

Survey Analysis: Strategic planning in anti-slavery/anti-trafficking organisations

Matthew C. Clarke – July 2020 ¹

Executive summary

The Freedom Keys Research Project aims to generate innovative ideas for ending modern slavery, and to test the effectiveness of those ideas. As part of that research, we wanted to validate the hypothesis that most anti-slavery/anti-trafficking organisations give inadequate attention to the roles played by perpetrators. An online survey distributed to anti-slavery/anti-trafficking organisations globally provided data on specific aspects of strategic planning, including the four pillars framework, theories of change, and attitudes to perpetrators. This report describes the survey, summarises the 147 responses, and discusses some implications of those results. Of prime significance, we found that ...

- Only 41% of anti-slavery organisations use the Four Pillars Framework as a central guiding principle of their work, even though it is the primary approach to anti-slavery work promoted by the UN and the USA government.
- For those organisations whose programs *are* guided by the Four Pillars Framework, Prevention is the most important influence and Prosecution the least.
- Only 26% of anti-slavery organisations have a documented theory of change that mentions perpetrators.
- Only 27% of organisations have programs that address the motivations and drivers of perpetrators.
- Regardless of the lack of conceptual thinking and interest in perpetrators, 57% of organisations actually *do* engage directly with perpetrators.

Overall, we conclude that many organisations do not have a thought through position with regard to perpetrators, and although they find themselves dealing with perpetrators, they do so without any prior theoretical framework, organisational interest, or intentional organisational capacity.



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¹ This Freedom Keys Research Project report is circulated to supporters of the project prior to any academic peer review process. The results are consequently indicative rather than formally validated.

Background and purpose

Starting in 2019, the Freedom Keys Research Project has sought to understand the current state of the anti-slavery² movement, posing the question of why modern slavery still exists given the massive amount of resources that has gone into its eradication? We have probed existing workers in the movement to understand the effectiveness of strategies during the past 20 years and promoted thinking about innovative strategies that might prove more effective over the next 20 years.

As part of that project, we wanted to push beyond assumptions about what anti-slavery organisations were doing, to document the reality of certain aspects of strategic thinking within the overall anti-slavery movement globally. In particular, we were interested in what attitude anti-slavery organisations held towards the role of perpetrators: that is, towards slaveholders, traffickers, and other individuals who directly or indirectly benefit from the enslavement of another.

To gather relevant data, we constructed an online questionnaire and invited anti-slavery workers globally to provide answers on behalf of their organisations. In order to maximise participation, we phrased the survey around the topic of strategic planning, and included questions about three themes: the UN's four-pillars framework, theories of change, and interactions with perpetrators.

Data collection method

A questionnaire was constructed using Google Forms (see details in Appendix A) with 16 questions in four main sections:

1. Respondent identification.
2. Attitudes towards the Four Pillars Framework promoted by the UN and the USA government (see Appendix B for a description of the Four Pillars Framework)
3. Theories of change (see Appendix B for a description)
4. Attitudes and engagement with perpetrators (see Appendix B for a definition of perpetrators).

People were invited to participate in the survey via email:

- The Global Modern Slavery Directory³ lists 2,854 anti-slavery organisations across 199 countries. An export from that database provided a list of 2,217 unique email addresses, which were all sent an invitation email and a reminder one week later.
- A notice was placed in the weekly update of a major anti-slavery networking organisation.
- Personalised emails were sent to 46 anti-slavery workers either known directly by the Principal Researcher, or recommended by other respondents to the survey.

Limitations

The survey-based approach to data collection has several limitations:

- Although the anti-slavery movement is global and multi-lingual, the survey and invitations to participate were only in English. This may have prevented some non-English speakers from participating and consequently biased the results. Although the language usage in the responses shows that many respondents did not have English as their first language, the

² See Appendix B for a clarification of the labels “modern slavery” and “anti-slavery”.

³ Data was extracted from <https://www.globalmodernslavery.org> in May 2020.

results may not reflect the strategies of anti-slavery organisations that do not have substantial English competence.

- In common with other approaches to data collection that rely on voluntary participation, this study may be affected by volunteer bias.

Results

Respondents

After invitations were sent to approximately 2,250 anti-slavery organisations, 149 responses were received, none of which was obviously faked or trivial.

At least 145 distinct organisations participated. In the remaining four cases, multiple respondents completed the survey for the same organisation or different regional branches of the same organisation. The varying regional responses were retained, but in two cases where it appeared that the survey responses were on behalf of the exact same organisation, only one response was included in the data set. The selected response in those two cases was the one submitted by the position description that seemed most senior. Following that selection process, the analysis was based on 147 responses.

The respondents tended to be people with senior positions in their organisations, with 53% claiming roles such as executive director, president, CEO, founder, national co-ordinator, and board member.

UN Four Pillars framework

Question 3 sought to measure how influential the four pillars framework is across the global anti-slavery movement. The results, summarised in Figure 1, indicate that 41% of responding organisations use the 4Ps as a “core guiding principle”. Conversely, 22% of responding organisations are either unaware of the framework or, though aware of the framework, choose not to follow it.

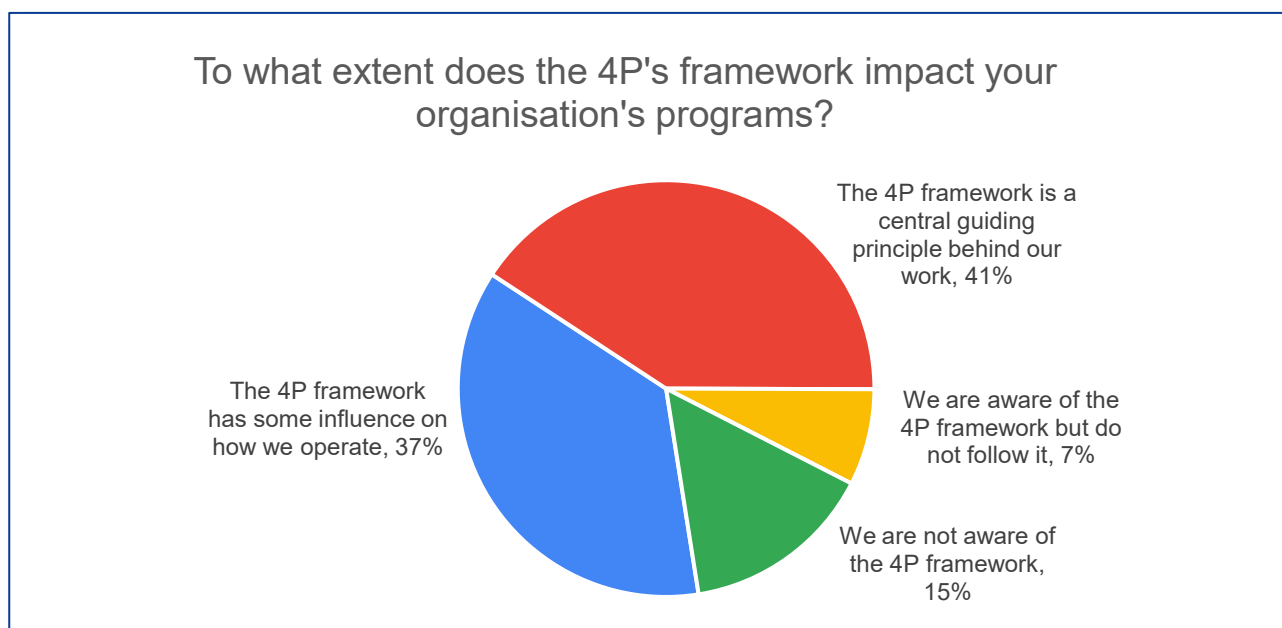


Figure 1: To what extent does the 4P's framework impact your organisation's programs? (n=147)

Those who indicated that the Four Pillar's Framework had some influence within their organisational strategy (question 3) were then asked to rank the influence of the four pillars (question 4). As can be seen from Figure 2, the most important pillar to the majority of organisations was Prevention:

79% (n=91) of respondents said that Prevention was the most important or second most important pillar. The least important was Prosecution: 89% (n=102) of respondents said that Prosecution was the least important or second least important pillar.

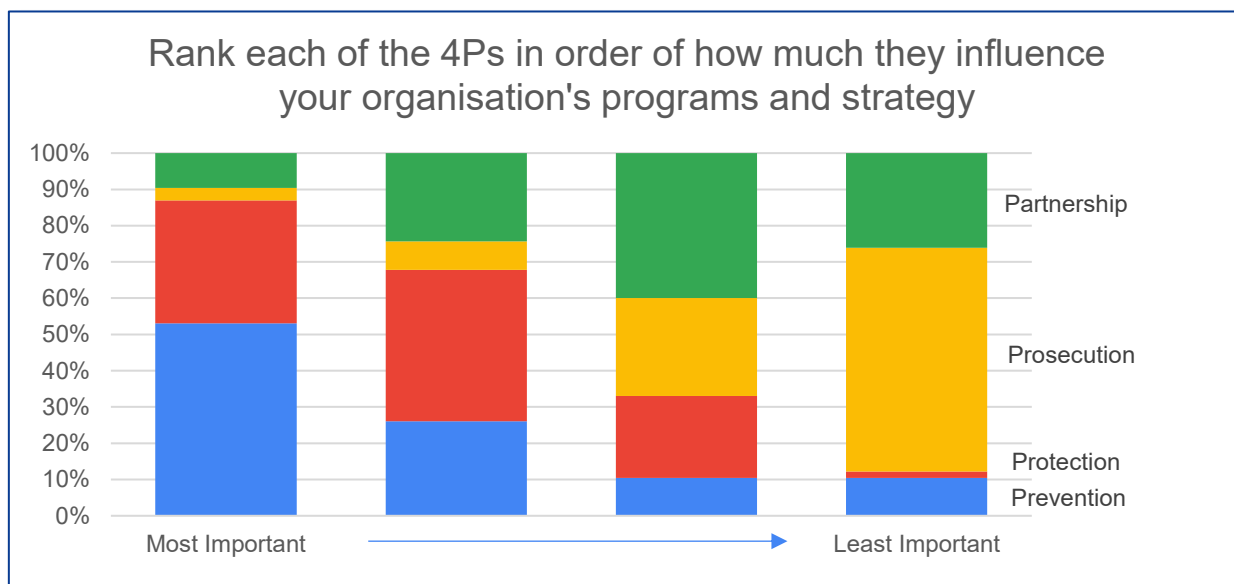


Figure 2: Rank each of the 4Ps in order of how much they influence your organisation's programs and strategy (n=115)

Theory of Change

This survey (question 5) found that 43% (63) of responding organisations have a documented theory of change.

Of primary interest to the Freedom Keys Research Project was the question of whether organisational theories of change assigned any role to perpetrators. Of the 63 organisations with a documented theory of change, 60% indicated that perpetrators do play some role in that theory of change (question 6). In other words, out of all responding organisations, just over a quarter (26%, n=38) have a documented theory of change that mentions perpetrators. Those respondents were then asked to "Briefly describe the role perpetrators play in your theory of change" (question 7). A thematic analysis of the 35 answers to that question led to the following observations:

1. In 26% (n=9) of the responses to question 7, perpetrators were mentioned as an actor in the theory of change but no further details were provided about causal effects on them nor causal effects by them on other actors. That suggests those organisations recognise perpetrators as actors in the system but treat them as static entities, outside of their organisation's ability or mandate to influence. One response could not be clearly interpreted and the remaining 71% (n=25) discussed various ways that the organisation's programs were affected by their understanding of perpetrators.
2. 51% (n=18) of responses suggested that some sort of intervention could result in stopping offenders, most commonly by legal and prosecutorial channels (31%).
3. Beyond prosecution, a small number of respondents (11%) mentioned other avenues to stop offenders, such as naming-and-shaming, changes to cultural attitudes, and commercial pressure.
4. In 11% (n=4) of responses, the organisation sought to monitor and/or report on the activities of perpetrators.

5. 11% (n=4) of responses suggested that the organisation could transform perpetrators or prevent people from becoming perpetrators through some form of education, codes of conduct, or prisoner rehabilitation.
6. Only 3 respondents (9%) mentioned the demand side of slavery: i.e. that consumers are also perpetrators of the problem, and that stopping future victimisation depends on reducing the demand for victim services. This is a surprisingly small number given that the introduction to this section of the questionnaire explicitly noted that perpetrators include “the direct and indirect consumers of slave-produced goods and services.”
7. Only 2 respondents (6%) mentioned the task of understanding the perpetrators’ motivations (though that is perhaps also implied in the 4 responses mentioned in the previous point).

These observations need to be taken as very preliminary because the survey expected only brief responses offered in a short time rather than a detailed formal statement.

Interest and engagement with perpetrators

In this section, the questionnaire asked about whether the organisation had any interest in perpetrators beyond what might have already been described in the previous section on theories of change. The top level summary of responses is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Apart from what might be written into your theory of change, does your organisation have any interest in the motivations and drivers of perpetrator behaviour? (n=147)

There were in fact more “Other” responses in the raw data, but to simplify the analysis we reclassified 7 answers according to the most salient feature of the respondents’ text.

Figure 3 shows a lack of interest regarding perpetrators by 22% of organisations (“It is never discussed” or “We discuss it but are not really interested in the issue”), current perpetrator-specific activities by 27% of organisations, with a further 48% wishing to be more engaged with perpetrator-specific activities.

The 30% of respondents who answered question 8 with either “Some of our programs explicitly attempt to address the motivations and drivers of perpetrators” or “Other” were given an

opportunity to describe how those programs operated (question 9). A thematic analysis of the 42 answers to that question led in the following observations:

1. 33% (n=14) of responses to question 9 noted the organisation’s role in raising awareness about the reality of slavery: either the dangers for potential victims or the consequences for potential perpetrators. These organisations attempt to prevent various forms of slavery and bring current practices into the open.
2. 19% (n=8) of responses mentioned dealing with economic motivations, including financial gain and supply chain integrity.
3. 17% (n=7) of responses noted the importance of addressing perpetrators on the demand side of slavery, particularly with respect to forms of sexual exploitation.
4. 10% (n=4) of responses mentioned law enforcement, mostly linked to the organisation referring cases to police and supporting the prosecution processes.
5. 10% (n=4) of responses saw a key aspect of their engagement with perpetrators was to listen to and understand their motivations.
6. 7% (n=3) of responses focussed on the dynamic whereby victims of slavery later become perpetrators.
7. 5% (n=2) of responses mentioned engagement with media.
8. Some other topics mentioned included working with prisoners convicted of trafficking offences, migration, and corruption.

When asked the more specific question about whether the organisation engages directly with any perpetrators (question 10) rather than having some theoretical interest in them, 57% (n=84) responded affirmatively.

The 43% who claimed (in question 10) to have *no engagement* with perpetrators were then asked why that was the case (question 11). They were presented with four options plus an “Other” option, and they could select multiple options. As can be seen in Figure 4, the most commonly stated reason for *not* engaging with perpetrators is that it is outside the organisations’ mandate, i.e. perpetrators do not fall within the purpose of the organisation.

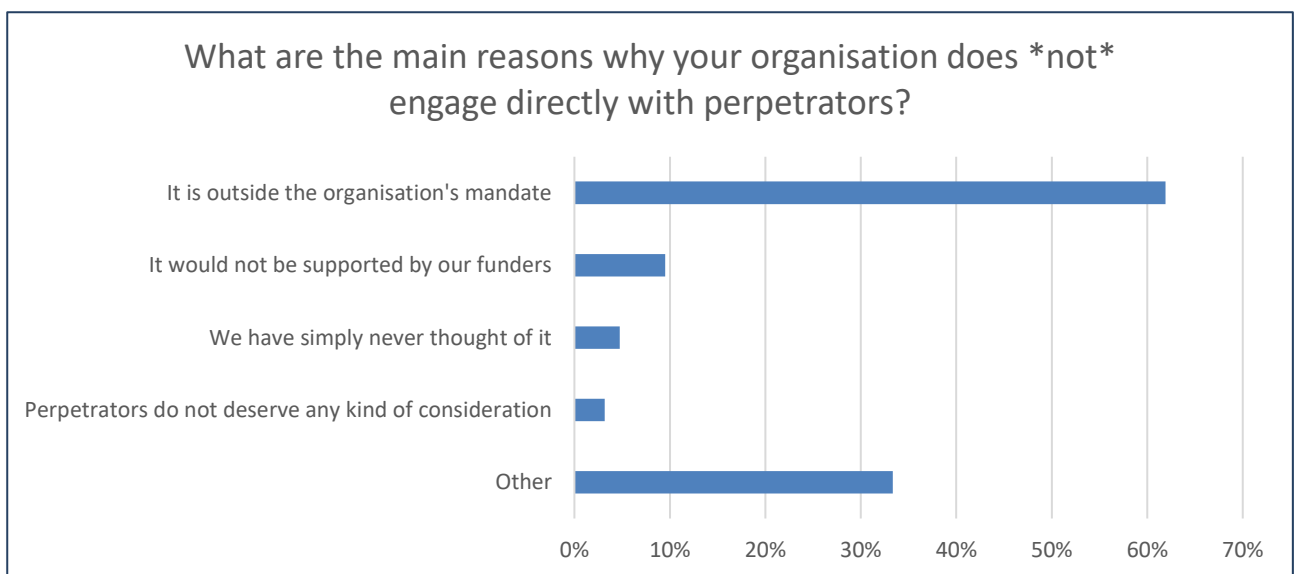


Figure 4: What are the main reasons why your organisation does *not* engage directly with perpetrators? (n=63)

The text that respondents used to explain their selection of “Other” included reasons such as:

- Limited resources such as money, personnel or competence
- Lack of policy assistance from their national government
- Not a strategic priority
- Working with perpetrators is left to other agencies.

The 57% who claimed (in question 10) to engage directly with perpetrators were then asked two further questions: about the types of perpetrator and about the types of interaction with them. In both cases, the questions had a list of pre-coded responses plus an “Other” option. The respondent could tick multiple options. If they selected “Other” then they were prompted to enter a text description. The results are summarised in Figure 5 and Figure 6.

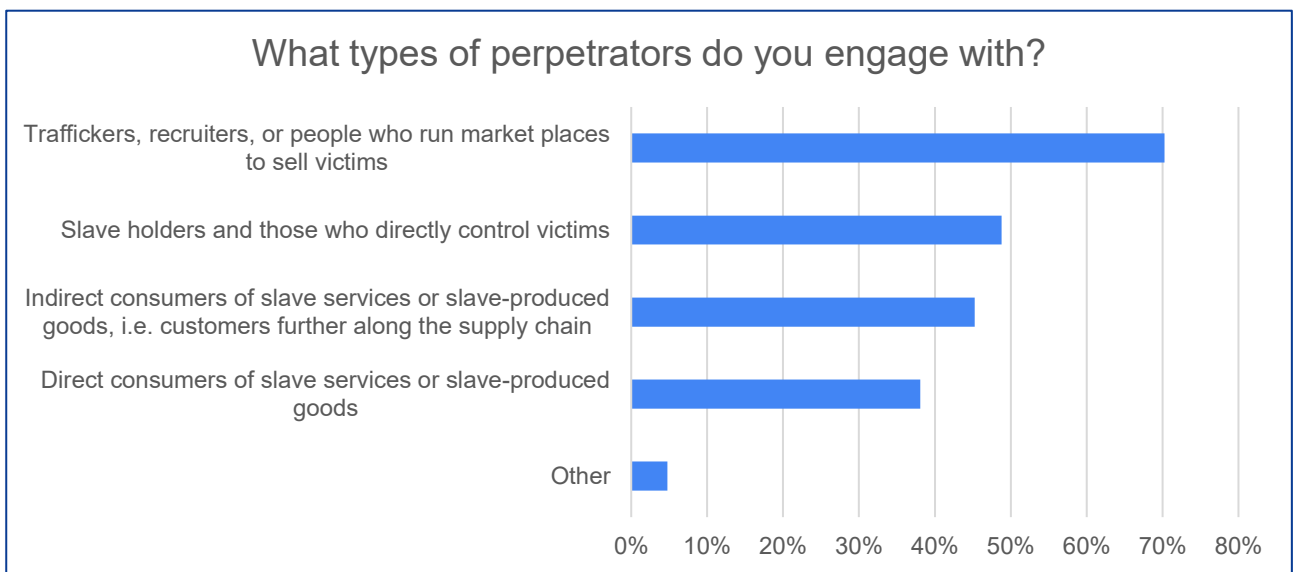


Figure 5: What types of perpetrators do you engage with? (n=84)

The text that respondents used to explain their selection of “Other” included comments such as:

- “Transporter mobilisation”
- “Indirect perpetrators like parents of the victims.”

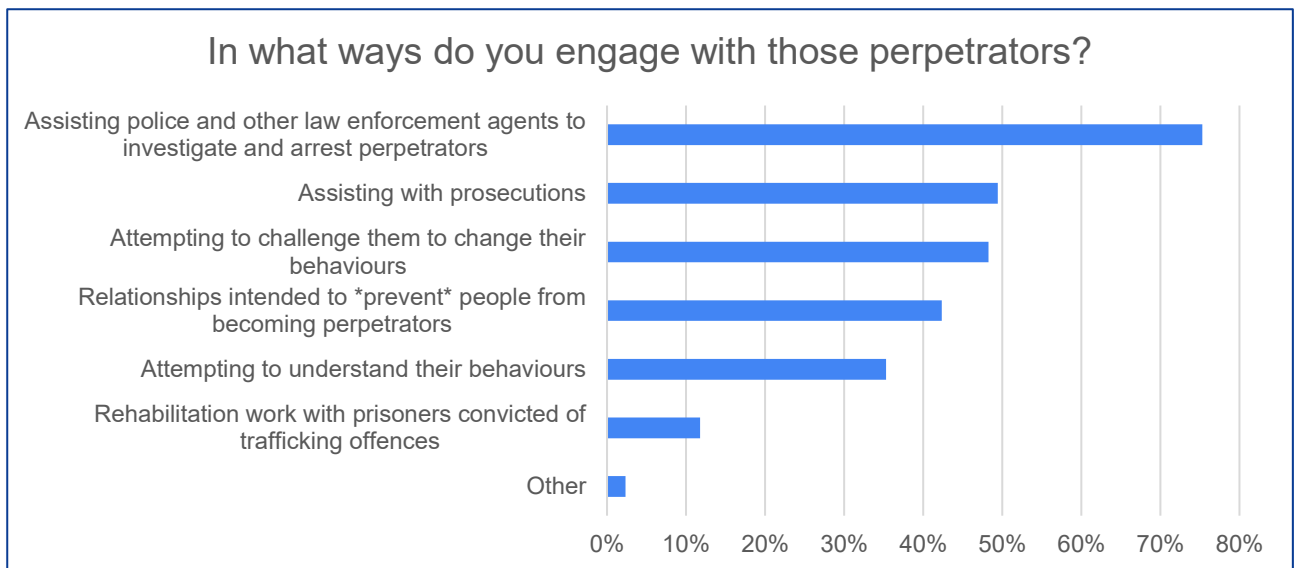


Figure 6: In what ways do you engage with those perpetrators? (n=84)

The text that respondents used to explain their selection of “Other” included the two comments:

- “We address unemployment of young women at risk of dangerous migration”
- “We represent survivors/victims in securing civil remedies.”

From Figure 5 and Figure 6 it is clear that the respondents who engage directly with perpetrators do so across a wide variety of perpetrator types and engagement processes. The dominant forms of engagement were:

- Assisting law enforcement in their investigation and arrest of traffickers, recruiters, or people who run market places to sell victims. That combination was present in 49 (58%) of the 84 relevant responses.
- Assisting law enforcement in their investigation and arrest of slave holders and those who directly control victims: present in 35 (42%) of the 84 relevant responses.
- Assisting with the prosecution of traffickers, recruiters, or people who run market places to sell victims: present in 35 (42%) of the 84 relevant responses.

Although those law enforcement approaches dominated the responses (82%, n=69), the majority (68%, n=57) also affirmed perpetrator-centric strategies intended to understand, change, prevent or rehabilitate. In relation to the whole cohort of survey respondents:

- 47% (n=69) engaged with perpetrators through law enforcement
- 38% (n=56) engaged with perpetrators with the intent to understand, prevent or change them
- Only 7% (n=10) selected the option “Rehabilitation work with prisoners convicted of trafficking offences” and the textual answers to other questions imply that none of those organisations see this option as a planned or substantial component of their work.

Discussion

Although the UN and the USA government promote the Four Pillars Framework as the primary means of structuring anti-slavery interventions, this survey found that only 41% of organisations use

that framework as a “central guiding principle.” Furthermore, 22% of global anti-slavery organisations either are not aware of or choose not to follow that framework. Those statistics highlight a lack of cohesiveness within the anti-slavery movement, and calls into question the influence of the Four Pillars Framework.

For those organisations whose strategy is influenced by the Four Pillars Framework, the vast majority focus on Prevention and Protection – both primarily victim-oriented elements. The only element of the 4P’s that directly addresses perpetrators (i.e. Prosecution) only ranks in the top two influences for 11% of responding organisations. This is consistent with the survey’s other result regarding perpetrators, since perpetrator-centric approaches apart from prosecution are virtually unmentioned in the Four Pillar Framework.

Notwithstanding the low percentage of organisations who see the Prosecution pillar as an important influence on their work, 29% (n=42) of organisations report that they do in fact assist with prosecutions, and an additional 18% (n=27) assist law enforcement with investigations and arrests.

At the beginning of the Freedom Keys Research Project, we assumed that most anti-slavery organisations would have an explicit theory of change, since many funding bodies require such a theory of change from the projects they fund. Conversations with many organisations prior to this present study called that assumption into question and this survey has confirmed that less than half (43%) of anti-slavery organisations have any documented theory of change.

We do not believe this is simply a failure to invest in one specific tool, but rather that many anti-slavery organisations are fuelled by an intuitive passion to end slavery, with no thought-through model of how their actions contribute to that goal. That hypotheses, however, needs further testing. Collecting and comparing the theories of change that do exist would provide insight into the (lack of) cohesiveness of the whole anti-slavery movement. Of even greater benefit to the whole anti-slavery movement would be to develop a generic theory of change that can act as a “reference model”⁴.

Only a quarter of organisations treated perpetrators as an actor within their theory of change. If we ignore the organisations who appear to merely mention perpetrators in their theory of change, then the proportion who deliberately consider what the role of perpetrator entails drops to one fifth (n=29).

The same pattern is shown in the responses to question 13: only one fifth of organisations (n=30) engage directly with perpetrators in an attempt to understand their behaviour. Most of this cohort (n=21) also allocate a role for perpetrators in their theory of change, showing a strong relationship between theorising about perpetrators and actively seeking to understand them. Counterintuitively, of the 41 organisations who interact with perpetrators in order to change them, only 24 seek to understand them.

Whereas a quarter of respondents indicated that perpetrators are included in their theory of change (questions 5 and 6), and virtually the same number attempt to address the motivations and drivers of perpetrators in at least some of their programs (question 8), over a half (57% in question 10) in reality *do* interact with perpetrators. That is, many organisations engage directly with perpetrators without either a theory or active interest in doing so: of the 84 respondents whose organisation does engage directly with perpetrators, 62% (n=52) do not have a theory of change that mentioned

⁴ The concept of a reference model is well-established in systems engineering and in information architecture but not within social movement theory. For those unfamiliar with the idea, the Wikipedia article at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reference_model provides a good description of the purpose and uses of a reference model.

perpetrators, and 68% (n=57) say they are either not interested or do not have the resources to take any significant action with perpetrators.

For those organisations that do *not* engage directly with perpetrators, the dominant reason is that it is outside the organisation's mandate (question 11). Presumably that implies the omission is not an *ad hoc* program decision, nor a strategy option that is discussed and rejected, but rather totally off the strategic planning table. That is, most organisations that do not engage directly with perpetrators are simply "not that sort of organisation": they are constituted to serve some other stakeholder and were not intended to work with perpetrators from the outset.

On the other hand, 48% of all respondents claimed that they would like to be more involved with perpetrators if it wasn't for resourcing constraints (question 8). The responses to questions 8 and 11 seem contradictory, especially so for the 18 organisations that claimed both that they would like to be more involved with perpetrators if it wasn't for resourcing constraints, and that one reason for not engaging with perpetrators was that it was outside their mandate.

Conclusions and future work

The tendency of responses to this survey, including the contradictory and inconsistent nature of some answers, suggests that many organisations do not have a thought through position with regard to perpetrators. Only a fifth to a quarter of anti-slavery organisations think about the causal influences on perpetrators and the causal effects of perpetrators' behaviour. Without such consideration, the remaining proportion are unable to effectively engage with perpetrators in any systematic way.

We consider this the most significant blind-spot in current anti-slavery strategic planning. As a result, many organisations find themselves dealing with perpetrators without any prior theoretical framework, organisational interest, or organisational capacity for doing so.

In a belief that theories of change provide a means to address this gap, we recommend that one of the major global anti-slavery organisations facilitate a collaborative project to develop a reference model for the anti-slavery movement. The outcome would be a theory of change, informed by systems theory and by practitioners across all forms of modern slavery, that acts as a standard against which each organisation could consider its own impact. The reference model would provide a foundation for education, communication, disagreement, and the demarcation of contributions among cooperating organisations. Based on the preliminary observations of the Freedom Keys Research Project, and the results of this current survey, an important aspect of that reference model would be an explication of the roles of perpetrators.

This survey has raised several issues that could benefit from further research:

- Given the low percentage of organisations who see the Prosecution pillar as an important influence on their work, how is it that so many in fact do assist law enforcement with investigations, arrests with prosecutions?
- Why do so few organisations invest in a theory of change? Is the task of constructing a theory of change too onerous? Do they apply techniques other than a theory of change to link their organisational activities to their organisational goals?
- Further questioning might explain how so many organisations that do *not* seek to understand perpetrators imagine that they can nevertheless interact with perpetrators in ways that will change them. How do they intend to change perpetrator behaviours without first understanding the internal motivations and external drivers of those behaviours?

- Further questioning might explain how so many respondents claimed both that they would like to be more involved with perpetrators if it wasn't for resourcing constraints, and that one reason for not engaging with perpetrators was that it was outside their mandate. If it is outside the organisational mandate then would the addition of resources really inspire a change of direction?

In their final comments, several respondents affirmed our focus on perpetrators, with comments such as:

- "This approach could reduce the modern slavery. Behavioural change solution is most important than punishment."
- "I am an MSW student who is interested in restorative justice. My colleagues and I ... find that there are not enough services to support and prevent young men from turning to trafficking."
- "We are well aware that perpetrators are often victims themselves and sexual exploitation will not end of until they get the help they need as well."
- "A 'perpetrator-oriented' expression of anti-trafficking is very much missing from both the discourse and therefore funding considerations. I am certainly interested in hearing more about this approach and the ways a theory of change could be applied to addressing the perpetrator side of the story."

Those useful insights are closely aligned to the focus of the Freedom Keys Research Project, affirming that unless we understand the internal motivations and external drivers of perpetrator behaviour, we will never be able to subvert or redirect them. Any intervention that fails to address those motivations and drivers will at best displace the abuse to other forms or other locations.

This survey has confirmed the importance of the direction of our project and we will continue to assist anti-slavery organisations to rethink their strategies, generate innovative ideas for future anti-slavery interventions, and work with them to test those ideas.

Appendix A: Structure of online questionnaire

Section	Id	Question	Conditionality
About you	1	What is the name of your organisation?	
	2	What is your position or role within the organisation?	
Four-pillars	3	To what extent does the 4P's framework impact your organisation's programs?	
	4	Rank each of the 4P's in order of how much they influence your organisation's programs and strategy.	This question was only asked if the response to question 3 indicated that the organisation made some use of the 4P's framework.
Theory of change	5	Does your organisation have a documented theory of change?	
	6	Does your theory of change include the role of perpetrators in any way?	This question was only asked if the response to question 5 indicated that the organisation has a theory of change.
	7	Briefly describe the role perpetrators play in your theory of change	This question was only asked if the response to question 6 was answered in the positive.
Perpetrators	8	Apart from what might be written into your theory of change, does your organisation have any interest in the motivations and drivers of perpetrator behaviour?	
	9	Describe how your programs address the motivations and drivers of perpetrators	This question was only asked if the response to question 8 indicated that the organisation does address perpetrator issues.
	10	Does your organisation engage directly with any perpetrator? (For instance, working with law enforcement agents to arrest or prosecute a slaveholder; or working with consumers of slave-services to challenge their purchasing choices.)	

Section	Id	Question	Conditionality
	11	What are the main reasons why your organisation does *not* engage directly with perpetrators?	This question was only asked if the response to question 10 indicated that the organisation does not engage directly with perpetrators.
	12	What types of perpetrators do you engage with?	This question was only asked if the response to question 10 indicated that the organisation engages directly with perpetrators.
	13	In what ways do you engage with those perpetrators?	This question was only asked if the response to question 10 indicated that the organisation engages directly with perpetrators.
Final	14-16	Several optional questions allowed the respondents to add other comments	

Appendix B: Glossary

Modern slavery, human trafficking and anti-slavery

For convenience, this report uses the terms “anti-slavery” and “modern slavery” throughout this paper. Even though those labels are problematic, I think alternatives, such as “human trafficking,” have their own problems. For a more detailed examination of these terms, see (Bravo 2019; 2017).

The scope of “slavery” is intended to be inclusive of all forms of human abuse, coercion, and exploitation, that reflect an assumption that one person can in any sense “own” another, whether that pretence of “ownership” be legal, psychological, financial or otherwise. It includes forced marriage, extreme labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, and conscription into child armies, along with the recruitment and trafficking of people for those purposes.

Demand side and supply side

Modern slavery depends on but the supply of vulnerable people and the demand for their services. The supply side involves finding and somehow coercing people into positions where they lose their freedom: victims, recruiters, traffickers, slaveholders and slave controllers. The demand side that fuels the abuse includes the people and economic systems which benefit from slave-produced goods and services: the direct purchasers such as so-called “sex tourists”, and the indirect consumers further along the supply chain.

Four Pillars Framework

The Four Pillars Framework arises from the Palermo Protocols in 2000 and is the primary approach that the UN and the USA government promotes for addressing slavery. The four pillars of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership provide the core structure of that framework. (See ‘Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime’ 2000.)

Theory of change

Many organisations – commercial, governmental and not-for-profit – base their strategies on an understanding of how their actions will impact their target market, and that understanding is often documented in a theory of change. A theory of change is typically represented via an annotated diagram with objects representing actors within the system and connecting lines representing causal influences between those actors. A simplified structure is to define each element in a “results chain”: inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact.

For further information, see <https://www.theoryofchange.org>, Taplin and Clark (2012) or Rogers (2014).

Perpetrators

Respondents to this survey were given the following description:

The term “perpetrator” refers primarily to slaveholders and human traffickers, but also to any individual directly or indirectly benefitting from the enslavement of another. Please treat this term broadly. Any experience you have had with slaveholders, slave owners, human traffickers, people running online market places for slave services, the direct and indirect consumers of slave-produced goods and services – all of that may be helpful.

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