

STORIES BEHIND THE STATISTICS

These stories show the role ordinary people in communities can play in ending modern slavery. We encourage you to incorporate these stories into your service, perhaps by including one in a sermon or talk. Or you could read one aloud during a time of prayer, and ask people to reflect on what they have heard. It's completely up to you, but we would love to hear what you did. Get in touch by posting on social media with the hashtag #FreedomSundayUK, or contact us via our website www.freedomsundayglobal.org.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS WITH THE SALVATION ARMY

For Salvation Army Officer Captain Lorraine Kinnear, understanding the community she lives in is key to spotting the signs of modern slavery.

"If you have good relationships with people in your community then recognising the signs of modern slavery becomes easier. The more I talk about modern slavery the more educated our local communities will be, which makes it more likely that together we can spot the signs and do something about it."

Lorraine's journey started in 2015 at an information evening The Salvation Army's Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Unit hosted in Maidstone. "I learned there are cases where victims of modern slavery are initially identified as a victim of domestic violence or a refugee or someone who is homeless."

In September 2015 Captain Lorraine's youngest daughter started nursery, and she found many of the other mothers didn't speak English. They were searching for inexpensive English lessons. Captain Lorraine drew on her friends' skills and started hosting free English classes with volunteer teachers.

"The English classes opened up a conversation with a lady called Alana*; she had been supported in a Salvation Army safe house and now has a new life. It was really good she could talk to me - other girls came into the group and she would tell them 'Lorraine will help you'."

"Alana found a girl who had literally just escaped from being trafficked. She phoned me saying Tanya* had called her pleading for help after escaping her traffickers by smashing the windows of the house. I took Tanya to my house until a volunteer driver arrived because she was in such a bad way. I found an Albanian translator who discovered that all Tanya wanted was a shower. Her skin was awful, she hadn't eaten. I drove to the safe house with her - it was nice to see her arrive safely."

Since then, Captain Lorraine has hosted her own information evenings, attended by members of the community including emergency service personnel. She also volunteers as a regional transport coordinator for the Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Unit. This role includes recruiting, training and supporting volunteers who chaperone and drive victims of modern slavery to safe houses.

Captain Lorraine finishes, "I have a real passion for helping people. When I signed my covenant as a Salvation Army Officer it said to love the unlovable, clothe the naked, feed the hungry and befriend the friendless. Each of us should be fighting against injustice. It is difficult as you can't help everyone, but if you help one person at a time then we can make a difference. Our area came even closer together as a community learning how to spot the signs of modern slavery - so can others."

*Names have been changed.

HIDING ON THE INTERNET: CYBERSEX TRAFFICKING

This story deals with child abuse. Please check beforehand if the details are appropriate for your group, for example if you have children present.

God wants to end slavery and he calls his people to help time and time again.

Slavery has evaded extinction by adaptation. As the church we must also adapt so that we can uncover new forms of slavery. The most recent manifestation is cybersex trafficking, otherwise known as the online sexual exploitation of children. Before you read on, remember: God is calling us to end slavery.

The problem of cybersex trafficking is closer to home than you may think. To date, International Justice Mission (IJM) has dealt with cases involving customers from the UK, Australia, Canada, Germany and the United States. In late 2015, a man from London was convicted for sexually abusing and exploiting children via a webcam. More than 4,000 indecent images were found on his laptop. The images traced back to a cybersex trafficking ring in the Philippines, where our team found seven-year-old Maarko*. Maarko, his two-year-old sister, and three cousins were being exploited by Maarko's mother and aunt. The British man had paid to set up a webcam in their home so he could direct the live abuse of the children, who were forced to pose and perform in front of the camera.

IJM investigators and Philippine police tracked down the house and safely removed all of the children. Maarko's mother and aunt were arrested, and court proceedings have begun against them for grooming and exploiting their children for profit. IJM will continue defending these children in the legal case to hold the perpetrators accountable. Restraining the criminals not only prevents further abuse, but also sends a strong signal to the community in the UK and the Philippines that there are real consequences for abusing young children.

Maarko, his sister and his cousins are now safe in an aftercare home. The eldest children have been enrolled in a school where they can have a fresh start and resume their studies. IJM social workers visit the children weekly and have shared that "the children have a glow of playfulness. They love to tease; they smile and laugh constantly."

Since being rescued, a few of the children have shared that they knew of other victims. Thanks to their courage and information, two more boys were rescued.

Maarko's story illustrates the devastating reality of cybersex trafficking. Thousands of young girls and boys today have no one to protect them from this abuse, unless we fight to protect them. That's why IJM is on the ground working day and night searching for each individual in need of rescue. Please pray with us and consider getting involved in our campaign #NotOnMyScreen. We pray the church will bring this new form of trafficking into the light.

You can find a video version of this story here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIML8kKHs0M>

A NEIGHBOUR OFFERS A CHANCE OF ESCAPE

Sara*, an Indian national, was bought to the UK from Kuwait as a domestic worker.

Living in London, Sara* was treated appallingly by her employers. She was not allowed to contact her family, was often locked in the house, was not allowed out to go to church and was expected to be constantly on call, looking after their baby 24 hours a day. With no contacts in the UK, no money, and her passport in the hands of her employers, Sara did not have anyone to turn to for help. She received no pay for five months. She was trapped in modern slavery.

A neighbour noticed that Sara seemed distressed whenever he saw her. He had also heard rumours of her treatment and was concerned that she was not being paid and was being treated badly. He contacted Kalayaan, a charity that provides advice and support to migrant domestic workers in the UK, to see how he could help. They told him it was important to know what kind of visa she had, as that would determine whether she would get deported immediately if she left her employers.

The neighbour managed to speak with Sara and get basic information from her which could be used to determine what her options might be.

Sara was worried that if she went to the police she would be deported, so she decided to leave her employer and to try and find another job. But her visa was expiring so she needed to find a new job very quickly.

Her only problem was that she was in constant sole care of a baby and was not able to leave the baby on its own. Even if there was someone else in the house Sara was usually not allowed out. However, Sara grabbed her chance when her employer let her out to do the shopping. She caught a taxi which she paid for with some money given to her by her neighbour and went straight to Kalayaan.

Sara's main priority was to find another job as she would need one in order to renew her visa. With one week before her visa was due to expire Sara managed to secure a job. She is currently working in the UK as a nanny. Her work allows her employers to go to work knowing their child is well cared for and Sara is able to send money home to support her family.

*Names have been changed.

STORIES FROM YOUR AREA

If you have time, why not try and find a story of modern slavery or human trafficking from your own area?

Try searching the website of your local paper, or google your town or county's name along with 'modern slavery' or 'human trafficking'. You could include the story in your church's newsletter, use it in a sermon, or post it on your social media.

People may be surprised to read that modern slavery and human trafficking are not crimes that happen far away, instead they are right at the heart of our communities, and often happening under our noses. We hope these stories will show people the power of their eyes and voices. **See It, Speak Out.**