



AWARENESS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 8 - AUGUST 2014

INTRODUCTION

HAART is mostly involved in the fight against human trafficking in Kenya, however, recently we had the privilege of carrying out activities outside of the country. We are going to share some of the stories in this newsletter. You can read about HAART's work in South Sudan where HAART's director held a workshop for young internally displaced persons. This was facilitated in partnership with SOS Children's Villages International. HAART was also involved in averting a case of potential trafficking from Ethiopia, where Kenya would have been a transit country. Interestingly, the recruitment was on social media. We continue to conduct workshops in and around Nairobi and also assist victims of trafficking. Young@HAART created two events in August. They held a community clean-up event where they suited up in gum boots and dust masks, armed with wheelbarrows and shovels, and they filled up two lorry loads of trash. This event drew a lot of attention for raising awareness as the community appreciated the event and asked questions about human trafficking. On the 30th August the Young@HAART organized a football event at a slum close to HAART's office. The event was very well received and during the games, the youths and our youth coordinators were busy creating awareness on human trafficking.

This month the monthly trafficking scenario #7 has been put on the website, please find it on haartkenya.org/scenario7



Young@HAART

The HAART youths had a football event on 30th August. Here Mary from HAART presents the prize to the winning team.

Inside this Issue

- Introduction
- HAART in South Sudan
- Trafficking in Ethiopia
- Volunteers of the Month
- HAART in Social Media

Human Trafficking in South Sudan

By Radoslaw malinowski

As the Republic of South Sudan – a newly born country – celebrates its third independence anniversary, its society tries to recover from decades of civil war. Any visitor will spot that much development is still needed in South Sudan in terms of state and society building. The South Sudanese people, who used to live amongst the war, are trying to save what remains from the war destruction. Obviously the priorities in South Sudan should be peace building, reconciliation and civil education. That is why, during my recent travel to Juba, I reluctantly accepted the offer of **SOS Children's Villages International to conduct a one-day human trafficking awareness meeting for young Internally Displaced Persons.** They have recently experienced a high level of recruitment for trafficking, especially for youths to join the rebels. My audience at my workshop was to be young refugees, who were chased from their homes by the recent wave of violence.

Before the workshop I learned that South Sudan is also a country affected by trafficking. Some of the incidents of trafficking are connected to war, but others are typical occurrences of trafficking that could be happening elsewhere. My audience had never heard about human trafficking (how typical!), but as soon as I had managed to describe what we mean by trafficking in persons through my Arabic translator, it appeared to be very familiar to the youth. They could recall many incidents of what we call human trafficking and the longer we continued the workshop the more I was convinced South Sudanese society is also affected by this vice.

There are many types of trafficking, as narrated by the young South Sudanese. Some are an outcome of the decades of war and the recent conflict, whilst others are due to lack of awareness and absence of the rule of law. Among the first are child soldiers – abducted by the warring parties. As the conflict continues many young boys are taken by the militia in order to serve as soldiers. The second are people who become victims of fake job **opportunities and end up working for free in the trafficker's homes, bars, farms etc.** Interestingly, in South Sudan people are not only recruited but also exploited. Besides the internal trafficking, there are incidents of people from neighboring countries being trafficked to South Sudan. Lured by the offer of a good job, they are forced into either prostitution or forced labour. Sadly enough, as there is no law against such procedures, it is very difficult to hold those who organize the whole process accountable. The police service, often composed of illiterate officers (according to United Nations close to 90% of policeman cannot read or write), cannot stop rich, smart and well connected traffickers.

To wind up the workshop I asked the youth to conduct a drama on somebody who fell into the trap of traffickers. The youth prepared a 30-minute drama (I guess it could be the first drama about human trafficking in Arabic in this part of the world), which perfectly and in a very detailed way showed the process of trafficking, especially how the traffickers manipulate the psychology of victim and their family. As I watched the youth performance I had a deep feeling that it is time for a thorough counter trafficking program in South Sudan. As the country faces a serious challenge to reduce trafficking, there is a need to organize awareness campaigns, **together with victim's assistance and finally encourage the government to introduce the law that will prosecute the perpetrators.** It is indeed an appropriate time to address human trafficking before it takes from this new country what is most precious – human capital. After all, there are few societies in the world who suffered more from traditional slavery than the people of South Sudan. They definitely should be spared from the effects of the slavery of our time – human trafficking.



Averted case of human trafficking in Ethiopia: Kenya as a transit country

By Anni Alexander

Ethiopia has a population of 70 million, with 50 per cent of the population under the age of 20 years. Therefore, there is bound to be considerable youth unemployment which pushes young Ethiopians to migrate abroad to look for better opportunities. Due to this and other reasons, many Ethiopian women move to the Gulf States to work as domestic servants and it is estimated that 60 to 70 per cent of the deals are brokered by illegal agents **increasing the women's risk of forced labour. In many cases, the women do not sign a contract before departure and have limited information about their future place of employment.**

Since many Ethiopians have lost their lives or have suffered emotional and physical abuse while in the Middle East, illegal trafficking has become a hot topic in Ethiopia. To combat the problem, the government has closed down many illegal job agent offices, prosecuted many traffickers, and has forbidden Ethiopians from travelling to many Middle Eastern countries for employment purposes. However, these measures are not strict enough. The root causes for trafficking need to be addressed by creating local employment opportunities and prosecuting offenders of sex and labour trafficking. The travel ban has created a need for Ethiopian migrants to transit via another country such as Kenya creating a market for Kenyan traffickers. The following story illustrates the issue of trafficking in Ethiopia.

Recently, a staff member at HAART received a message from an Ethiopian friend who told him she had a friend, Fana *, who had been approached by a Kenyan job agent via a social media site offering an accountant job in Oman. The friend felt the offer Fana had received was suspicious and the agent seemed to target Ethiopian women on this site. Fana was supposed to travel to Kenya to sign the contract because Ethiopians cannot travel direct to Arab countries if they have a work visa. HAART advised the Ethiopian contact that if Fana travels to Kenya, she is more vulnerable. HAART assisted Fana by calling the agent to confirm if the offer was genuine.

"I called the agent and spoke to him for about 5 minutes. He remembered Fana but would not give the details of the work place or a copy of the contract. The only thing he would say is that the employer is a construction company. I pushed him for details but he still would not give them and stated that if Fana did not want to go to Oman, he was not forcing her. After I told him that it was in his best interest to provide Fana with a contract and details of the work place as the minimum sentence for human trafficking in Kenya is 15 years, he hung up."

Based on the conversation Fana was advised not to travel anywhere with this man. Fana agreed to send HAART the transcript of conversation she had had with the agent on the social media site. Since most recruitments are done verbally, this was an opportunity to learn about how traffickers might recruit their victims using different tactics. Reading the transcript there are many suspicious elements:

The man was Kenyan but recruiting in Ethiopia using social media, thus potential employees cannot meet the agent face to face. When Fana asked him about this, the agent ignored her question. Later, when Fana asks about it again, the agent replies that the company he is working for wants Ethiopian nationals.

The agent was in a rush to get all the details he needs to apply for a visa on **Fana's behalf and pushes her to make a decision. Everything needs to happen very fast and the job is starting very soon. The agent tells Fana that "send me his passport copy right now and also send me back the visa application form for your friend [...] we are surely running out of time because you are to at work on sunday 13/07/ so please send me the two person documents so that we can finalize the visa process today and it will be ready by Wednesday**

[sic]**.

The only details of the job the agent is willing to give is that it is an American company working at a power plant in Oman. However, later on the agent says it is actually a construction company. When Fana asks for more information, he seems to get annoyed and tells her she needs to make up her mind quickly. He also does not provide any details about his own business as a job agent when asked. The agent only provides Fana with a first name, a phone number and an email address, and when Fana asks for a website or a Facebook page for the agent, he does not provide her with further details.

Fana was supposed to cover all the travel costs without having proof of employment. The agent wanted Fana to travel to Kenya to sign the contract before travelling onwards to Oman and Fana was supposed pay all travel expenses. Thus, she was supposed to pay to travel to Kenya to see the contract the agent was offering.

The agent seemed to be manipulating Fana into complying by using religion and a sense of belonging to the East African community. He tells Fana that he is Catholic and his religion has not taught him how to cheat. **Just before this he tells her that "Me i know you are save you are just like my sister because we are all east africans first you have to trust me and you trust everything i do for you [sic]". When Fana changes her mind about going, the agent gets angry and tells her he thought he could trust her people. As what seems like a last resort, the agent tells Fana she could talk to someone from her tribe that the agent knows to reassure her that the right decision is to go to Oman.**

In the end, Fana decided not to go to Oman. She tells the agent she does not feel safe. In addition, she seems to have been well informed as she **tells the agent that "I am sorry again what I heard about what did happened in kenya and oman I lost all my confidence sorry and I just mate u online I dont know u before hard to take risk and all my friends and my family not agree [sic]".**

While there is no definite evidence that this is a case of human trafficking, the way the agent talks to Fana, tries to persuade her but does not give details of the job, makes this a suspected case of human trafficking. Traffickers use deception and do not provide details of the potential employer to the potential victim. This suspected trafficker used a sense of urgency and religion to persuade Fana to travel to Kenya where she may have become a victim of trafficking.

Although it is not definite Fana would have been trafficked had she agreed to travel to Kenya, anti-human trafficking organisations in Kenya and Ethiopia, such as HAART, as well as government agencies should be aware of the existence of the real possibility that Ethiopians are trafficked to the Middle East via Kenya, and particularly Nairobi. The travel ban implemented and enforced by the Ethiopian government has created a need for Ethiopians to travel via another country, most notably Kenya, to reach their destination, and traffickers may use the possibility of travelling via Kenya to transport Ethiopians to the Middle East and other destinations. This has also created a new market for Kenyan traffickers. Ethiopians like Fana need to be made aware of the distinct possibility that if they are approached by job agents in social media or otherwise, they may be at risk of being trafficked.

* The name has been altered.

** The spelling is copy-pasted from the original conversation and is thus not edited in any way.



Awareness Against Human Trafficking

P. O. Box 26893 - 00504 Nairobi
Kenya

Phone: +254 738 506 264

E-mail: info@haartkenya.org

WE ARE ON THE WEB!!!

PLEASE VISIT US AT:

HAARTKENYA.ORG

Follow US ON FACEBOOK

FACEBOOK.COM/HAART.KE

Upcoming events

- 10 workshops at the grass root level organized by our volunteers
- Assistance to victims' of human trafficking (VOTs)
- Anti-trafficking campaign in social media
- HAART to evaluate awareness programme

HAART in social media:

Please visit us on our new Facebook account:

facebook.com/HAART.Ke

If you click LIKE, you will receive daily news feeds.

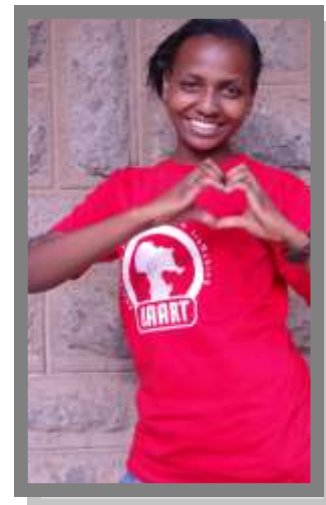
You can also get our daily tweets if you follow us on twitter:

[@HAARTKenya](https://twitter.com/HAARTKenya)

Volunteers of the month



Young@HAART
Sebastian Wafula



Young@HAART
Lucy Nyawira