



# AWARENESS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 5 - MAY 2015

### INTRODUCTION

Arts to End Slavery completely exceeded our expectations. After working on planning the project, we were blown away by the response. Hundreds of people came to the different exhibitions and events around Nairobi and it has also garnered interest in many traditional and social media as well as some international media as well. The launch was on May 1st at Sarakasi Dome in Ngara. Although it was a holiday and also raining around 400 people came for to see the art and see the performances. We were grateful that so many people came for that event and helped it make it a big success. The following four weeks, HAART had several events, at GoDown Art Center HAART invited local community groups to learn more about human trafficking. At the British Institute in Eastern Africa, HAART invited Trace Kenya and the Cradle Children Foundation to present about human trafficking in a panel discussion. Last event was at the Kobo Foundation and it was a more art oriented and also intimate event. You can see pictures from the events and more on [facebook.com/haart.ke](https://facebook.com/haart.ke). In June, HAART is continuing to use Arts to End Slavery although not in the same way. We are going to take the exhibition to universities. Moreover, HAART is planning a Human Trafficking Conference on 26th June with participants from civil society, government and the media. The theme is 'understanding the multifaceted nature of human trafficking in Kenya and how art can be used to fight it'. It is a one-day conference and it is going to have two parts; firstly, we are going to have discuss the nature of human trafficking in Kenya and how it relates to East Africa and globally. Secondly, we are going to utilize Arts to End Slavery, to discuss how art can be used for social change.

We would like to again thank all of you who came or followed Arts to End Slavery on social media, this project has been a big success mainly thanks to you. We would also like to thank the more than 40 artists who submitted art to the project and also made performances during the different events. Most of the artists came on board at a time when we did not have funding for the project and they volunteered their amazing talents for this project. Aside from Arts to End Slavery, HAART's normal program went on, HAART continued with our grassroots awareness campaign and also do assist victims of trafficking. In this newsletter you can also read about the launch of Arts to End Slavery and a new story on [HAARTstories.org](http://HAARTstories.org) about the struggle to find a small girl who had disappeared.



### Arts to End Slavery at the Kobo Trust

The last event at the Kobo Trust was an unforgettable night with more than 100 guests, live painting, music, dance and poetry. Furthermore, there was a raffle and a bar. See more pictures on [facebook.com/haart.ke](https://facebook.com/haart.ke)

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## A thank you letter

By Anonymous

The long anticipated day was finally with us. The closer we got to May 1st, the more we felt unprepared. This was mainly nerves because as a team, this was the first major event that we were hosting. Arts 2 End Slavery was a dream that we never thought we could fully implement and with the passage of time, it grew bigger than we anticipated. I guess, that is the best thing about sharing a dream that it stops being about you and it becomes about us. Arts 2 End Slavery was about everyone that contributed. It is about the artists that agreed to give out pieces of art before we could even buy them materials. It is about volunteers who worked tirelessly even when we could not afford to pay them. The launch was the culmination of the effort that was put by all these people and it was beautiful to see it all come together.

Sarakasi Dome was the place to be and the guests started arriving as early as five o'clock. Our event on Facebook had more than 600 people signing up for the event. For us, that was a good sign and even if half that number showed up, we would be grateful. The artists did a good job and the 47 pieces of art displayed in the room was a clear sign of their commitment to the fight against human trafficking. Grace, the project coordinator had been working since morning with Young@HAART volunteers to make sure that everything was in place. The turnout by the end of the night was around 400 people and we believe that this was a success. It was amazing to see the support we got from other NGOs who have worked with us, people from the art world, the media and concerned citizens who wanted to know what this night was all about.

One of the things that stood out during the night was the performances. Ghemma, a musical group from Coast performed a song on human trafficking that was quite entertaining but had a very strong message. We also had Sheddy The Poet and Coreen who did very moving poetry pieces. Although, we faced some issues with the lights going on and off, this did not kill the mood of the people who were patient to watch every performance and learn more about human trafficking.

The feedback was very positive. People were not only impressed by the art and the performances but also the message. One of the goals of this project was to make people see that modern slavery is an issue that needs to be addressed and by the end of the night most people agreed with us. The launch is the beginning of two months of Art to End Slavery and we hope that by the time the curtain closes, we would have reached more people with this important message.



# Finding Sylvia\* - A Child Trafficking Story

By George Matheka, edited by Winnie Mutevu and Sr. Elizabeth Mueni

Sylvia\* is 14 years old. I met her in a school in Nairobi. She was a class seven pupil and according to her teacher she used to be very bright, but her performance had dropped drastically over some time. Sylvia's attitude was also different because she was always moody. These changes made the class teacher suspect that something was happening to Sylvia that was causing these changes. Upon investigation the class teacher found out that she was being abused by her cousin.

Sylvia would leave school early to go and pick her cousin's children from school. She was also responsible for doing all the house chores. This meant that she would have to sleep late at night, was extremely exhausted from all the chores and still had to wake up early to attend school. This schedule was impossible for a young child who is only fourteen years old to maintain.

The class teacher was concerned and forwarded the case to the school social worker who coincidentally is a volunteer on a HAART project. He had previously arranged trainings for the students on human trafficking. The social worker contacted me and we discussed the issue at length. We concluded that Sylvia was being exploited for child labour, that this was a child trafficking case and the girl needed to be rescued. At the time of planning her rescue the schools were closed for holidays and Sylvia was to travel back to Kisii with her cousin. This made it impossible for us to implement our plans for her rescue. We talked with Sylvia and agreed that we would carry out her rescue when they came back from Kisii.

Schools opened and to our dismay Sylvia did not report to school. We were imagining the worst because if her cousin could exploit her as she was doing maybe she had harmed her. We had to figure out our next course of action because Sylvia's welfare depended on it. We decided that the best way forward was to visit the girl's home in Kisii to confirm whether she was fine. Luckily we had taken directions to Sylvia's home in Kisii when we interviewed her. Therefore, we had an idea of the location of her home. I discussed the issue with the program manager and he agreed with our course of action.

I left for Kisii relying on the directions I got from Sylvia. I had never been to this area before. I had tried to follow the directions but became lost because it was an area I was not familiar with. I was also running out of time because it was becoming late for me to get my destination. It took me two hours to realize that I had gone in the opposite direction and I had to find my way back. I did not despair because I knew Sylvia's life might depend on my success.

It took two hours for me to find my way back to the town. When I got there I thought that the village was close but I had to travel for two hours on a motorbike to get to Sylvia's village.

I got to Sylvia's home at 7.30 pm. I found her cleaning utensils. Her brother and grandmother were also in the house. It was a relief for me to see her safe and she was very happy to see me. She was able to explain to me how she got home. Sylvia said that on their way to Kisii her cousin decided to visit her sister in Siaya. Her cousin did not want the burden of travelling with her all the way to Siaya and dropped her off at town near Kisii. She left Sylvia with an older man who was to take care of her for some months before they picked her up. When she explained this to me, I could tell that there was a very high risk that her cousin was planning to traffic Sylvia to this man for sexual exploitation. No one in their right mind would leave a fourteen year old girl with a man who is a complete stranger to her.

Fortunately Sylvia had attended one of HAART's trainings. The information she got from the workshop made her notice that she was not safe and she needed to run away from him. To escape she devised a plan. She excused herself to go to the washroom and as soon as she was sure that she was alone, she ran away. Luckily she had a few coins in her pocket which she used as her transportation to get to her home village. She arrived home late at night, which meant that she had travelled alone using public transport. Since I had travelled the same route coming to see her, I knew what she had gone through to get home. When she arrived home she found her mother and brother. They were shocked to see her arrive at that time. She had to explain what had happened to her mother who broke down in tears upon hearing everything her child experienced in the hands of someone that is a relative.

Her mother works as a house help in the nearby village and was not earning much, which is why she allowed Sylvia to stay with her cousin. The mother said she was not aware that her daughter was going through such difficulties in her cousin's hands. She took the initiative of taking her daughter to her nearby school and decided to take full responsibility of taking care of her. Sylvia was lucky to get away as she did because she knew what was about to happen to her. Most victims are not so fortunate because until they are trafficked they are not informed of the danger of trafficking.

By the time I had finished talking to the family it was very late but I had to begin my journey to a meeting I had the next morning in Homa Bay. I had to travel on a motorbike and down a mountain after dark for two hours to get to the main town where I could catch a connecting bus. Despite the challenges I was happy that Sylvia was fine and safely in the hands of someone that genuinely cared for her.

*\* Name has been altered.*



Awareness Against Human Trafficking

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WE ARE ON THE WEB!!!

PLEASE VISIT US AT:

[HAARTKENYA.ORG](http://HAARTKENYA.ORG)

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## 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
- Human Trafficking Conference

## Donate

We would be very grateful if you would support our work to end modern slavery.

With your contribution we are able to prevent more people from being trafficked and to assist more victims of trafficking.

[HAARTKENYA.ORG/DONATE](http://HAARTKENYA.ORG/DONATE)

MPESA PAY BILL NUMBER:

**823258**

## Mourning Ashif Malamba

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of one of the artists that participated in the Arts to End Slavery project. Ashif from Maasai Mbili was one of the first artists to volunteer and deliver his work for the project. Ashif was a respected Kenyan artist and undoubtedly one of the pioneers of art in Kibera and his death has robbed the art world and Kenya a great talent. HAART would like to send our condolences to the family and Maasai Mbili. Kindly, contact Rabala on 0720293820 if you want to assist with the burial preparations. Below his picture and his contribution to Arts to End Slavery. Rest in Peace Ashif!

