



# Myths & Realities of Human Trafficking



Lift Up the  
Vulnerable



## Myth

## Reality

**Human trafficking is synonymous with sex trafficking.**

While sex trafficking gets more media attention, labor trafficking is believed to be even more prevalent globally. Estimates close to 49.6 million people were living in modern slavery in 2021, of which 27.6 million were in forced labor and 22 million in forced marriage. In Sudan and South Sudan, forced labor and child brides are leading causes of exploitation.

**Traffickers usually target strangers.**

Surprisingly, many traffickers are known to the victim; they can be romantic partners or even family members. Estimates ranging between 37–41% of child trafficking situations are facilitated by family members or caregivers.

**Human trafficking is a problem only for undocumented foreigners.**

The world is more displaced than ever. It's estimated that today there are over 100 million people who have been forced to leave their homes; greatly increasing their risk of exploitation. However, people all over the world in cities, suburbs, and nations at peace can also be vulnerable. Human traffickers prey on people who are emotionally and financially vulnerable; including those living in poverty, unemployed, or homeless.

**Trafficking requires transporting the victim across borders.**

Trafficking doesn't necessarily involve movement. Victims can be exploited right in their own communities — even their own homes.

## Myth

## Reality

**Human trafficking always involves violence.**

Many think that trafficking mainly involves kidnapping or physical force. However, most traffickers employ psychological tactics like manipulation or threats to exploit victims. In warzones, both are true but violent crime is more of a reality because the rule of law is no longer intact – and entire villages can be raided. Many children we protect had family members killed or trafficked when their villages were raided.

**Only women and girls are victims of sex trafficking.**

Trafficking affects men and boys too and that's why LUV's trafficking programs in warzones have an almost 50/50 split between boys and girls protected in our housing and school program.

**Traffickers are primarily men in organized crime.**

Perpetrators of human trafficking span all racial, ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic demographics and are as diverse as survivors – some are even survivors. They include individuals, business owners, members of a gang or network, caregivers of victims, intimate partners, business owners, and powerful government representatives or business executives.

**Victims of trafficking are physically restrained.**

While some victims are physically confined, many remain in trafficking situations due to complex factors such as fear, manipulation, lack of resources, or psychological control.



LUV

## Myth

## Reality

**Consent at the beginning negates any later claim of trafficking.**

If an adult originally consented to work or engage in commercial sex but was later coerced through force, fraud, or manipulation, they are considered a victim, regardless of their initial consent. It's important to note that estimates as high as 90% of those engaged in commercial sex "by choice" report having experienced child sexual abuse. Any minor engaged in commercial sexual exploitation is always considered a victim.

**Victims of trafficking always seek help to escape.**

The decision to seek help is complicated by factors like fear, loyalty, shame, and manipulation. Recognizing oneself as a victim is a process, and not all are ready or able to seek help immediately. In countries like Sudan and South Sudan, there are often no place to go for help and so many suffer without any options.

**Labor trafficking is only a major issue in developing countries.**

Labor trafficking is prevalent in developed countries, including the U.S., but it tends to be underreported. All around the world, as consumers demand cheaper and quicker materials — exploitation becomes the norm. In communities where LUV works, some of the ways children are engaged in labor trafficking included: conscripted as child soldiers, work in gold mining or cattle rearing camps, or through forced begging.

**The problem is too big and there is nothing I can do.**

**You are needed!**



Lift Up the  
**Vulnerable**

# **Transform the world by empowering the most vulnerable**



# Our Model

**We work to prevent human trafficking and empower children and women to thrive as change agents in their own lives and communities. Through the only indigenously directed anti-trafficking network spanning Sudan and South Sudan, we offer:**

## *Protection*

Vulnerable children and women are empowered to thrive long-term by receiving safe housing, nutritious meals, clean water, as well as, preventative and emergency medical care.

## *Education*

Students are equipped to grow intellectually in our pre-K through 12th grade schools, vocational training for adults, and faith-based mentoring for all ages to support their spiritual development.

## *Economic Development*

Communities are transformed through grassroots economic development which provides a catalyst to transition from dependency towards self-sufficiency and stability.





**Invest in vulnerable children and women  
at-risk to human trafficking by  
empowering them to be changemakers today.**

**Learn more at [liftupthevulnerable.org](https://liftupthevulnerable.org)**



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