Impact Report
Standing up for people in slavery in 2019
Standing up to slavery

When I think of the difference that individuals and organisations can make, I think of our founder Thomas Clarkson. His lifelong journey to stop Britain engaging in slavery took over 50 years of tireless campaigning.

Today, 180 years on, I believe that we face a similar challenge. Over 40 million people are trapped in slavery and we must change that.

But I also believe that with so many trailblazing people, organisations and businesses who are joining our anti-slavery movement, we can equal Clarkson and his collaborators’ challenge.

Last year alone, Anti-Slavery International worked to strengthen and support 20 overseas anti-slavery partners across 21 projects in 13 countries. Together, we directly supported 58,062* women, men and children, helping them build lives free from slavery.

If we keep working together, we can fulfil the legacy of our founder and deliver freedom to everyone, everywhere, always.

Thank you so much for your support.

Jasmine O’Connor OBE
Chief Executive

Our vision is a world free from slavery

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In Mauritania, we work together with our partner to support people who escape traditional slavery, which still persists in the country.

It is extremely difficult for people who were enslaved from birth, particularly women, to build their lives in freedom. We provide emergency support and a network of female mentors to start this difficult process and help establish themselves in local communities. We also provide literacy and vocational training, which is bringing spectacular successes. Today, for example, 368 women are thriving after our project gave them training, equipment and funds to run small businesses.

We’ve also enjoyed big successes in bringing slavery cases to court, with two harsh sentences given to former masters, which resonated across the country.

There have only been five previous slavery convictions in Mauritania’s history, so this is a big step forward to ending slavery in the country.

Like in Mauritania, traditional slavery – when people are born into slavery because their ancestors “belong” to slave-owning families – is still widespread in Niger.

For over ten years, we’ve partnered with a local organisation to establish dedicated hubs to support communities escaping slavery.

The hubs are centred around schools providing primary education for the first time for these communities and also provide vocational training and micro-loans. Pupils obtain some of the highest pass rates in the country, with the highest proportion of girls at school.

What’s more, the influence of our project communities’ is spreading to neighbouring areas. In 2019 alone, the Government estimated that 5,735 people left their masters and established four independent communities.
In Tanzania, together with our partners, we work to protect children working in private homes, where they are extremely vulnerable to abuse. We provide safe spaces where children can find individual support and learn about their rights and we bring together whole communities to protect children in their neighbourhoods. Thanks to this work, hundreds of children have been rescued from exploitation. Further thousands have registered with authorities, received formal contracts and reported dramatic improvement in their working conditions, meaning that they are less likely to be exploited.

Across West Africa, children in residential Quranic schools are forced to beg on the streets, which exposes them to abuse. Students are often malnourished and live in squalid conditions, far from their families. Together with our partners, Anti-Slavery has been working in Senegal with local communities, schools and the government to drive reform of the Quranic schools' system. Our work bringing together communities to protect children in their local schools has significantly improved conditions for the children and many teachers stopped the traditional practice of sending children out to beg. We also work to empower children to claim their voice on this issue. Last year, we initiated the creation of a first ever organisation of children and young people with experience of forced begging. Together with our partners, we now support a growing group of current and former Quranic students to engage with the media, lobby the authorities and change social norms that underpin this harmful practice.

Recently, we’ve extended our successful project into neighbouring Niger, Mali and Nigeria.

1,026 young people working in private homes obtained written contracts in the last year, thus improving their protection.

Judith* is one of the children we supported. She was just thirteen when she started working in a private home. Her employer refused to pay anything for six months. When Judith complained, she was kicked out onto the streets with no idea how to get back home. While walking in the dark looking for help, someone kindly took Judith to our partner organisation. They gave Judith a safe place to stay and provided counselling to help her recover. They also made sure Judith’s employer paid the withheld wages.

*names changed

We helped to prevent 917 children from being forced to beg on the streets of Senegal.
In the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, children and young people have become increasingly vulnerable to trafficking. Anti-Slavery worked with its partners to deliver knowledge raising sessions to improve the awareness of children and young people about the risks of being trafficked. We also supported 45 girls and women personally affected of trafficking by training them as paralegals and arranging placements at police stations. This develops their skills and allows them to support survivors in other trafficking cases when they are identified by the police.

Addressing debt bondage

Many brick workers in India are trapped in a cycle of debt-bondage, forced to toil in harsh conditions with little recourse to the law. Anti-Slavery has recently concluded a successful project on this issue. Working with our partners, we supported improvements in working conditions at 31 brick factories and secured the release of 2,251 workers from debt bondage.

Aamuktha is supported by Anti-Slavery’s project. Her father borrowed money to fund her college education, which left the family with mounting debts. In sheer desperation, Aamuktha agreed to take some drugs to India to help pay off the debt. But once there, she was taken to a brothel, where she was locked up, beaten and raped repeatedly.

Through sheer determination and courage, Aamuktha escaped and returned home. She was ashamed and scared. But thanks to Anti-Slavery’s project, Aamuktha trained as a paralegal and now works for the police helping other trafficking victims in Nepal.

Bindu and her family became trapped in debt bondage after moving hundreds of miles away from home to a brick-making factory in Punjab. Despite assurances of good living conditions, Bindu’s family was forced to live in squalid accommodation, suffering daily threats and violence from the factory owner.

Tragically, Bindu’s brother-in-law became ill with fever, and, without any treatment, died soon after, leading Bindu to contact Anti-Slavery’s local partner for help. Thanks to this interaction, Bindu was able to force the local authorities into action and all workers ultimately were released, received compensation, and were assisted to return home.
Global

Stopping slavery in global supply chains

Addressing slavery practices in global supply chains is central to Anti-Slavery’s work. As ‘critical friends’, we continued encouraging businesses in the UK to go beyond compliance with the Modern Slavery Act and develop practices preventing exploitation in all parts of their supply chains. We worked with brands such as Whistles and The White Company. We also teamed up with leading online fashion retailer ASOS and other partners to help end the exploitation of migrant workers travelling from Bangladesh and Madagascar to work in the garment industry in Mauritius.

In partnership with a wide coalition of organisations, Anti-Slavery has been encouraging global brands to pledge to not knowingly use cotton from Turkmenistan, picked by forced labour. Over 70 brands have already signed the pledge.

We are very excited about the growing momentum behind a potential game-changer

Together with partners, we built a coalition of over 300 organisations to back the campaign for an EU-wide law that would make businesses legally responsible for potential abuses in their global supply chains. Excitingly, the campaign has also been backed by a number of international brands, adding an extra impetus.

Addressing trafficking from Vietnam to Europe

In our collaborative project, we worked to address trafficking from Vietnam to Europe. Our partners ran awareness raising campaigns in Vietnam and provided support for trafficked Vietnamese children in the UK. In the aftermath of the tragedy in October, when 39 Vietnamese people were found dead in a lorry in the UK, our research report on trafficking from Vietnam, Precarious Journeys, attracted significant attention. We hope this can hasten the development of mechanisms for people to migrate safely.

Anti-slavery hero ends slavery practice in Niger

The ‘fifth wife’ is a practice where men buy ‘unofficial’ wives, in addition to the four permitted by Islam, who are treated as slaves. But in 2019, this practice was outlawed in Niger.

The win comes after a decade-long legal battle, started by Anti-Slavery and its partner. At the centre of the battle was Hadijatou Mani who, as a 12-year-old girl, was sold for around £200 to an older man. She escaped and bravely took on her former master in court. She was finally able to see her unofficial marriage ruled unlawful, following the ruling by Niger’s highest court.

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Thank you for helping us to support so many people in 2019. We couldn’t have done it without you.

For more information on how to support Anti-Slavery International, please visit [www.antislavery.org/donate](http://www.antislavery.org/donate) or call [020 7737 9934](tel:02077379934)

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