

Trust and Liberation

A REPORT BY

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Arise

Are we making a difference? How do we know? These two questions rightly preoccupy those working in development and human rights. Much hinges on how we understand 'impact'.

Many civil society organisations working to confront slavery and human trafficking complain that our current understanding of impact is too narrow, and does not allow for their work to be fully captured and demonstrated.

Worse, the dominant model of impact measurement can disempower smaller organisations, which often lack the technical expertise to engage fluently with the funding community. Some have expressed their hope that a more holistic understanding of impact will emerge - one capable of appreciating the less measurable, but profoundly important aspects of frontline work. One key aspect is trust.

This investigation was conceived following discussions with colleagues around this tension: between what some call the *impact agenda* and the realities of work on the ground. If concepts like trust are essential to frontline workers, but fall outside of our understanding of impact, it is hard not to conclude that a realignment is needed.

Trust and Liberation is a quantitative study which explores the relationship between trust and human rights abuse, using as much relevant and robust data as we could gather, and controlling for as many variables as possible.

The overarching conclusion of this report is that trust matters



Some key findings include:

No matter how we measure human trafficking¹, we note a similar pattern: trust is a statistically significant predictor. **Stronger levels of trust correspond with lower incidences of slavery.**

A one unit increase in trust on the BTI scale, greatly improves the odds of a state receiving a more favourable TIP⁴ report ranking. **Trust appears as a critical part of the social glue that enables greater levels of protection, prosecution, and prevention.**

Looking at the US as a case study, we found that stronger levels of civil society⁵ predict more reports to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. **Higher levels of civil society provide more eyes and ears on the ground to help protect the vulnerable.**



A one unit increase in trust on the BTI scale² corresponds to a 0.05% decrease in enslavement.³ In Pakistan, this would translate into some one-hundred thousand people liberated, and in India, one-million people. **Trust could be the key to unlocking liberation.**

Our findings are preliminary. The deeper, causal relationships between trust and human trafficking have yet to be fully illuminated. This is an essential next step in deepening a more robust research agenda on trust and anti-slavery.

We hope that this marks the beginning of a research agenda and fruitful collaboration between those working to protect human rights.

1 E.g. Using data from the United States Trafficking in Persons Report, the Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index, or the think tank Woman Stats.

2 To measure trust, we use data from the Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI) on a ten-point scale.

3 Analyzing these BTI data with the 2016 Global Slavery Index, we find a one-point increase in trust corresponds to an average decline in enslavement by 0.05%.

4 The data on trust from BTI also illuminates the US State Department's TIP Report rankings, on a scale from Tier 1 (meeting minimal compliance in protection, prosecution, and prevention) to Tier 3 (not meeting any of these standards). We find that a one-point increase on the BTI trust scale significantly improves the odds of receiving a more favourable TIP report ranking (e.g., moving down from Tier 2 to Tier 1).

5 We obtained a measure of civil society in the United States from the AmeriCorps Program.