes of conduct to guide survivor engagement. They would also like to see survivors take diverse leadership positions within their organizations and share their expertise at external speaking arrangements. Organizations would like engagement to go beyond the provision of services and move towards inclusion as established staff. They envision some survivors influencing national and global policies through their voice. Ultimately, organizations would like to see survivors become empowered leaders that contribute to the movement as advocates and ambassadors:

"We would like survivors to be all resilient, able to share their own stories, talk about them in public, help other survivors, actively participate in advocacy, research, and even file complaints against perpetrators, etc."

Respondents also highlighted a desire for survivor-centered organizations that acknowledge survivors' individual needs through a tailored approach and are characterized by greater capacity development, safeguarding, participation, and opportunities for survivors.

4.9. Paving the way for a standardized approach

Organizations were asked how survivor engagement could be best standardized in order to facilitate the transformation of existing practices and approaches. One respondent indicated that given the diversity of survivors' situations, a standardized approach cannot be adopted. However, there was a strong consensus suggesting that standardization can indeed be established through the creation of policies or standard operating procedures, ideally at the governmental or regional level. This would also be most effective if done through a participatory process involving periodic meetings and discussions surrounding expectations for survivor engagement. It is recognized as important that survivors be part of an integrated movement where they can discuss engagement and contribute to establishing a model as to what this engagement should look like. It was also recognized that in order for survivor engagement policies to be effective, they must be accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Part V. Recommendations

Building on the interviews with survivor leaders and advocates, three areas emerged consistently as highly important in regards to engagement with organizations. First and foremost, interviewees emphasized the need for financial sustainability. Second, inclusion through employment in counter trafficking organizations - something that even survivor-led and survivor-only organizations struggle with, due to limited financial means. Third, the importance of survivor networks - another area that requires funding and that will benefit immensely from support by established organizations.

In general, organizations are encouraged to seek engagement not only with a few survivor leaders, but rather **with survivors as a community**, so as to better embrace and reflect their different perspectives. Overall, there is a need to deliberately create **multiple ways of accessing the movement**. In order to do so, organizations are asked to critically reflect on the inclusivity and intersectionality of the system and to consider whether opportunities can be opened to survivors at all levels.

Especially for non-survivor-led organizations, building an inclusive organization starts with acknowledging the need for a systemic change within the organization. It requires the willingness to actively create space for survivor inclusion in the internal processes, allot resources to it (finances as well as time are important factors to set up any new process), and build capacities. Establishing a **trauma-informed** working culture does not only benefit people who have experienced trauma, but every member of an organization. In all areas, and on all occasions, it should be considered if survivor-to-survivor interactions can be included and supported.

Survivor advocacy and leadership, as evidenced from the interviews, was initiated by most interviewees on their own. In cooperation with those survivors who are already active, organizations could better sustain and support the work that these experts are already undertaking. This promises to benefit active survivor advocates and the organization.

Survivor advocates and leaders expressed that they highly appreciate when their needs are acknowledged and when participation is enabled by tackling individual barriers. This can only happen if there is a good exchange between the organizational decision makers and the survivor advocates. It is therefore recommended that organizations **create platforms and regular opportunities to listen to survivor advocates and leaders**.

Less engagement was documented for survivors who are not yet experienced social justice advocates. Only few organizations invited survivors who are new to activism and advocacy to join the movement - and without remuneration, those initiatives hardly succeed. Initiatives that engage survivors who are new to this form of social engagement need to be particularly cautious of power hierarchies or excessive gratefulness (and perceived indebtedness) towards the organization. They need to make **sure that any engagement is motivated by the dedication towards the cause**, not towards the organization. As there seems to exist a de facto barrier for those who are not comfortable sharing their personal experiences of trafficking, organizations should offer ways of engagement that do not require story-telling.

At every step, full inclusion and informed consent of survivors is to be ensured. At the validation meeting, high importance was given to **raising awareness on the risks and potential security issues that can follow from such engagement.** Without these preconditions, even financial acknowledgement – which is of utmost importance in work relations between organizations and survivor advocates – carries the risk of "buying" the personal experience of a survivor for public display. To support survivors who have no, or little, experience in media or public engagement, organizations need to build the capacities of survivors and employees on ethical storytelling. This includes not only raising awareness on the risks of public engagement but also empowering survivors to define their own boundaries.

Organizations must have a **protection policy and a security framework** for survivor advocates and leaders, and they must be clear on protection measures that can be taken as well as on risks that cannot be mitigated. Of course, survivor leaders have the right to decide that they want to be radically visible and outspoken and take the potential risks. However, organizations need to ensure that such decisions are informed and aware.

From our interviews, it emerged that financial limitations are the most significant barrier that prevents survivor advocates from engaging further with the movement, and prevents others from engaging at all. It is therefore crucial that **remuneration for survivor advocates/leaders** is integrated into budget planning and proposal writing. Budget must be set aside for adequate financial resources for survivor engagement (e.g., remuneration, participation, capacity building).

A minimum of 30% of survivor leaders was spontaneously recommended for any counter-trafficking staff, a quota that only a minority of organizations currently meet. Without going into the details of whether setting that specific quota is indeed the most desirable approach, there was certainly strong agreement that **significantly more survivor advocates and leaders are needed in counter-trafficking organizations.** Taking affirmative action for more employment of survivors is of utmost importance for an inclusive movement. However, no quota will automatically generate inclusion or diversity - to be effective, it needs to be embedded in an inclusive organizational culture and accompanied by other participatory and power sharing measures. Therefore, affirmative action needs to commit **to the meaningful inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences**. To make sure that only survivors of trafficking benefit from these measures, trauma-informed screenings need to be accessible for those applicants who have not yet undergone that process.

For all opportunities that arise - be it employment, conducting or receiving training, or any other service that an organization needs - it is appropriate to check whether they can be taken up by survivors. A key recommendation to create more employment opportunities is to **review job descriptions** while acknowledging

and including specifically those qualifications that survivor advocates/leaders possess (e.g., knowledge acquired outside of traditional academic institutions). Creating more positions explicitly for survivors and developing job descriptions for these positions could immediately open employment opportunities for survivors, allow non-survivor-led organizations to quickly benefit from the inclusion of more survivors with their expertise in the organization's work, while continuing to advertise job openings that require applicants (including survivors) to fit certain requirements and regulations.

Equally, the movement will benefit from **devoting resources to capacity building**. Since a number of interviewees voiced their hope to get a degree in the field of their choice in order to qualify for certain positions in the movement, **more learning and professional development opportunities should be offered**, including further qualification in counseling, program management, or social work. Organizations can research existing scholarship opportunities and link interested survivors. They can also encourage donors to create new ones. As the joy of learning and personal growth was named as a key motivating factor, all training and education opportunities that arise should be shared with survivor advocates and leaders.

To enhance practical work experience, organizations can team up a staff member and an interested survivor ("shadowing") in order to create a learning-on-the-job setting, with the trainee progressively moving from a learning to a supportive role. This arrangement should already be captured at the stage of proposal writing and reflected in the project budget.

Additionally, organizations should consider **how to include artistic talents** and other skills into the movement and allow for side-hustles. Reported inequalities between paid staff and unpaid survivor advocates who do the same work contribute to generating feelings of unfairness and need consideration on how they can be mitigated.

An organizational measure that responds to the relevance attributed to survivor networks, mental health support, capacity building and employment, would be investing in intervision, mentorship, and forms of peer-to-peer-support. Validation meeting participants stressed that mentoring and peer-to-peer sessions among non-professionals in that field will not replace professional counseling or therapy. However, given structure, finance, and training, those offers could make peer support available for more survivors and create employment opportunities specifically for survivors.

Survivor networks play a leading role in encouraging other survivors to become active in the movement, supporting survivor advocates and leaders to remain active over time, and fostering an inclusive organizational culture. Those networks will benefit if established organizations and donors create more opportunities for survivor-to-survivor interactions and lend financial support to those initiatives. In organizations that are not survivor-led, this requires the willingness of those partners and colleagues without lived experience **to give room to survivor advocates and leaders, to listen actively, to grant a safe and respectful environment, to value cooperation with the survivor network(s), and to share resources with them.**

It emerged from the interviews that it can be very hard to balance the need for self-care and setting boundaries on the one hand with the desire to help others who are going through a situation similar to one's own experience. Also, media engagement and public visibility can be especially exhausting for people who are reminded of their own experiences. Considering these difficulties and challenges, organizations should **offer free psychological support to those survivor advocates/leaders who are dealing with the resonances and challenges that come with their work.** This psychological support should be accessible, respectful of individual needs, and offered, depending on necessity, both on a regular and an ad hoc basis.

While there might be guidelines for survivor engagement in place, they do not seem to have raised a great deal of awareness or practical significance for the interactions between survivor advocates/leaders and the respective organization.

In the interviews, there was no indication that those guidelines were missed. However, during the discussions at the validation meeting some areas emerged where specific guidelines were given high relevance, e.g., a protection policy and security framework for survivor advocates and leaders who engage with an organization, awareness raising on the risks that come with public speaking activities, and a guideline on ethical storytelling.

The content of all guidelines that concern survivor advocates and leaders should be defined in cooperation with active representatives. Once set up, they must be known, accessible, and adhered to. Organizations should also consider setting up a policy for survivor inclusion and participation to institutionalize efforts. The recommendations from this research indicate areas of concern that may be addressed by these policies.

Instead of relying on individual ad hoc cooperation, as it seems to be the case in many organizations, a policy on survivor engagement **can drive and institutionalize efforts for a meaningful engagement of survivors and enhance the latter's participation and full inclusion**. For those policies and guidelines, the list of recommendations at the end of this study might hold some inspiration.

Finally, this study generated insightful methodological observations regarding survivors' participation in research. In this regard, building on our own experience, we believe that a series of "good practices" and "lessons learnt" could usefully guide future research projects with people with lived experience. Specifically, the study established the need to **include survivors in the research project at all stages**, beginning at the planning stage; **invest financial resources for capacity building**, to enable the comprehensive and active participation of researchers with lived experience; and make (more) **use of focus group discussions (FGDs)** in addition to one-on-one interviews, as FGDs might bring to light insights and considerations that do not emerge in bilateral interviews

Researchers with lived experience should also **take the lead in interactions** with other survivors. This approach elicits trust in the research project and improves the quality of answers.

Moreover, while this research focused on existing engagements of survivor advocates and survivor leaders with organizations, future research could **focus on survivors who are interested in engaging against human trafficking but have not yet done so, on survivors who might not have considered becoming active, and on survivor advocates who once were active but stopped or dropped out.**

Addendum

Recommendations for organizations on the level of service provision:

- Support economic empowerment and education of survivors to avoid re-trafficking.
- Conduct follow up visits to people who were in direct assistance programs.
- Offer more counseling services for survivors.
- Include survivor advocates in counseling and mentoring offers for other survivors.
- Encourage peer-interactions of survivors with survivors.
- Counter stigmatization and discrimination that survivors of trafficking often face in their communities.
- Work together with other organizations to have more impact and learn from each other.
- Have more fun activities

Summary: List of Recommendations

Recommendations from survivor advocates/leaders to other survivors

Consider engagement against human trafficking. Prevent others from going through what you have gone through. Engage with the community.

When you are engaged in an organization, ensure that your actions are benefitting other survivors.

Recommendations to organizations

Instead of engaging survivors individually and ad hoc, organizations need to institutionalize mechanisms that drive participation and inclusion. Especially for non-survivor-led organizations, this starts with acknowledging the need for systemic change. It requires the willingness to actively create space and time for survivor inclusion in the internal processes, to allot resources to it, and to build capacities.

The following recommendations can help to put this into practice.

Organizational culture and structures

- Be safe and respectful. Keep trust and confidentiality.
- Embrace change. Dedicate resources for more inclusion and intersectionality.
- Set a budget for survivor engagement.
- Make time for inclusion and capacity building.
- Listen, ask, and actively include survivors, survivor advocates, and leaders
- Consider setting regular occasions for listening, feedback, and exchange.

- Ensure that survivors and employees are trained on relevant issues, e.g. ethical storytelling and security. Bear in mind that a trauma informed organizational culture benefits everyone in the organization.

- Acknowledge and give room to the distinctive value of lived experience, however do not expect or limit survivors to sharing their personal experience. Offer areas of engagement that do not require sharing one's trafficking story.

- Create multiple opportunities of access into the movement for survivors, also for those without prior engagement in social justice work.

- Inclusion, intersectionality, and the notion of security benefit from practical measures. Take in account individual needs (e.g. accommodation, translation, childcare, etc.) to enable full participation.

- Assess the inclusivity of the whole organizational system.

- Keep mental health services for survivors accessible at all stages.

- Avoid tokenism. Make sure you interact not only with individual survivor leaders and advocates, but with a community of survivors. Look for diverse perspectives.

- On all occasions, consider whether a new opportunity can be given to survivors, and whether elements of survivor-to-survivor interactions can be included and supported.

- Set up policies and guidelines for relevant areas of survivor engagement, such as protection and security, ethical storytelling, employment and remuneration guidelines, and others.

Survivor networks

- Support survivor networks.
- Create survivor networking opportunities and secure a budget for them.
- Support survivors in realizing their own initiatives.

Finance and employment

- Remunerate survivor advocates and leaders adequately and sustainably for their engagement. Travel allowances are only the bare minimum. Consider this when budgeting for projects and proposals. Create avenues for negotiating remuneration.

- Aim to have a significant number of survivors, survivor advocates, and survivor leaders in the organization. Beyond ensuring that an adequate number of survivors is part of the organization, meaningful inclusion also requires mechanisms of power sharing and representation.

- Take affirmative action for more employment of survivor advocates in the counter trafficking movement. Actively encourage applications by survivors.

- As part of affirmative actions, reconsider job descriptions to reflect those qualifications that survivors possess. Create positions and job descriptions explicitly for survivor advocates or leaders.

- Employ survivors and train them on the job to handle the assignments.

- Ensure that affirmative action is accessible only to survivors of trafficking. Accept prior screenings by professional organizations or legal agencies. For applicants who did not undergo prior screening, set up a trauma-informed and efficient screening mechanism for affirmative action opportunities.

- Allow employees with lived experience to side-hustle, as long as it does not interfere with their commitment to their work as employees.

- Think about ways to include artistic talents and other skills into the movement.
-
- Be aware of economic disparities between employees and volunteers and reflect how inequalities can be addressed or mitigated.

- Give opportunities to survivors to engage with organizations in their professional capacities outside the core activities of the organization, e.g. in security, as suppliers, etc.
- Employ survivors as trainers for other survivors in their respective professional skills and in survivor advocacy and leadership.
- Offer intervision for survivors, peer-to-peer sessions and/or mentoring.

Capacity building

- Train employees and survivors on ethical storytelling. This includes capacity building for survivors on sharing their experiences and raising awareness of the risks of visibility for survivor advocates and leaders. Set up guidelines and policies for ethical storytelling.
- Offer and share learning and capacity building opportunities. Those can also be opportunities by third-parties, networking, and travel opportunities.
- Offer mechanisms of training and professionalization like “shadowing” (teaming up a survivor advocate leader and an organizational staff member). Budget for this in proposals.
- Employ survivors as trainers for other survivors.
- Offer training for peer-to-peer intervision and mentoring.
- Actively support the willingness of survivors to combine their personal experience with a professional qualification of their choice in order to get their preferred position in the movement. To this end, collect information on opportunities offered by third parties (scholarships, foundations, etc), and share them with interested survivors. Seek cooperations and encourage donors to invest in scholarships and higher education opportunities for survivors.

Security

- Set up a safeguarding system, including a protection policy that benefits survivor advocates and leaders that the organization engages with.
- Take measures to uphold security in different areas, including on social media and in media engagement (cf. ethical storytelling), interactions with affected communities, and mitigate psychological consequences resulting from any interactions.
- Offer security training for survivor leaders and advocates.
- Make sure that survivor advocates and leaders are aware of the risks that are related to their counter-trafficking engagement.
- Take responsibility for security issues following survivors' engagement with the organization.

Recommendations to researchers

- Include survivors in the research project at all stages including planning
- Budget for capacity building to enable comprehensive participation of researchers with lived experience
- Ensure that researchers with lived experience take the lead in interactions with other survivors.
- Make use of focus group discussions (FGDs) in addition to one-on-one interviews
- Suggestions for future research:
    - To identify more barriers to engagement, focus on survivors who are not (yet) active against human trafficking, and on survivors who once were active but stopped or dropped out.
    - Investigate security threats as well as the perception of security threats by survivors of human trafficking after direct assistance has ended.

Endnotes

1. *International Labor Organization, Walk Free, International Organization of Migration, Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labor and Forced Marriage (Geneva, September 2022).*

2. *C. Ash, S. Otiende, Meaningful Engagement of People with lived Experiences: A framework and assessment for increasing lived experience leadership across the spectrum of Engagement (Washington DC: Global Fund to End Modern Slavery and National Survivor Network- Cast, 2023).*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Code of Practice for Ensuring the Rights of Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking (Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR, 2023); Rights Lab, Survivor Alliance, Nothing About Is Without Us – Survivor involvement in anti-slavery policy making: Guidance for policy makers, March 2020.*

5. *C. Ash et al., We Name It So We Can Repair It: Rethinking Harm, Accountability, and Repair in the Anti-Trafficking Sector, Lived and Professional Experience Movement-Building Working Group, March 2023; National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, From the Front of the Room: An Advocate's Guide to Help Prepare Survivors for Public Speaking, 2011.*

6. *W. Asquith, A. Kiconco, A. Balch, A review of current promising practices in the engagement of people with lived experience to address modern slavery and human trafficking (London: The Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre, 2022).*

7. *C Ash et al., We Name It So We Can Repair It.*

8. *Walk Free, What Works: Lessons Learnt in Survivor Inclusion, June 2022; W. Asquith, A. Kiconco, A. Balch, A review of current promising practices.*

9. *Rights Lab, Survivor Alliance, Nothing About Is Without Us.*

10. *C. Ash et al., We Name It So We Can Repair It.*

11. *Inspired by: C. Ash, S. Otiende, Meaningful Engagement of People with lived Experiences.*

12. *C. Ash, S. Otiende, Meaningful Engagement of People with lived Experiences.*

13. *W. Asquith, A. Kiconco, A. Balch, A review of current promising practices.*

14. *Ibid.; S. Paphitis, S. Jannesari, Modern Slavery Core Outcome Set Project report, Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre, King's College, Helen Bamber Foundation, Survivor Alliance, 2023.*

15. *Walk Free, What Works: Lessons Learnt in Survivor Inclusion, June 2022.*

16. *C. Ash, S. Otiende, Meaningful Engagement of People with lived Experiences.*

17. *M,. Dang, An Open Letter to the Anti-Trafficking Movement, March 2013, In: L.T. Murphy, Survivors of Slavery (New York: Columbia university Press, 2014); Practical Guide: Survivor-Informed Services, Office for Victims of Crime – Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center; C. Ash, "Flipping the Script on Survivor Leadership in Anti-Trafficking", Open Democracy, 14 February 2023, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/flipping-the-script-on-survivor-leadership-in-anti-trafficking/.*

18. *C. Ash, S. Otiende, Meaningful Engagement of People with lived Experiences.*

19. *C. Ash, We Name It So We Can Repair It.*

20. *In one case, a human rights defender with lived experience in another field had not experienced trafficking. In another case, the interviewee at that time did not consider herself a survivor advocate nor was she taking any action against human trafficking. However, we wish to extend our gratitude to both interviewees for the insights shared. Both of them confirmed important findings of this research from their different perspectives.*

21. *UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022 https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTiP_2022_web.pdf*

22. *Based on this self-assessment, the further answers were not evaluated for this study on survivor advocates and survivor leaders.*

23. *C. Ash, S. Otiende, Meaningful Engagement of People with Lived Experience.*

24. *This could be due to the fact that the study focused on the survivor's post trafficking experience. Nevertheless, the perception of security threats by survivors of human trafficking during and after direct assistance should be a subject for another study.*

25. *Here, a clarification is due. As noted in the methodological section, the interviewees of this research are survivors who managed to become and remain active as survivor leaders and advocates and team up with an organization. This selection criteria needs to be taken into account when assessing the feeling of inclusion that participants to this research unanimously reported. In fact, survivors who did not feel included are more likely to have left the movement, and their perceptions are not reflected in this specific research.*

26. *Given that only two organizational representatives referenced topics directly relevant to survivor-informed approaches, it is likely that respondents understood the concept asked by the question, "training on survivor-informed methodologies" to mean training either provided to survivors or provided to their organization for general capacity building.*

References

Ash C., et al. (2023), We Name It So We Can Repair It: Rethinking Harm, Accountability, and Repair in the Anti-Trafficking Sector, Lived and Professional Experience Movement-Building Working Group, March.

Ash, C. (2023), "Flipping the Script on Survivor Leadership in Anti-Trafficking", Open Democracy, 14 February, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/flipping-the-script-on-survivor-leadership-in-anti-trafficking/.

Ash, C., Otiende, S., (2023), Meaningful Engagement of People with lived Experiences: A framework and assessment for increasing lived experience leadership across the spectrum of Engagement (Washington DC: Global Fund to End Modern Slavery and National Survivor Network- Cast).

Asquith, W., Kiconco, A., Balch, A. (2022), A review of current promising practices in the engagement of people with lived experience to address modern slavery and human trafficking (London: The Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre).

Dang, M. (2014), An Open Letter to the Anti-Trafficking Movement, March 2013, In: L.T. Murphy, Survivors of Slavery (New York: Columbia university Press).

International Labor Organization, Walk Free, International Organization of Migration (2022), Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labor and Forced Marriage (Geneva, September).

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (2011), From the Front of the Room: An Advocate's Guide to Help Prepare Survivors for Public Speaking.

OSCE/ODIHR, (2023), Code of Practice for Ensuring the Rights of Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking (Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR).

Paphitis, S., Jannesari, S. (2023), Modern Slavery Core Outcome Set Project report, Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre, King's College, Helen Bamber Foundation, Survivor Alliance.

Rights Lab, Survivor Alliance (2020), Nothing About Is Without Us – Survivor involvement in anti-slavery policy making: Guidance for policy makers, March.

Walk Free (2022), What Works: Lessons Learnt in Survivor Inclusion, June.

US Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime – Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center, Practical Guide: Survivor-Informed Services, NA.