

An aerial photograph of a busy city street, showing a crosswalk and many pedestrians. The image is partially covered by a large red overlay that contains the title and subtitle. The GBCAT logo is in the top left corner.

GBCAT

# Empowerment and Employment of Survivors of Human Trafficking

A Business Guide



## 2 About this Guide

The [Global Business Coalition Against Human Trafficking](#) (GBCAT) is a business-led initiative supported by global businesses committed to preventing and reducing the incidence of human trafficking and other forms of slavery in their operations and global supply chains, and supporting survivors of exploitation.

To date, much of the discussion in the business and anti-trafficking community has been on identifying, preventing, and mitigating the risk of forced labor, debt bondage, and human trafficking in business' operations and supply chains. With this Guide, GBCAT aims to spark awareness about how the private sector can go further to address the needs of survivors of these forms of exploitation, proactively supporting them to access vocational training and secure good jobs both within a business' own operations and through the operations of its business partners. By connecting survivors with vocational training opportunities and access to good and safe jobs, survivors

can better build the skills and resources they need to achieve financial security and long term safety. Increased security reduces the likelihood that survivors or their families will be re-exploited in the future.

Cultivating work environments and cultures that are inclusive and accommodating to the needs of survivors may also benefit other workers who have experienced other forms of exploitation, violence, and trauma.

This Guide is intended for individuals working in global business departments such as Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion, and Community Engagement. Personnel in departments that oversee the business' approach to human trafficking issues (e.g. Human Rights, Public Policy, Legal, or Sustainability) or those who regularly engage with suppliers and contractors (e.g. Supply Chain or Procurement) may also benefit.

This Guide does not explore how a

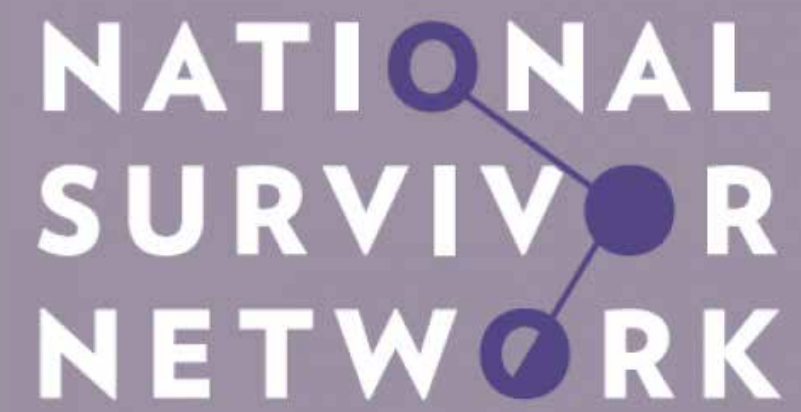
business can better prevent, identify, or address human trafficking in its own operations and those of its business partners. These are actions that all businesses should be conducting at a minimum before exploring strategies to support survivors. For a primer on these steps, see [Addressing Forced Labor and Other Human Trafficking Risks: A Toolkit for Small and Medium-Sized Suppliers](#).

This Guide was written by Shubha Chandra, Sara Enright, and Alice Pease, with support and input from the participants of GBCAT. The authors conducted interviews and consultations with over 20 organizations that support survivors of human trafficking, reviewed literature on the topic, and solicited input from experts, including survivor leaders from the Survivor Alliance and the National Survivor Network's Resilient Voices leadership program. Any errors are those of the authors.

Please direct comments or questions to GBCAT at [gbcats@bsr.org](mailto:gbcats@bsr.org).

## A Note on Terminology

For the purposes of this Guide, the term "victim" is used to describe an individual who is subject to human trafficking, or who is in the early stages of identification and intervention. The term "survivor" is used to describe the experience of an individual who has exited a situation of human trafficking. The term "human trafficking" is used to refer to a range of exploitative practices such as debt bondage, forced labor, labor trafficking, and sex trafficking. This Guide applies the UN Palermo Protocol's definition of trafficking, as the "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation."<sup>1</sup> The Protocol explains that exploitation includes sexual exploitation, forced labor, and slavery or practices similar to slavery. While GBCAT has historically used the term "modern slavery" to refer to this range of exploitative practices, as also adopted in international legislation,<sup>2</sup> for the purposes of this Guide, we have opted not to use this term, as it may be seen as diminishing the most serious forms of slavery, such as the experiences of people who were exploited through the Atlantic slave trade and their descendants.



## Foreword by the National Survivor Network's Resilient Voices

Human Trafficking is a complex system which includes labor exploitation, slavery, child labor, forced labor, child soldiering, organ trafficking, and sex trafficking. While “victim” and “survivor” are commonly accepted titles and can be markers in a person’s healing journey, it is important to remember that they do not describe who the person is, or identify something they did wrong. These labels only reflect something that has happened to them. These labels, if confused with a person’s identity, can diminish someone’s capacity to fulfill their potential. To set an individual up for success, we must see them through a holistic lens and engage them through approaches that capture all their humanity.

Trauma-informed programs acknowledge that many people have experienced a form of trauma. A trauma response or activated trauma is a survival response of

fight, flight, or freeze to a situation that correlates to a lived trauma. To engage someone with activated trauma, we must pull them out of their survival mind that is reactionary and into their conscious mind through corrective experiences, where they can reason and form new relationships with the situations around them. Understanding that this activated trauma creates an unconscious response is a critical component of deescalating the trauma response. This context allows us to navigate situations with insight and compassion, not only in the workplace, but as a way of being with others.

Research demonstrates that social capital—our relationships, networks, workplaces, and neighborhoods—is the most critical driver of a person’s resilience. Social capital is measured by trust and cooperation and how we extend hospitality and affection to one

another. Social capital promotes a sense of interdependency, belonging, and community.

Businesses are in a unique position to address the needs of survivors of human trafficking and help them to access and build the social capital that supports their resilience. Through their own operations and in partnership with other organizations, businesses can provide paid internships or apprenticeships that allow survivors to build critical resume skills as well as to form new relationships that will serve them in the present and beyond. Businesses that seek to create a trauma-informed workplace must support the growth and success of their employees through a strength-based approach to work, reinforcing employees’ assets, resources, and talents. Empowering individuals to think of themselves as gifted motivates survivors

that might have otherwise thought of themselves as disadvantaged, inspiring the true agency required to effect change in one’s own life and in one’s community. These opportunities enable survivors to be economically independent and empower them to dream and take manageable steps to become the vision they hope for themselves. Stable, long-term employment, a focus on employee strengths, and a dedication to addressing the root causes of human trafficking allow businesses to invest in their own future and their communities, and build a better way forward with sustainable development in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



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# I. Introduction

# Introduction

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This guide is based on the following premise: by partnering with organizations that support survivors of human trafficking and by providing access to safe and long-term employment, businesses can support survivors in achieving economic security and autonomy, and reduce the risk that they or their dependents will be re-exploited in the future.

While anyone can be a victim of human trafficking, many people are coerced into slavery or slavery-like conditions through the deceptive practices of friends, family members, intimate partners, and businesses and/or their recruitment agents, who prey on individuals who are socially or economically marginalized and systemically oppressed. If a victim's socioeconomic vulnerabilities are not addressed, a survivor may easily find themselves in the same precarious financial situation they experienced prior to exploitation, but now with the added challenges of complex trauma, the bias of a criminal justice system that too often fails to protect survivors, and other systemic barriers to recovery. The

psychological and physical impacts of having survived human trafficking affect a person's entire life. Inclusive workplaces can help survivors of any traumatic experience assert their autonomy and empower themselves.

Businesses can support in the empowerment of survivors through partnerships with organizations that support survivors, and by offering safe and long-term employment. Businesses that seek to advance a strategy to support survivors are encouraged to partner with as well as financially support organizations that provide vital services to survivors across a range of needs. This Guide will describe the activities of three such organizations in detail:

- **Immediate Needs Providers:** These organizations provide basic and urgent needs to survivors, such as medical care, shelter, food, clothing, and trauma counseling, helping survivors to heal so that they are successful in continuing their lives on their own terms.
- **Vocational training organizations:** These organizations equip survivors with the technical and professional development skills that enable them to find safe, sustainable, and well-paying jobs.
- **Businesses and social enterprises:** These organizations offer safe and long-term employment that paves the way for financial well-being, work experience, and transferrable skills.



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Through empowerment and employment of survivors, a business can meaningfully contribute toward anti-trafficking prevention efforts. Businesses that have programs to address human trafficking risks, particularly in countries known to be high-risk for human trafficking, can demonstrate that their efforts to support the empowerment and employment of survivors are helping to prevent individuals and their dependents from being exploited or re-exploited. Survivor empowerment contributes to the long-term socioeconomic development of the communities in which a business operates, which benefits all individuals, including survivors.

This Guide describes the following key topics:

- Experiences of human trafficking survivors, including who they are, the effects of human trafficking and trauma, and common needs
- The role of business in survivor empowerment and employment and why businesses should engage on the topic
- Actions business can take to empower and employ survivors, types of organizations that support survivors (including real-world case studies), and criteria to look for in survivor employment partners
- Elements of a strong survivor employment approach and key considerations for business when deciding whether and how to intentionally integrate survivors into their workforce





# II. Understanding the Experiences and Needs of Human Trafficking Survivors



# Understanding the Experiences and Needs of Human Trafficking Survivors

The goal of any empowerment program should be to support survivors at any stage of their journey to autonomy and self-fulfillment.

## Who Are Human Trafficking Survivors?

Anyone can be a victim of human trafficking. However, individuals who are already socially or economically marginalized due to structural factors are most likely to be targeted. These factors include poverty, lack of access to education, limited access to economic opportunities, social and political instability, and conflict in the countries in which they live. Others are targeted because they belong to historically marginalized groups that may have

fewer social and legal protections, such as refugees, stateless individuals, migrant workers, LGBTI individuals, children, and women.<sup>3</sup>

Survivors may self-identify as victims or may be referred to the attention of social service organizations by family and friends, or other stakeholders such as law enforcement, non-governmental organizations, embassies, faith-based organizations, and lawyers.<sup>4</sup>

## What Are the Effects of Human Trafficking and Trauma?

Survivors commonly experience trauma, which has a profound impact on their mental and physical health, well-being, and ability to thrive. Trauma can arise from multiple factors including the type of exploitation experienced (e.g. acts of violence, rape, or coercion), the age when it took place and length of exploitation, and prior life experiences, particularly sexual or physical abuse.<sup>5</sup> Trauma may also be reflective of the tactics that perpetrators employ to exploit victims,

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such as asserting control (physical, mental, and/or monetary) and decision-making authority.

For example, victims of human trafficking may be forced to rely on their perpetrators for basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter, as they may have had their identification and money confiscated, and any income generated goes to the perpetrator. Victims are often treated in dehumanizing ways and stripped of their personal freedom, requiring permission for basic human necessities such as using the bathroom or taking a shower.

Over time, the trauma and the lack of personal choice and control over their own lives can result in survivors exhibiting a loss of identity, sense of safety, and ability to relate to and trust others.<sup>6</sup> It can also negatively impact a survivor's self-confidence. Some

survivors may suffer from poor mental health and self-esteem due to limited support and understanding from others of their experience and of how to address their trauma. Many survivors are focused on daily survival and have had little opportunity to reflect on their plans for the future. In short, trauma often changes the way that survivors view the world around them.

In addition to trauma, some survivors may experience serious health problems because of poor treatment, the exploitation itself, and/or limited or no medical care. This can include diseases as well as bodily injuries.

Recognizing these effects of exploitation, many survivor empowerment programs focus on meeting the medical and psychological needs of survivors and reclaiming a survivor's autonomy, confidence, and decision-making skills.<sup>7</sup>

There is strong evidence that steady employment and a stable financial situation also contribute positively toward the empowerment of survivors.<sup>8</sup>



## What Are the Common Needs of Survivors?

As part of the healing process, survivors have a range of needs that must be met in both the short term and the long term. These include:

- 1) **Housing, food, clothing, and medical care:** In some cases, having been reliant on a perpetrator of their exploitation for days, months, or even years, survivors may have limited financial means to support themselves. Survivors may also need medical treatment, as some may be malnourished or may have developed illnesses or diseases from the abuse they suffered (e.g. chronic back pain, sexually-transmitted diseases), economic hardship resulting in poverty, or the lack of medical attention in the past.<sup>9</sup>
- 2) **Counseling and psychosocial support:** Proper counseling is critical for a survivor's well-being and ability to manage their trauma over the long term.<sup>10</sup> Survivors often develop complex trauma that is linked to their exploitation. Some survivors may exhibit intense post-traumatic symptoms (e.g. re-experiencing the original trauma) in their dreams or in real life.
- 3) **Skills development:** Many survivors have limited or interrupted formal education, caused by either the marginalization that led to their exploitation (e.g. experiencing homelessness) or the exploitation itself.<sup>11</sup> This often limits the chances of survivors obtaining stable and well-paid work.
- 4) **Safe job opportunities:** Long-term employment opportunities that are safe (i.e. will not cause harm) enable survivors to financially support themselves and their dependents, which is critical to healing and prevents re-exploitation.<sup>12</sup>
- 5) **Legal services:** Survivors may seek legal services for a variety of reasons, such as immigration (e.g. to return to home countries or apply for a specific visa) or to initiate civil and criminal lawsuits against perpetrators of their exploitation.
- 6) **Peer support:** Participating in peer support groups with others who may have had similar experiences is helpful for healing and rebuilding trust. In some circumstances, survivors may be unwilling to return home or places where support could be offered for safety reasons or because of stigma associated with exploitation.

The length of a survivor's journey to healing is generally dependent on a range of factors, including but not limited to the survivor's age, physical and psychological health, existing support systems, and duration and type of exploitation.<sup>13</sup> Recovery for survivors is not a linear process; there are some good days and some more challenging days, and trauma may be experienced throughout a survivor's lifetime.

# III.

# The Role of Business in Supporting Survivors and Preventing Re-Exploitation



# The Role of Business in Supporting Survivors and Preventing Re-Exploitation

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## GBCAT Resource for Business:

The [Interactive Map for Business of Anti-Human Trafficking Organisations](#) identifies Immediate Needs Providers, Vocational Training Organizations, social enterprises, and other victim and survivor support organizations around the world that businesses can partner with to combat human trafficking, forced labour, child labour and modern slavery, including the ability to sort by industry, geography, and other useful filters.



Businesses have an opportunity to prevent human trafficking and the re-exploitation of survivors by supporting the organizations that empower survivors and, where possible, hiring survivors into the business itself. The remainder of this Guide focuses on the role of business in these two critical support opportunities:

- 1) **Empowerment of Survivors:** Support the work of Immediate Needs Providers (INPs) and Vocational Training Organizations (VTOs) that assist survivors with their recovery. These organizations protect, support, and empower survivors as they rebuild their lives. In some countries, limited government funding makes it difficult for INPs and VTOs to continue to provide the quality of care needed by survivors beyond the time covered by government programs.<sup>14</sup> Business can support the critical work of INPs by providing financial and advocacy support, enabling these organizations to scale their provision of direct aid. Businesses can also leverage their relationships with law firms to provide pro bono legal support to INPs and survivors, as well as real estate organizations, which can identify affordable housing options for survivors. They can also support VTOs by investing in programs that offer paid internship placements, executive coaching, and professional development trainings for survivors. Businesses can also establish partnerships with VTOs to run trainings on relevant industry skills. INPs and VTOs can also serve as key partners for a business looking to hire survivors. Businesses interested in hiring survivors should review the key characteristics of INP and VTO partners described in the next section of this Guide. Businesses will also need to explore internally how to better equip themselves to support survivors within the workplace. For instance, businesses at a minimum should educate all staff on how human trafficking affects business operations and should ensure that departmental supervisors working with survivors take a trauma-informed approach to engagement.
- 2) **Employment of Survivors:** In partnership with INPs and VTOs, explore opportunities to provide ready and qualified survivors with access to safe and well-paying jobs at your business, or with a key business partner (e.g. a trusted supplier).

# Why Business Should Invest in Survivor Empowerment and Employment

Businesses that seek to support the organizations that serve survivors and or hire survivors directly may find positive reasons to do so.

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which is the global standard for business conduct, requires all businesses to respect human rights by implementing policies and processes that identify, prevent, and address potential and actual negative human rights impacts which a business may cause or to which it may contribute. This includes identifying, preventing, and mitigating or eliminating (if possible) negative impacts related to human trafficking.

Many businesses have recognized that in addition to respecting human rights, which is a minimum requirement, there is an opportunity to support the advancement of human rights.

Business opportunities may include:

## 1. Demonstrating a commitment to actively preventing human trafficking

Many businesses have a public commitment to prevent human trafficking from taking place within their own operations and business partnerships. However, to date, most businesses have not actively sought to hire survivors of human trafficking or those most at risk of re-exploitation. Businesses hiring survivors especially in high-risk areas are actively helping to prevent the re-exploitation of individuals and therefore living up to their commitment.

## 2. Supporting organizations making a meaningful impact

Businesses are keen to partner with and support organizations that make meaningful contributions to the world. Partnerships with local VTOs and INPs, as well as with social enterprises, offer a positive and impactful way for businesses to invest in their communities.

## 3. Creating a more empathetic work environment

Businesses that adopt a trauma-informed approach are helping to foster a workplace culture with greater empathy that is beneficial to all workers.



# Case Example

## Bright Future

United Kingdom

Developed by Co-op, one of the world's largest consumer co-operatives, and City Hearts, a charity dedicated to supporting survivors of human trafficking, Bright Future offers survivors of human trafficking a four-week paid work placement and guaranteed job interview following the placement to apply for a permanent position within the organization.

Bright Future has evolved from a multi-partner initiative with nearly 50 businesses and charities participating from across the UK to become a co-operative enterprise in May 2020. Participating businesses include The Body Shop, Dixons Carphone Warehouse, and Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd.

Placements are coordinated through a National Matching System (NMS). Survivor candidates able and ready to work are referred to the NMS by charity partners. If candidates meet the requirements, they are matched with an existing job opportunity offered

by a business partner. There were 215 referrals to Bright Future for placements by the end of 2019. Of these referrals, 75 candidates were successfully placed in businesses and a total of 40 candidates were offered a permanent role.

The program has been praised by placed candidates and businesses alike. The candidates reported feeling more positive about their future at the end of the placement and a more integrated part of the local community. Candidates also reported that returning to work can be challenging; some survivors may feel insecure in a work environment because of a lack of previous experience, educational qualifications, and comfort with direct communications and feedback.

For businesses, Bright Future has contributed to an improved understanding about working with survivors and a better awareness among staff about human trafficking.<sup>15</sup>

For more information, see here: <https://www.co-operative.coop/ethics/bright-future>

*"As a business, we have the opportunity to be a force for good, to have purpose beyond profit, and Bright Future is a way for us to do just that. It has the support of our board and executive management right down to the teams that work with the candidates on a day-to-day basis."*

*Simon Murray, Group Responsible Sourcing Manager, Dixons Carphone Warehouse (a corporate participant of Bright Future)*

The logo for Bright Future, featuring the words "Bright" and "Future" stacked vertically in a bold, sans-serif font. A small circular icon with a dot inside is positioned above the letter "i" in "Bright".

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# IV.

## Survivor Empowerment: Overview of Organizations Supporting Survivors



# Survivor Empowerment: Overview of Organizations Supporting Survivors

## Overview of Organizations Supporting Survivors

There are three main types of organizations that can support survivors along their recovery journey. While some organizations may offer a range of services, organizations generally provide either: psychosocial and basic needs support to survivors, such as medical care, shelter, and counseling (INPs); vocational and professional development training to survivors (VTOs); or safe employment opportunities to survivors (businesses and social enterprises). These three types of organizations can work in partnership to help a survivor from recovery to full reintegration into the workforce.



**Immediate Needs Providers**  
Psychosocial and basic needs support



**Vocational Training Organizations**  
Technical skills and workplace readiness skills



**Businesses and Social Enterprises**  
Work placement and job opportunities



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## Immediate Needs Providers

Psychosocial and basic needs support

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INPs help stabilize survivors who have recently exited trafficking by ensuring their physical safety and providing them with services, such as emergency housing, food, and clothing. Some organizations may provide financial support for basic needs, translation services, and substance abuse services. Others may offer legal services to help survivors to, for example, navigate complex immigration laws (e.g. applying for a specific visa) or initiate legal proceedings against perpetrators of exploitation. Many INPs also work closely with local law enforcement, training officers to effectively identify victims of human trafficking. Some INPs also offer wraparound services, such as providing transportation and childcare support to survivors who are participating in vocational training or work placement programs. Some organizations also

facilitate peer support groups for survivors looking to connect with others.<sup>16</sup>

Most INPs have dedicated case managers who provide support to survivors upon arrival. Through daily interactions, these individuals glean insights into the needs, concerns, and aspirations of survivors, supporting them throughout their recovery, including as they seek economic independence.<sup>17</sup> Developing a rapport with a case manager enables survivors to speak and express themselves freely and, importantly, gain trust again in others.<sup>18</sup>

# Case Example

## Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST)

*United States*

CAST is a nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles, California, providing comprehensive services to survivors, including counseling, legal resources, housing, educational and leadership training, and mentorship. Through these programs, CAST has helped empower survivors to overcome their traumatic pasts and become leading voices in shaping policy and public awareness of modern slavery.

Find out more here: <https://www.castla.org/about/>







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## Vocational Training Organizations

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Technical skills and workplace readiness skills

VTOs can equip survivors with the skills and experiences that employers are looking for.<sup>19</sup> For example, survivors seeking to work in call centers could benefit from training on effective communication and client service skills. This includes training on technical skills (e.g. coding, sewing, hairdressing) as well as professional development skills (e.g. communicating effectively, planning for the future). These trainings can make the transition to a formal workplace smoother.<sup>20</sup> Some VTOs may also provide financial literacy and local language classes.

# Case Examples

## BRAC Institute of Skills Development

*Bangladesh*

BRAC is an international NGO based in Bangladesh. BRAC connects at-risk populations and survivors of modern slavery, including cross-border trafficking and forced labor, with decent employment opportunities through skills development and awareness raising. In addition, BRAC's Migration program provides thousands of returnee migrants with linkages to psychosocial support, financial products, and skills training.

BRAC's Institute of Skills Development (BRAC-ISD) is a registered training organization in Bangladesh that can help survivors of modern slavery learn new vocational trades. BRAC-ISD provides market-driven skills training in a range of sectors, including construction, hospitality and tourism, ready-made garments, and IT. Courses offered include industrial sewing machine operation, food and beverage services, housekeeping,

electrical installation and maintenance, refrigeration and air conditioning, graphic design, computer operation, and construction services. After graduating from the program, graduates receive support from BRAC-ISD to secure full-time employment in Bangladesh and can work in partnership with businesses and BRAC's responsible recruitment enterprise, BRAC Probashbandhu Ltd., to find placements in decent jobs abroad.

For more information, see here: <https://bisd.brac.net/>



## Youth Career Initiative (YCI)

*Vietnam*

YCI is the flagship employability program of the International Tourism Partnership, operating in over 20 different countries. The program provides young people, including trafficking survivors, with the

skills and experience needed to work for the world's leading hotel businesses.

YCI works with local partners to identify trafficking survivors. Survivors first participate in classroom training in basic hospitality and English language skills. Survivors then undertake a work placement, which is agreed by YCI and the hotel business. To maintain anonymity, survivors are integrated into the program along with vulnerable youth, so hotels do not know whether the individual hired is a survivor. Through the program, survivors gain experience working with different departments within a hotel (e.g. housekeeping, kitchen, and food and beverage). Students are provided with a Certificate of Completion, which demonstrates that they have the necessary skills to succeed in the industry.

For more information, see here: <https://www.tourismpartnership.org/youth-career-initiative/>





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## Businesses and Social Enterprises

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Businesses and social enterprises have begun to specialize in employing survivors through paid work experience and competitive positions. Some social enterprises have been established specifically to provide on-the-job-training, work experience, and employment opportunities to survivors. By offering decent work, these organizations provide a path to financial independence while also opening doors for further education and employment opportunities.<sup>21</sup> Some survivor-led organizations have also created their own employment programs, such as Survivor Alliance’s Employment Pathway Program.<sup>22</sup>

# Case Example

## AnnieCannons

### *United States*

Technology is at the core of the survivor economic empowerment program at AnnieCannons, a software social enterprise, which trains survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence to become software engineers and entrepreneurs. By providing a comprehensive training course and product-building experience, students can build the foundations for self-sufficiency and high-skilled careers in tech.

AnnieCannons coordinates with shelters and case management providers in the San Francisco Bay Area that refer potential students to participate in the program. After an initial application process, candidates are invited to take part in a readiness screening to assess their aptitude for software development.

Those demonstrating readiness and

commitment are invited into the formal learning program, which begins with a six-month coding bootcamp followed by project-based practicums to help participants hone their skills and become workforce ready. The AnnieCannons’ trauma-informed, open-sourced, train-to-work program includes modules on digital literacy, HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. Later courses cover full stack development, cybersecurity, and mobile development. At every stage, students are supported with free onsite childcare, local transportation, and personalized coaching to optimize their learning.

Once they complete their training, graduates are offered work as employees or as subcontractors in AnnieCannon’s impact agency. Here, they develop products for clients, such as mobile applications and websites, and offer inclusion-by-design services to help businesses develop more inclusive and diverse products at the design and code levels. Graduates can earn an income

and build a portfolio in a supportive and flexible work environment. Students have identified numerous benefits of the program: ongoing education, a path to economic independence, a renewed focus for life, flexible work arrangements, the organization’s high regard for individuals’ privacy, and increased self-confidence.

Students also support other survivors of human trafficking by creating their own technology solutions to fight abuse and exploitation. For example, the EasyTRO mobile app, designed and developed by AnnieCannons students, simplifies and explains to survivors the complex process of applying for the first phase of judicial relief: a temporary restraining order.

For more information, see here: <https://anniecannons.org/>







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## Businesses and Social Enterprises

### Work placement and job opportunities

# Case Examples

## Outland Denim

*Cambodia*

Outland Denim, an Australian company, crafts premium denim products and employs victims of human trafficking and other human rights abuses.

Trainees are enrolled in a two-year program that enables them to gain a depth of knowledge in the areas of cutting, finishing, and sewing denim products. After their skills have been honed, trainees are given the opportunity to progress their careers at Outland Denim.

Outland Denim provides its staff members with a living wage as well as training in areas including (but not limited to) budgeting, self-defense, language, and maternal and infant health.

For more information, see here: [www.outlanddenim.com](http://www.outlanddenim.com)

**OUTLAND**  
DENIM

## The Market Project

*Uganda*

The Market Project is a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that creates for-profit, market-driven businesses that offer stable, safe, dignity-affirming, and healing work for survivors of trauma, exploitation, and trafficking.

For example, Nguvu Dairy employs 75 men and women who produce quality, fresh yogurt and milk. The product is currently sold in five towns in northern Uganda, with plans to expand. Community well-being is improved through economic stability and increased food security.

Survivor-focused partners recommend men and women—survivors from their programs and those at risk of being trafficked—who are ready and able to work. Each employee receives on-the-job training in task-specific skills. Workers gain more and more agency as they discover their strengths and focus on building their job skills.

Supervisors at every level are trained in trauma-informed management principles and coached as they apply those principles in the workplace. All employees from entry-level to top managers are given the opportunity to understand the impact of trauma in their own lives. Through participation in trauma healing groups, employees are able to work through and address relational challenges. As a result, survivors find hope and flourish through stable jobs, increased agency, and long-term trauma healing.

For more information, see here: [www.marketproject.org](http://www.marketproject.org)



# V.

## Survivor Employment: Steps for Business to Get Started and Partnership Criteria



# Getting Started: Steps for Business

23 Businesses interested in employing survivors should take the following steps to get started:

- 1) **Conduct an internal assessment to determine if the business is ready to hire survivors and assess potential barriers to employment.**

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A business should first conduct an internal assessment to determine if the business has the buy-in from senior management to integrate survivors into its workforce. As part of the assessment, the business should consider some of the challenges that often limit the prospects of survivors of obtaining safe work. For example, many survivors have interrupted work experience, or missing or confiscated documentation related to their education, identity, or birth. They may not be able to furnish names of employment references.<sup>30</sup> In addition, before being identified as a victim of human trafficking, some survivors may have criminal offenses or convictions on their record connected to their exploitation or be listed on sex offender registries.

- 2) **Determine the departments or business units where jobs are available, and the skills and qualifications needed to obtain these roles.**

Consider job opportunities in regions where human trafficking is most prevalent. A business should identify the departments or business units that have positions available, the type and level of roles available, and the skills and qualifications needed to be considered.

A global business should consider if there are opportunities to hire survivors within the business or within the operations of a key business partner in regions where there is high prevalence of human trafficking. By doing so, the business can help protect those most marginalized from exploitation or re-exploitation.<sup>31</sup> Business partners should be fully supportive of hiring survivors, and should not be employing survivors based on a top-down target or

initiative from the global business.<sup>32</sup>

- 3) **Find trusted INP and VTO partners who can help identify survivors ready to work and ensure they have the rights skills and qualifications for the job.**

Businesses should look to INPs and VTOs to help select the most suitable candidates for a job. Please read the section “What to Look for in Partners: Survivor Employment” for guidance on criteria to look for in INP and VTO partners.

- 4) **Conduct due diligence on the departments or business units that may hire survivors to ensure working practices are not exploitative.**

Businesses aiming to integrate survivors into their workforce must actively protect against a work environment where survivors may be exploited again. Please read the section “Key Considerations for a Robust Approach to Survivor

Employment” for guidance on how to conduct due diligence.

- 5) **Educate departmental supervisors overseeing survivors on trauma-informed approaches.**

The concept of work for many survivors is intertwined with the wielding of power and control by another person. Many survivors were not treated with respect in the past and may fear individuals who exhibit characteristics of their abuser. Certain triggering situations, such as demonstrations of anger or dominance by a colleague, may place survivors in distress at work. Supervisors who are trained to understand trauma, its effects, and coping mechanisms can help support a survivor while a case manager is sought. Adopting trauma-informed approaches in the workplace also serves as an opportunity for a business to strengthen their diversity and inclusion strategy.

# What to Look for in Partners: Survivor Employment

Businesses looking to partner with INPs and VTOs should look to those which have the following foundational elements, best practice elements, and specific criteria described below.<sup>25</sup>

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## Six key principles of a trauma-informed approach:

- I
- II
- III
- IV
- V
1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment
6. Voice and Choice

## Foundational Elements

- **Is a credible organization.** The partner should be able to offer evidence of its legitimacy by furnishing incorporation documents and references. INPs in particular should be screened to ensure they work constructively with survivors.
- **Adopts a trauma-informed approach to counseling and training.** “Trauma-informed” means acknowledging trauma an individual has experienced and connecting a person’s history of trauma with their symptoms and behaviors. A partner’s practices should reflect adherence to six key principles of a trauma-informed approach.<sup>23</sup> The partner should also consider needs in a non-judgmental way and be committed to promoting self-determination, encouraging survivors to determine what they want and need instead of deciding what is best for them.<sup>24</sup> The partner’s staff should have experience working with individuals who have survived trauma, helping them to better

anticipate challenges in training due to trauma-related factors.

- **Has written guidelines requiring prospective staff to submit to background checks, and prohibiting sexual and other forms of harassment in the workplace.** In addition to education and licensing requirements, partner organizations should require all prospective staff and volunteers to comply with a screening process to ensure they do not exhibit behaviors that can harm survivor clients. This process should at a minimum include checking sex offender registries, child protective services records, and civil protection order court records. Further, partner organizations should have a written policy prohibiting all forms of harassment.

## Best Practice Elements

- **Works in collaboration with a network of partners to pair businesses with interested and qualified survivors.**

Global businesses looking to offer employment opportunities to multiple survivors will need a network of INPs and VTOs that can pool existing resources and provide match-making services between survivors and businesses. If it is determined that an interested candidate does not have the requisite skills or qualifications for a position with the business, VTOs could help train them for the job. INPs and VTOs should have a history of forming these partnerships, or demonstrate a willingness to do so.

- **Has an effective complaints mechanism.** Like any organization, partner organizations should have a channel available to staff members (paid and volunteer) and clients to raise concerns. The channel should allow for the thorough investigation of allegations, appropriate disciplinary action in verified cases, communication to the complainant on the resolution of the matter, and accountability.



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## Specific Criteria

### Immediate Needs Providers (INPs)

- I • **Has appropriate language skills to support survivors.** An INP should have case managers with various language skills.
- II
- III
- IV
- V • **Offers financial support to survivors.** Many individuals have limited or no money when they become survivors. Stable and safe housing is a critical need for most survivors. INPs should have programs that provide financial support or that direct survivors to such programs, including for safe and affordable housing and transportation stipends.
- **Has skilled case managers who can recognize candidates appropriate for work placements and can advise on the appropriateness of work placements.** Case managers who are properly trained can gauge survivors who have received sufficient trauma counseling to begin work and those who may need additional time to process and cope

with their trauma. In addition, case managers who have insight into the experiences of survivors can advise on the appropriateness of a placement. For example, survivors of debt bondage or labor trafficking may be offered a placement in an industry in which they were trafficked, as this may be the only professional experience they have. While case managers can advise on the appropriateness of the placement, the decision ultimately should rest with the survivor. If the placement is accepted, the case manager and survivor can work out a plan to address potential triggers in the workplace.<sup>26</sup>

- **Offers long-term support to survivors, especially as they begin work.** As trauma has lasting effects, INPs should have the capabilities to continue to support survivors throughout their employment. Survivors may experience challenges adapting to a work environment and may be faced with situations that remind them of their exploitation and cause great distress. For example, some survivors who

have experienced sexual exploitation may have difficulty working with authority figures or male supervisors. A case manager can offer support to the survivor and advise a manager overseeing the survivor on how to help the survivor cope at work. Studies have shown that regular engagement with a survivor following the work placement is critical to prevent re-exploitation.<sup>27</sup>

### Vocational Training Organizations (VTOs)

- **Offers free or affordable training on vocational skills, language skills, and workplace readiness skills that match the needs of the industry or the role a survivor may be seeking.** Successful vocational training increases a survivor's confidence, life skills, and employment prospects. However, in many cases, training is expensive. Some survivors unable to pay may not attend training while others may attend a few classes but later drop out to focus on more pressing priorities. A VTO that offers subsidized or free trainings is an ideal partner.

- **Is aware of community-based services and resources that can support the educational needs of survivors.** VTOs may not themselves offer certain types of skills-building training. However, these organizations should be able to refer survivors to other educational services (e.g. local high schools or community colleges where survivors can enroll), as well as resources that can provide support (e.g. community and local government programs).<sup>28</sup>
- **Is in the vicinity of the survivor's place of residence.** For convenience and to minimize travel expenses, VTOs should be in close proximity to a survivor's place of residence.
- **Offers training regardless of age.** Some VTOs have restrictions on the age of survivors who can participate in training. Recognizing that survivors may be young or old, vocational trainings should be offered to all survivors regardless of age.

# Key Considerations for a Robust Approach to Survivor Employment

Survivor employment requires collaboration among INPs, VTOs, survivors, and businesses. Based on research and expert interviews, a robust approach to survivor employment should consist of:

## 1) Safe and Appropriate Employment Opportunities

- Survivors should be ready to work and interested in taking on work, on a part-time or full-time basis depending on their availability.
- The position should lead to a long-term role which allows for career advancement. However, to start, it can be offered as a 3-6-month trial, in which both the business and survivor determine whether the placement is working.
- The position offered should be competitive in pay and enable survivors to cover basic needs, in line with similar roles at the business (i.e. not part of a hiring quota) and should offer the same benefits afforded to other employees.
- Businesses should remove or make optional questions regarding an applicant's criminal record. As a criminal

record may be tied to their exploitation, answering such questions may discourage survivors from applying to the role.

- Businesses should at a minimum have safeguards in place to protect against workforce harassment, including sexual harassment.
- When determining placements, Human Resources leads should consider grievances that have been raised by employees in the department or business unit. If any concerns have been raised related to harassment or violence, those departments or business units may not be a good fit for a placement. These potential placements should still be discussed with the survivor and the survivor should be empowered to make the final decision. Human Resources leads should also interview current employees in the department or business unit where the business

intends to place a survivor, including the prospective manager of the survivor, to better understand the team culture and working conditions.

- If a placement is offered by the business and accepted by a survivor, a meeting should be arranged with the survivor and the manager overseeing the survivor to lay out expectations of the job, rights available to the survivor, and benefits offered, such as flexible work arrangements, annual leave, and payment for overtime.<sup>29</sup>
- Once employed, survivors should be treated like any other employee at the business.
- The fact that the employee is a survivor should remain confidential to all employees, except, if necessary, relevant Human Resources personnel and the direct manager overseeing a survivor. Efforts should be taken to maintain



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confidentiality so that the survivor may feel more comfortable in the workplace.

## 2) Vocational and Professional Development Opportunities for Survivors

Survivors should be trained so that they have the skills and background needed to succeed in their work placement. This includes, but is not limited to, the technical skills required for the role.

Survivors, who may not have held a formal job before, should also be trained on professional skills so that they can more confidently integrate in the workplace.

## 3) Businesses that have a Trauma-Informed Work Culture

The business should organize a business-wide training illustrating how human trafficking affects business and outline the steps the business is taking to address this within its operations and supply chains.

The business should be aware that the transition to a work environment may

be difficult for any individual who has survived a traumatic experience. Any issues that arise should be addressed with empathy with the case manager and survivor.

- The supervisor of the survivor at work should be provided with a training on trauma-informed approaches before the placement begins. This means that the supervisor should at a minimum understand what trauma is, how it may manifest, and the coping strategies that can support a survivor who may have activated trauma at work while the case manager is requested. This level of support at work may be needed particularly if the survivor is in or may become involved in legal proceedings related to their exploitation, which may activate trauma. This includes legal proceedings against a perpetrator or post-conviction efforts to expunge a survivor's criminal record pertaining to arrests resulting from human trafficking.





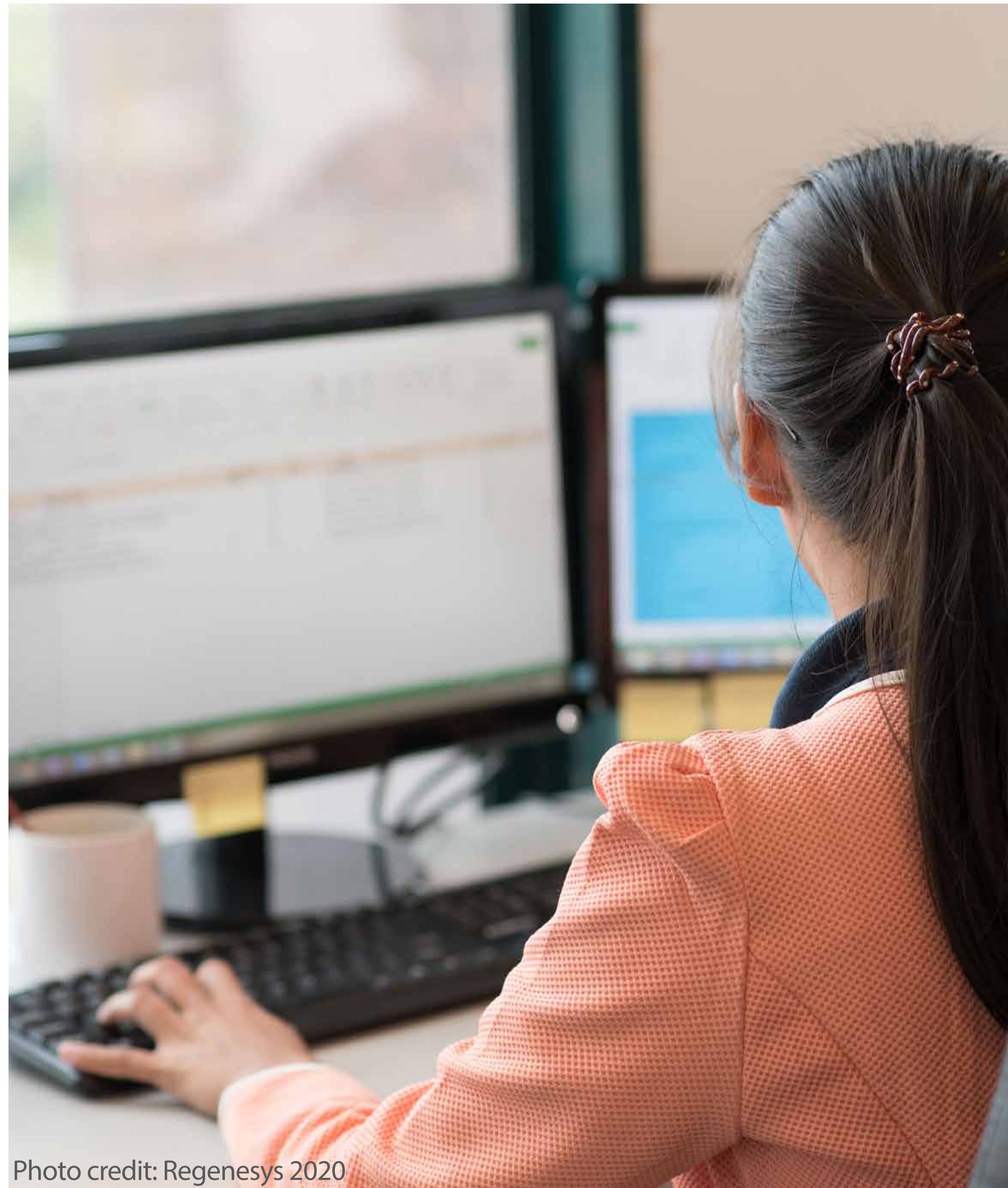


Photo credit: Regenesys 2020

# Case Example

## Regenesys

*Philippines*

Regenesys is a business process outsourcing (BPO) company based in the Philippines that provides back-office and operations support services focusing on digital image processing for clients in the U.S. and Australia. Regenesys was created to employ survivors of human trafficking in technology-centric jobs, enabling technical skills acquisition, career progression, and financial independence, as well as a supportive environment where survivors can continue their journey of recovery.

The BPO partners with aftercare organizations to select candidates to join its training program, with successful graduates joining the operations team as long-term employees. Technical and core skills training are implemented in parallel throughout employment to enable the acquisition of the knowledge, attitudes, life skills, and character traits needed by the employees to be successful both in the workplace and in their personal lives. Employees have access to a comprehensive support program that includes performance coaching; educational programs about physical, mental, social, and financial wellbeing; workplace counselling; and scholarships for further education.

Regenesys currently employs 215 people, of which about two-thirds of entry-level recruits having experienced trauma. Research undertaken by academic partners demonstrates significant improvement in the lives of the employees across a range of wellbeing measures.

For more information, see here: <https://www.regenesysbpo.com/>





# Conclusion

This guide has aimed to explain how business can make a tangible impact in preventing human trafficking from taking place through the empowerment and employment of survivors of human trafficking.

All businesses interested in survivor empowerment and employment should have at minimum processes to ensure the business is not causing, contributing, or directly linked to human trafficking. Those businesses wishing to make a profound impact in the lives of survivors can look to this guide and the case examples for inspiration.

GBCAT invites global businesses to join us in helping to tackle human trafficking. Businesses participating in GBCAT can drive progress across multiple workstreams, including advancing survivor empowerment and employment, supplier capability building, and business resource navigation.

Visit the [Global Business Coalition Against Human Trafficking](#) website to learn more.



## Survivor Empowerment and Employment:

Participate in skills building programs for survivors of human trafficking to obtain sustainable employment at GBCAT member companies and business partners.



## Supplier Capability Building:

Build capabilities among your suppliers to understand and manage human trafficking risks by gaining access to tools primarily tailored to SMEs and aligned with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.



## Resource Navigation:

Guide businesses and other stakeholders to meaningful resources to navigate the landscape of human trafficking tools, trainings, and organizations.

## 30 Endnotes

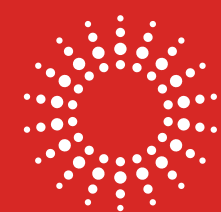
- 1 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolTraffickingInPersons.aspx>.
- 2 See e.g. UK Modern Slavery Act (2015) and Australia Modern Slavery Act (2018).
- 3 <https://www.unseenuk.org/modern-slavery/facts-and-figures>. For more details on the different types of human trafficking and steps businesses can take to identify, prevent and manage human trafficking risks, please see GBCAT's Toolkit for Small and Medium-Sized Suppliers on Forced Labor and Other Human trafficking Risks.
- 4 <http://project-chance.prorefugiu.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Training-Manual.pdf>.
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- 11 Ibid.
- 12 <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/centres/modern-slavery/docs/2018-jun-a-game-of-chance.pdf>.
- 13 <http://un-act.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/USAid-on-HT-Rehabilitation.pdf>.
- 14 In the UK, survivors are only provided with government funding for 45 days after exiting trafficking. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales>.
- 15 [https://assets.ctfassets.net/5ywmq66472jr/36Svz3uAtl7j9i7LE8c5vr/d25d5184773e8e77effae94f2034c5cb/COP21157\\_Bright\\_Future\\_Report\\_6\\_2\\_-\\_FINAL\\_2\\_July\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/5ywmq66472jr/36Svz3uAtl7j9i7LE8c5vr/d25d5184773e8e77effae94f2034c5cb/COP21157_Bright_Future_Report_6_2_-_FINAL_2_July_2019.pdf).
- 16 For example, see: <https://www.survivoralliance.org/survivors> and <https://nationalsurvivornetwork.org/la-survivor-network/>
- 17 <https://cclou.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Guiding-Principles-for-Agencies-with-Self-Assessment.pdf>; <https://blog.theexodusroad.com/aftercare-human-trafficking>.
- 18 <http://www.helenbamber.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Trauma-Informed-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>
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- 28 <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/HT-Workforce-Collaborations-Webinar.pdf>.
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- 30 Ibid.
- 31 For information about geographies where the incidence of human trafficking is high, see resources such as [U.S. Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Country Report](#), Verite's [Responsible Sourcing Tool](#), and the Minderoo Foundation's [Global Slavery Index](#).
- 32 Businesses interested in hiring survivors may be interested in learning more about Impact Sourcing. See the [Buyers' Impact Sourcing Guidance](#).





## Global Business Coalition Against Human Trafficking A BSR Collaboration

BSR provides executive leadership and secretariat support for GBCAT. BSR is a global nonprofit business network and consultancy dedicated to sustainability. BSR Collaborations bring together more than 400 companies, spanning multiple sectors and geographies, to strengthen company performance, improve markets and industries, and contribute to systemic change for a more just and sustainable world. Visit [www.bsr.org/collaboration](http://www.bsr.org/collaboration) to learn more.



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