

Technology and Labor Trafficking Project Framing Document

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1. Introduction

In 2014, the Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership & Policy at the University of Southern California (USC) will conduct the first in-depth study of technology and labor trafficking. The Technology and Labor Trafficking project examines the role of technology and digital tools in both facilitating and combatting labor trafficking in the U.S. and international contexts. While the project will highlight positive technology implementations such as those that monitor labor trafficking in supply chains, the negative aspects will be also explored such as the tools that exacerbate information asymmetries among recruiters, employers, and exploited workers. A final report will provide businesses, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), technologists, and the research community with critical information about immediate risks, best practices, recommendations, and guiding principles for the development of data and technology driven strategies to effectively address labor trafficking.

While reliable statistics are elusive and often contested, recent estimates indicate the scale of the issue. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2014) there are 21 million victims of forced labor and trafficking in the world today, with more than US\$150 billion in illegal profits generated by their work.¹ It is vital to consider the relevance and impact of technologies on the lives of this “vast nation”² of exploited men, women, and children in order to effectively understand and respond to labor trafficking in the 21st century.

With generous support from Humanity United, the Technology and Labor Trafficking project builds upon the Center’s leadership in the technology and human trafficking space to guide current and future interventions in forced labor, labor trafficking, and exploitation. The project builds on USC’s earlier, pioneering research on technology and sex trafficking, and will focus on building a stronger empirical base to inform policy-making, and the development of responsible technological interventions to aid vulnerable populations.

This framing document provides an initial scan of the technology and labor trafficking landscape based on preliminary research. The purpose is to explore the key issues, provide the context for the current research approach, and discuss the trajectory of the project and next steps. This is an evolving document - open to reader feedback, comment, and criticism - and will be further revised and incorporated into a final report.

2. Project Rationale and Objectives

¹ International Labour Organization. *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour*. Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL) and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FPRW). Geneva, Switzerland, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_243391.pdf

² Ibid.

The rapid diffusion of digital and networked technologies, such as social media, mobile devices, and the web are impacting a vast array of human processes. Communication technologies can significantly alter the frequency, capacity, distance, and speed of information flows that underpin relationships between individuals, communities, and organizations. In addition, developments like big data analytics and surveillance tools can provide new ways of understanding social phenomena as well as additional means of social control.

How are existing and emerging information and communication technologies impacting labor trafficking? Currently little empirical research exists. An examination of the strengths and weaknesses of current counter-trafficking technologies and policies will help address this knowledge gap. Research will identify potential strategic areas where technological interventions might counter labor trafficking. Interviews, focus group, and case study methodologies will ground potential findings in empirical research. Gender, human security, and economic perspectives will also inform the analysis. The objective is to produce action-orientated research that will stimulate the field with innovative, multi-sector, and transformative approaches to address labor trafficking and ultimately aid its victims/survivors.

The first research phase includes a preliminary review of the landscape and formulation of the present framing document. The second phase involves expert interviews and focus groups in the U.S., and the third phase involves international field research and case studies. In the final phase, researchers will analyze the data and present and distribute the findings in a comprehensive report.

A central goal of this project is to build a knowledge base of the ways in which technology is used to facilitate labor trafficking, as well as how technology can be leveraged to counter this exploitation and aid its victims. A foundation of empirically grounded research is necessary to ensure that well-meaning technological and data-driven interventions do not unintentionally introduce negative consequences for those vulnerable populations they seek to aid. The final report will provide the multi-stakeholder community with needed research and guiding principles for the development of responsible and effective technological solutions to forced labor and exploitation.

3. Definitional Considerations

While definitions are often contested, this project draws upon definitions of labor trafficking, forced labor, and exploitation laid out in key International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, United Nations (UN) instruments, as well as United States federal law.

The ILO's Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) defines forced labor as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily" (ILO C.29, Art. 1). Forced labor can be enacted by States or imposed by private agents for the purposes of sexual and/or labor exploitation. This research project will focus on *forced labor imposed by private agents* for

the purposes of *labor exploitation*, and will include practices such as bonded labor, serfdom, forced domestic labor, forced labor of migrants, and slavery.³

The UN Palermo Protocol on Trafficking (2000) gives additional emphasis to the role of *movement* in the overall act of exploitation. Aspects of movement include the recruitment, transportation, harboring, or receipt of a trafficked person. The Palermo Protocol also focuses on the *means* of exploitation, including the coercion, abduction, deception, and abuse of power or vulnerability of a trafficked person.

U.S. federal law defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)⁴ as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.” It is important to note that under this definition movement is not a required condition.

While the Palermo Protocol, ILO Convention No. 29, and the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act are useful in defining the scope and parameters, this research study will be cognizant of the assumptions, objections, and debates around these and all definitions relevant to labor trafficking.

4. Research Questions

The following research questions will be examined:

- 1) To what extent does the current literature deepen our understanding of the role of technology in forced labor and exploitation? What available theoretical, methodological, and analytical frameworks can be employed to address the issue?
- 2) What are current examples of technology being used to facilitate labor trafficking?
- 3) What are examples of technology being leveraged to disrupt, prevent, or intervene in labor trafficking?
- 4) How is the private sector utilizing technology to monitor and prevent labor trafficking from occurring in supply chains?
- 5) What are the risks and best practices associated with technological interventions?
- 6) What geographic regions, countries, supply chains, labor forces, economic sectors, and industries offer targeted opportunities for technological interventions?

³ The 1926 Slavery Convention defines slavery as “the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised” (Article 1(1)). The research also draws on definitions of exploitative practices outlined in the 1956 UN Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices similar to Slavery.

⁴ Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, 22 U.S.C. § 7102 (October 28, 2000), as amended (the Act (TVPPRA) was most recently reauthorization in 2011).

- 7) What can be learned from interviews, focus groups, case studies, and field research in these areas?
- 8) What guiding principles can be derived for multi-stakeholder strategies to apply technology-enabled and data-driven solutions to combat forced labor and exploitation?
- 9) How can the key research findings be translated into actionable next steps?
- 10) What questions remain for future research?

5. Thematic Areas on Technology, Social Change, and Labor Trafficking

Information and communication technologies and infrastructures are now critical parts of economic and social life, including illicit activities like human trafficking. This framing document proposes that the intersection between technology and labor trafficking is characterized by three initial thematic areas for research (1) the role of technology in facilitating trafficking, (2) the potential for technological tools to prevent, expose, and monitor trafficking, and (3) the capacity for trafficking victims, survivors, and at-risk groups to use technology.

Facilitating Trafficking

As USC Annenberg School's previous research on sex trafficking demonstrates, new technologies are facilitating trafficking behavior and networks.⁵ The diffusion of online advertising and mobile phones has provided sex traffickers with efficient means to identify and target trafficking victim,⁶ as well as facilitate communications and financial transactions between recruiters, traffickers, and exploiters.⁷ Further investigation is needed on how digital tools play a role in labor trafficking, such as in advertising, recruitment, coordination, surveillance, and control.

Preventing, Exposing, and Monitoring Trafficking

Technology has the potential to make the clandestine and covert practices of human trafficking more visible. Sex traffickers, for example, leave behind digital traces of coercive, deceptive, and exploitative behavior, and these traces can catalyze interventions to identify, locate, and prosecute. Such interventions, however, are not without potential cost, risks, and unintended consequences for vulnerable populations and trafficking survivors, and have not yet been explored in the context of labor trafficking.⁸

⁵ Latonero. *Human Trafficking Online. The Role of Social Networking Sites and Online Classifieds*. University of Southern California, September 2011. <https://technologyandtrafficking.usc.edu/report>

⁶ Latonero et al., *The Rise of Mobile and the Diffusion of Technology-Facilitated Trafficking*. University of Southern California, November 2012. <https://technologyandtrafficking.usc.edu/2012-report>.

⁷ Boyd et al., *Human Trafficking and Technology: A framework for understanding the role of technology in the commercial sexual exploitation of the children in the U.S.* Microsoft Research, 2011. <http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/collaboration/focus/education/htframework-2011.pdf>

⁸ Boyd, Latonero, and Musto et al., *How to Responsibly Create Technological Interventions to Address the*

There is also an opportunity for private sector technology firms, whose networks are appropriated by recruiters and traffickers, to engage with tools to counter labor trafficking. Technology might also assist private sector transparency initiatives by aiding supply-chain management and the monitoring of exploitative business practices.

Assisting trafficking victims and at-risk groups

In the context of insufficient labor protection and weak rule of law, technology has the potential to become a vital tool in the promotion of security, protection, support networks, and information flows among vulnerable populations. Trafficking hotlines and SMS and text-based services are examples of how technology works to provide direct information and support to individuals who have been trafficked and at-risk populations. Many of these direct services have not been comprehensively evaluated, however.

Variable access to technology must be taken into consideration in developing any such tools. Traffickers may seek to limit or manage a victims' access to a mobile phone or the internet, for example, as a means of control. Intimidation and control tactics may also result in reluctance among trafficking victims to use tools like mobile phones, even when available.

6. Technology in Labor Trafficking Policies

An initial review indicates that technology could be given far more attention in the major counter-trafficking policies of governments, international organizations, and NGOs. Further research is needed to responsibly inform the development of any future policies on technology and labor trafficking. What follows are some initial examples (rather than an exhaustive analysis) of potential intersections and gaps between policy, technology, and labor trafficking.

United States

There is a growing movement to develop policies to combat labor trafficking in the United States, as with the recent September 25, 2012 enactment of Executive Order 13627: *Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal Contracts*.⁹ The order significantly expands the responsibility of federal contractors and subcontractors in the effort to prevent human trafficking and forced labor. The role of technology was not specified in the Executive Order; however, The White House has included technology in a number of related initiatives.¹⁰

Domestic Sex Trafficking of Minors. Danah.org, April, 2013. <https://cyber.law.harvard.edu/node/8267>

⁹ Executive Order 13627. *Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal Contracts*. White House, 2012. See also President Obama's remarks to the Clinton Global Initiative <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/09/25/remarks-president-clinton-global-initiative>

¹⁰ http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/cgi_fact_sheet.pdf

In its 2012 *Counter-Trafficking in Persons Policy*,¹¹ USAID identifies five factors that facilitate the continued flow of human trafficking: porous borders; absent rule of law; failure to prosecute traffickers; complicity of corrupt officials; and modern communication technology. Based on this policy, USAID is investing in a number of activities that promote technological solutions to combat trafficking. In addition, the U.S. State Department and The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy have organized international technology-focused capacity-building activities. State Department organized “TechCamps” seek to develop innovative solutions for the counter-trafficking efforts of governments, civil society and advocacy organizations.¹² In addition, U.S. Ambassador to Combat Trafficking in Persons Louis CdeBaca has called for “a hard look at the supply chains and labor sources behind the products we use every day.” Ambassador CdeBaca has highlighted the role of technology and innovation in addressing labor exploitation supply chains.¹³

And at the state level, the Californian Supply Chain Transparency Act (2012) is an innovative legal instrument that highlights the responsibilities of the private sector in providing information about the potential risks of labor trafficking in their supply chains.¹⁴

International Organizations

In June 2014, ILO adopted a new protocol to complement and strengthen the ILO Convention 29 on Forced Labour. The protocol requires governments to take measures to better protect workers, particularly migrant laborers, and to ensure that victims have greater access to justice and compensation. The protocol does not provide details on the role of technology in facilitating and preventing forced labor, or in assisting at-risk groups.¹⁵

The Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is mandated to oversee the implementation of the UN Palermo Protocol on Trafficking. While offering an insightful assessment of the impact of transnational crime on human security and development, current UNODC strategy offers minimal guidance on the potential role of technology in combating labor trafficking.¹⁶

¹¹ USAID. *Countering trafficking in persons*. USAID Website, 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.usaid.gov/trafficking>

¹² Office of Science and Technology Policy, White House. *Tech vs Trafficking: TechCamp Mexico*. White House, December 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/12/18/tech-versus-trafficking-techcamp-mexico>

¹³ CdeBaca, L. *Amb. CdeBaca to OSCE on current trends in human trafficking [Transcript]*. Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP), 2013. Retrieved from <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2013/06/20130612276047.html#ixzz34Q02VRwd>

¹⁴ Senate Bill No. 657. *California Transparency in Supply Chains Act*. 2010. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/164934.pdf>

¹⁵ International Labour Organization. *Report of the Committee on Forced Labour: Supplement to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) to address implementation gaps to advance prevention, protection, and compensation measures to effectively achieve the elimination of forced labour*. Geneva, 2014.

¹⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Thematic Programme: Action against Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Trafficking, including Drug Trafficking (2011-2013)*. UNODC Website, April 2011. Retrieved from https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/Other/Thematic_Programme_on_Organised_Crime_-_Final.pdf

In this research project's cursory review of other international organizations active in anti-trafficking work, including UNWOMEN, UNICEF and IOM, strong indications of engagement with technology and labor trafficking were not found. The UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UNGIFT) comprises UNODC, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, OSCE, and UNICEF, and seeks to marshal multi-stakeholder collaboration to strengthen research and awareness about human trafficking and has conducted previous work on technology.¹⁷ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) engages with technology through the development of databases to assist in case management and data collection for use by NGOs and governments.¹⁸

Drawing on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking has urged businesses to refrain from using trafficked labor, and prevent and monitor the use of such labor by its suppliers. Although not drawing explicit attention to technology, the Special Rapporteur noted that "the connection between trafficking in the supply chains and business is still not well understood... and that the solution to the problem of human trafficking in supply chains lies beyond the reach of any single stakeholder."¹⁹

Regional Bodies

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is seeking to promote regional cooperation amongst Southeast Asian nations to combat human trafficking. The *ASEAN Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons, particularly Women and Children* (2004) and the *Declaration on the Protection and Promotions of the Rights of Migrant workers* (2007) do not make specific mention of the role of technology as it relates to labor trafficking, although the 2007 *Declaration on Migrant Workers* does require ASEAN Member States to "facilitate data-sharing...for the purpose of enhancing policies and programmes concerning migrant workers in both sending and receiving states."²⁰ ASEAN is currently working on new legally binding Conventions to strengthen counter-trafficking and safe migration

¹⁷ United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking. *The Vienna Forum to fight Human Trafficking 13-15 February 2008, Austria Center Vienna Background Paper. Workshop: Technology and Human Trafficking*. Vienna, Austria, February 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2008/BP017TechnologyandHumanTrafficking.pdf>

¹⁸ International Organization for Migration. *IOM Global Human Trafficking Database Counter Trafficking Division*. Geneva, Switzerland. Retrieved from http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/ct/iom_ctm_database.pdf

¹⁹ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Fighting trafficking is everyone's business – corporations must strive for trafficking-free supply chains*. Ankara, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12789&LangID=E> See also General Assembly, United Nations. 2012.

²⁰ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers*. Cebu, Philippines, January 2007. Retrieved from <http://www.asean.org/communities/asean-political-security-community/item/asean-declaration-on-the-protection-and-promotion-of-the-rights-of-migrant-workers-3>

policies across the region. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is also closely engaged on human trafficking, and its *Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings* (2003) requires Member States to enhance data collection on trafficking cases.²¹ This suggests that there is room for engaging technology to implement counter-trafficking strategies.

National-Level Policies and International Development Agencies

Sweden and the UK are among the few countries engaging directly with technology and trafficking. Sweden's (2008) national *Action Plan Against Prostitution and Human Trafficking for Sexual Purposes* proposes to equip law enforcement with "bugging devices" and the capacity to seize and process personal data in order to detect and investigate trafficking.²² The *Action Plan*, however, does not extend to detecting cases of labor trafficking. The UK's *Human Trafficking: the Government's Strategy* (2011) includes the implementation of E-borders, an immigration scheme that collates and screens data on people entering and exiting the country.²³ One of the aims of E-borders is to disrupt crime, including human trafficking, to promote stronger national security.

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) have made significant donor contributions to anti-trafficking programs in South Asia and Southeast Asia. DFID's updated *Strategic Vision for Women and Girls, to 2020 and Beyond* (2014) seeks to "unlock women's and girl's potential" by making new technologies accessible.²⁴ DFID's "Work in Freedom" program, for example, engages mobile technology to mitigate labor trafficking of women migrant workers. The program, which is jointly implemented by the ILO and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, focuses specifically on domestic work and the garment industry in South Asia.²⁵

The DFAT-funded *Australia-Asia Program to combat Trafficking in Persons* (AAPTIP) aims to make the criminal justice response to trafficking more effective and responsive to victim's needs, as well as enhance international cooperation on trafficking.²⁶ Implemented across Southeast Asia, AAPTIP does not engage centrally with the issue of technology and

²¹ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. *Permanent Council Decision No. 557: OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings*. OSCE, July 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.osce.org/pc/15944>

²² Government Offices of Sweden. *Action Plan against Prostitution and Human Trafficking for Sexual Purposes*. Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, Sweden, July 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.government.se/content/1/c6/11/06/29/fcd261a4.pdf>

²³ United Kingdom Home Office. *Human Trafficking: The Government's Strategy*. UK Home Office Website, July 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-strategy>

²⁴ Department for International Development. *Stepping-up a gear for girls and women, Updates to DFID's Strategic Vision for Girls and Women, to 2020 and beyond*. UK Home Office Website, March 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stepping-up-a-gear-for-girls-and-women-updates-to-dfids-strategic-vision-for-girls-and-women-to-2020-and-beyond>

²⁵ Department for International Development. *DFID-ILO "Work in Freedom" programme*. Annual Review, January 2014. Retrieved from http://iati.dfid.gov.uk/iati_documents/4346599.docx

²⁶ Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *Australia-Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons (AAPTIP)*, DFAT, November 2013. Retrieved from <http://aid.dfat.gov.au/countries/eastasia/regional/Pages/initiative-aaptip.aspx>

labor trafficking.

This brief scan of policies and strategies suggests the potential of incorporating technological approaches. Yet the role of technology in facilitating or preventing labor trafficking, and in assisting at-risk groups, rarely plays a central function in coordinated strategy and policy in international, regional, and national contexts.

7. Regional Contexts: South and Southeast Asia

To further ground this project, researchers will explore key aspects of technology and labor trafficking in South Asia and Southeast Asia. These two regions provide a compelling context to better understand the intersection of technology with labor trafficking due to two factors 1) the rapid rise in mobile phone and internet usage and 2) high levels of migration. It must be noted that despite the widespread increase in the adoption of communication technologies across South and Southeast Asia, ICT usage is uneven across regions.

For example, according to 2012 figures from the International Telecommunications Union, 74% of individuals in Singapore use the internet, 66% in Malaysia, 40% in Vietnam, 36% in the Philippines, 27% in Thailand, 15% in Indonesia, 5 % in Cambodia, and 1% in Myanmar. In India, 13% of individuals use the internet, followed by 11% in Nepal, 10% in Pakistan, and 6% in Bangladesh. Mobile phone penetration rates in the regions are dramatically higher. In 2012, the mobile subscription rates per (100) inhabitants are 150% in Singapore, 147% in Vietnam, 141% in Malaysia, 128% in Cambodia, 127% in Thailand, 114% in Indonesia, 106% in the Philippines, and 10% in Myanmar. Also in 2012, mobile subscription rates per 100 inhabitants are 70% in India, 67% in Pakistan, 63% in Bangladesh, and 60% in Nepal. Any potential technology and labor trafficking interventions and policy at the regional and country levels should take into account these variances.

Of course, access to technology is not a panacea for empowering vulnerable populations. It is also important individuals have the knowledge of how to use technology in order to obtain information, and connect with sustainable support networks. An understanding of how gender, class, ethnicity, and identity impact technology usage is also necessary for leveraging future tech-based strategies.

Millions of people from South Asia and Southeast Asia are migrating in search of work opportunities – either moving within Asia or further afield to the Middle East, Europe, and the U.S. One indicator of the size and significance of this migration pattern is the ascendancy of South and Southeast Asia's remittance economy, now a key driver of social and economic development for many Asian countries. The World Bank (2014), for example,

ranks India as the largest recipient of remittances in the world at \$70 billion, and the Philippines third-ranked at \$25 billion.²⁷

Forced labor and labor trafficking poses a significant threat to various economic sectors as well as vulnerable populations in the region. While reliable prevalence rates are again difficult to obtain, recent ILO (2012) estimates suggest that Asia-Pacific is home to 12 million forced laborers, including trafficked persons, and more than half of the global total. Widespread and systemic exploitation contributes to deteriorating social and human capital among exploited groups,²⁸ while practices such as debt bondage and slavery prevent workers from realizing their earning potential and issuing much-needed remittances to dependents back home.²⁹

It is beyond the scope of this research study to comprehensively address all of the human security, human rights, economic, and social intersections between technology and labor trafficking. Yet focused research in South and/or Southeast Asia can provide a better grasp of the role technology plays in labor trafficking. As a starting point, this research will focus on technologies for monitoring supply chains, many of which have an origin and source in the regions. The recent global attention to supply chains after the tragic deaths of garment workers at Rana Plaza in Bangladesh, suggests that technology could be incorporated in monitoring exploitative practices in the workplace.³⁰ Additional areas of interest include information asymmetries and exploitative practices among migration agents, employers, and traffickers and the use of technologies in counter-trafficking efforts.

8. Emerging Work on Technology and Labor Trafficking

A major objective of this research project is to identify and assess how current and future technologies might meaningfully intersect with labor trafficking. Some examples of recent technologies are considered below, which further demonstrate the thematic areas outlined in Section 5. A more rigorous and extensive assessment of these and other interventions will be provided in the final report.

In terms of technologies that **facilitate trafficking**, this project's early focus group research with survivors indicate that technology has been used to recruit, transport, and

²⁷ Dilip Ratha. *Migration and Remittances: Recent Developments and Outlook*. World Bank, April 2014. Retrieved from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1288990760745/MigrationandDevelopmentBrief22.pdf>

²⁸ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Human Development Report 2009 - Overcoming barriers: human mobility and development*. UNDP, New York, USA, 2009. Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/269/hdr_2009_en_complete.pdf

²⁹ International Labour Organization. *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour*. Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL) and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FPRW). Geneva, Switzerland, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_243391.pdf

³⁰ Labowitz, S. and Bauman-Pauly, D. *Business as Usual Is Not an Option: Supply Chains and Sourcing after Rana Plaza*. New York University Stern School of Business, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.stern.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/con_047408.pdf

control victims of trafficking. Experiences of restricted access to communication technology such as mobile phones have shown to create potential information asymmetries that exacerbate exploitation, particularly among the domestic workers interviewed. Labor recruitment websites and online forums could provide further indicators of potential trafficking cases.

A few organizations have demonstrated the potential role of technology in **preventing, exposing, and monitoring trafficking**. Slavery Footprint is an awareness raising website and mobile app jointly developed by the U.S. State Department and the US-based NGO Made in A Free World. The website helps users measure their consumption habits in terms of trafficked labor.³¹ Made in a Free World has also developed The Forced labor Risk & Determination software to build the capacity of businesses to mitigate forced labor in their supply chains and identify hot spots of risk in their given industry.³²

The U.S. based Verité has worked on forced labor and supply chain issues in a number of countries and sectors, including the production of shrimp in Bangladesh; fish in Indonesia; and tuna in the Philippines. Based on Verité's research findings, there is scope to consider how technology can assist the business community in identifying indicators and risk factors in labor exploitation.³³

Technologies are being deployed to **assist labor trafficking victims and at-risk groups**. In 2013, the Polaris Project's National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) reported a significant increase in total calls received to the human trafficking phone hotline and created the option for texting/SMS. Analyzing hotline data, the NHTRC identified the top three industries engaging in labor trafficking in the US as *domestic work, door-to-door sales crews, and restaurant/food service*. Google has provided funding and technological assistance to Polaris in coordinating with international hotlines and Palantir have provided data analytics capacity.

Additionally, ad hoc examples include the use of high-definition satellite images to potentially identify and monitor trafficking situations,³⁴ and the Pakistan Remittance Initiative, which attempts to use mobile technology to ensure the safer transfers of remittances.

More technological innovations and interventions will be identified during the field research and included in the final report. The research will also delve further into the different levels of technological impact on labor trafficking, such as connecting at-risk populations to direct assistance, the collection of data for advanced analytic understanding, and the sharing of digital information across networks.

³¹ Slavery Footprint. Retrieved from <http://slaveryfootprint.org/>

³² <http://madeinafreeworld.com/business>

³³ Verité. Retrieved from <http://www.verite.org/research/forced-labor-research>

³⁴ Antonelli, Noelia. *Argentina: Satellites to fight drug and human trafficking*. Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 2011. Retrieved from http://infosurhoy.com/en_GB/articles/saii/features/main/2011/11/04/feature-01

9. Next Steps

While this framing document is based on preliminary research, there is little doubt that technology's role in labor trafficking is an important yet understudied issue. Phase two of the research project has begun, which involves interviews and focus groups with experts in technology, supply chains, and migration. In addition, discussions with trafficking survivors will give a better sense of the negative and positive use of technology in actual trafficking situations. In phase three, locations for field research will be chosen in South Asia and/or Southeast Asia, as well as industry sectors targeted for case studies. A final report will be produced at the end of 2014, which will deliver analysis and practical recommendations to governments, businesses, NGOs, service providers, academics, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders.