

THE MISSION

The Human Trafficking Institute (HTI) exists to decimate trafficking at its source by empowering police and prosecutors to stop traffickers. Working inside criminal justice systems, HTI provides embedded experts, world-class training, investigative resources, and evidence-based research necessary to free victims.

THE PROBLEM

According to the most recent estimate from the International Labour Organization, there are approximately 24.9 million human trafficking victims in the world today. Traffickers force people into labor or sexual exploitation, seize their earnings, and pay them little or no wages. Even though every country in the world has laws against this form of exploitation, traffickers still manage to bring in \$150 billion in annual profits—that's more than Apple, Microsoft, and Berkshire Hathaway combined- helping make trafficking the fastest-growing criminal enterprise in the world. Governments across the Global South have the will to protect human trafficking victims and bring traffickers to justice, but are often not equipped with the proper skills, resources, or training to handle these complex cases.

Currently, the vast majority of anti-trafficking efforts have no impact on the trafficker's profits. Instead, they focus overwhelmingly on reducing the vulnerability of potential victims and caring for survivors. While these interventions are essential, they do not confront the problem at its source: the traffickers themselves. Traffickers rake in profits, operating under a sense of impunity due to limited criminal justice enforcement, all while exploiting some of the most vulnerable populations and facing no serious repercussions. Our model fills this gap to stop traffickers from exploiting potential victims in the first place.



OUR STRATEGY

Trafficking schemes collapse when justice systems send traffickers to jail. Many traffickers will only exploit individuals if there is no risk to doing so. Even a small increase in law enforcement changes the calculus for traffickers. Traffickers begin to leave the vulnerable alone when they face the risk of forfeiting their profits and losing their freedom. We do not have to prosecute all traffickers to produce a devastating or widespread reduction in trafficking. We just have to prosecute a critical mass of traffickers through criminal justice enforcement that deters an even larger group of future traffickers from ever committing the crime in the first place.

HTI's approach for decimating human trafficking was not conceived as an idea we hoped would work, but rather based on a model successfully piloted by our co-founders during their tenure at the U.S. Department of Justice. There, they helped develop and implement a model that was piloted in six U.S. districts to improve the federal response to prosecuting traffickers. Within two years, the pilot districts increased the number of traffickers charged by 114% and convicted more traffickers than the other 88 federal districts combined.

Based on the success of this model, HTI set out to partner with countries that are serious about measurably improving human trafficking enforcement. Prosecuting human trafficking cases requires intensive training from experienced experts to develop specialized skills and mastery of core knowledge. We embed our experts within the justice systems of our Partner Countries to provide hands on support and intensive training so prosecutors and investigators can effectively combat trafficking. We implement our model in coordination with our Partner Countries' governments over an extended period of time until the model is self-sustaining and the justice system is fully equipped to stop traffickers.

OUR MODEL

Specialized Teams

We help our Partner Countries build specialized anti-trafficking teams of investigators, prosecutors, and victim service specialists. We train these teams on specialized investigative and prosecutorial techniques to arrest and charge suspected traffickers. We work with our Partner Countries to fast-track trafficking cases through the courts to prevent excessive backlogs.

Targeted Trainings

Members of the specialized anti-trafficking teams complete a robust training program, comprised of our intensive Human Trafficking Academy and targeted trainings, designed to improve investigative techniques centered on victim needs. Our experts, law enforcement specialists, and victim service professionals provide hands-on training and real-time guidance as they investigate and prosecute cases in the field. Each training program is crafted with input from agencies that handle trafficking cases so as to properly address each Partner Country's needs and challenges.

Embedded Experts

In cooperation with our Partner Countries, we place enforcement experts inside prosecutors' offices and police departments. These experts are accomplished prosecutors and investigators with extensive experience working on human trafficking cases in the United States and abroad. Our experts help support prosecutors and investigators as they pursue trafficking cases, from the identification of victims to the end of a trial. They work side by side with the specialized teams to build skills, solve trafficking case-related challenges, and provide accountability to prevent corruption long after we are gone.

HTI's model is designed to help justice systems build effective, sustainable responses to human trafficking, and it is working. In the short time our field teams have been on the ground, we have assisted our Partner Countries in removing hundreds of victims from exploitation and prosecuting hundreds of traffickers, in turn deterring countless potential traffickers from committing the crime in the first place.

Our work is bringing tangible hope to victims of human trafficking worldwide. Together, we can decimate trafficking.