

DEVELOPING A COUNTER-TRAFFICKING STRATEGY

There are many approaches to consider when developing a comprehensive strategy to tackle trafficking in persons (TIP) within frontline sectors and organisations. A few critical approaches for a robust counter-trafficking strategy are:

1. Awareness

2. Training

3. Policies/Procedures

While the following guidance sets forth best practices to consider while developing and implementing a counter-trafficking strategy, organisations vary in size and resources. As such, some may focus on developing one area as a starting point rather than all three at once.

1. Awareness

IMPORTANCE OF AWARENESS

Awareness is always the first step in understanding and combating trafficking. A foundational understanding of the issue, including recognising trafficking, the different types of trafficking, vulnerability factors, and dispelling myths, is vital to activate the correct response. Awareness as a general practice gives broader visibility to the issue of human trafficking. By remedying misconceptions about human trafficking and correcting potential stereotypes about both victims and perpetrators, individuals become better equipped to recognise possible trafficking situations. While different methods, strategies, and tools are used to raise awareness, one of the most effective ways is through widely disseminated, targeted public awareness campaigns.

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Public awareness campaigns increase the general public's knowledge of TIP. They also provide sector-specific perspectives (i.e., highlighting indicators of trafficking in an airport, hotel, or healthcare facility). Ideally, a public awareness campaign should be multifaceted and appeal to vulnerable populations, actively trafficked victims and the general public. Dynamic strategies will provide the general public with tools to recognise and report possible trafficking situations. Similarly, a victim-centred public awareness campaign allows victims to self-identify and seek assistance.

A foundational principle of public awareness campaigns is that an increase in reports leads to an increase in identified victims. Campaigns that encourage the public to make reports, paired with sector-specific frontline professional training, work simultaneously to combat trafficking.

A21's *Can You See Me?* campaign illustrates the use of a public awareness campaign to highlight common trafficking scenarios, present the key signs of trafficking and recruitment methods, and provide information on local reporting mechanisms.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See [Overview of the *Can You See Me?* Awareness Campaign](#) and the [*Can You See Me?* Awareness Posters: Story-Telling Posters and Exploitation Type Posters](#).



2. Training

Frontline professionals, who are in the best possible position to identify trafficking due to the nature of their employment, should regularly receive training on TIP trends and practices. Frontline professionals can include employees in forward-facing government entities such as the South African Police Service or healthcare professionals, social workers, and immigration officials. It can also include non-governmental professionals within the transportation, hospitality, and education sector.

Frontline professional training sessions should include general TIP information, updated trafficking trends and behaviours, and content tailored to the audience's needs. While all levels within an organisation should receive training, education for those working on the 'frontline' who are most likely to encounter potential victims of trafficking should be prioritised. Training sessions should be held regularly to maintain awareness of the latest guidance. Even if new information isn't offered in each training, refresher courses are vital to strengthening an individual's understanding of the topic while providing reminders of critical points. It also provides a forum for further discussion by employees.

A21 provides specialised frontline training sessions, based on availability, to various sectors. These include but are not limited to law enforcement, aviation, healthcare, hospitality, and social development. Training covers multiple topics and seeks to provide a complete overview of TIP, from breaking down the core elements of the crime to industry-specific strategies to combat exploitation.

Please contact info.sa@a21.org for more information or to book a professional training session.

3. Policies/Procedures

All sectors should have robust policies in place that outline clear procedures to follow if an individual encounters a potential victim of trafficking. These internal policies should address the necessary steps to take, appropriate staff conduct, and adhere to a victim-centred approach. Such policies ensure that the application of a victim-centred approach results in a non-threatening response and limits re-traumatisation, while providing safety for the victim. Policies should also include an easy-to-follow referral procedure that is well understood by staff at all levels.

Depending on the organisation's mandate (i.e., law enforcement or community centres), it may be possible to conduct regular, specialised victim identification 'operations', or community outreaches, that focus specifically on proactively identifying potential human trafficking victims, conducting interviews/screenings, and providing any necessary further support.

Examples of the aspects to be addressed in the policy are outlined below:

► IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES:

The creation of a step-by-step guide for when trafficking is suspected within the scope of your operations. This can include:

- Basic signs that someone might be a trafficking victim.
- Initial steps to take once signs are identified, such as making a report to law enforcement.
- A named, central point of contact to receive reports of suspected trafficking.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See [Identifying Trafficking in Persons](#).

► POST IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING PROCEDURES:

Your organisation should establish a clear process that sets forth 'next steps' once a victim has been identified. This process should include specific actions that ensure the proper protection and support of that victim. Post-identification policies should lay out specific steps while providing key internal and external contacts for after a victim has been identified. Suggested components of a post-identification procedure include:

- Guidance on information to gather which may support the investigative process.
- A clear flow chart of the relevant referral pathways.
- A list of local service providers that provide support for victims of trafficking, preferably those that provide services 24/7.
- A directory of phone numbers and email addresses of key contacts, including internal and external entities.

- ▶ Internal and external (NHTH, local law enforcement) reporting mechanisms.
- ▶ All policies should include a provision requiring escalation of any victim safety concerns to the designated trained individual(s).
- ▶ A privacy statement reminding employees that any communication should be kept confidential and information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See [Responding, Reporting and Recovery](#) and the [Standard Operating Procedures](#).

▶ VICTIM-CENTRED PRINCIPLES:

A victim-centred approach results in a non-threatening response and limits re-traumatisation, while providing safety for the potential victim. Some examples of key victim-centred practices include:

- ▶ Before speaking with a potential victim, separate the potential victim from any accompanying persons. Your policy should clearly explain whether or not this is possible for your profession or how you will approach this in a safe and victim-centred way.
- ▶ Enlist a trusted and professional translator/interpreter who also understands the cultural context.
- ▶ Where possible, ensure any employee interacting with the potential victim is of the same gender.
- ▶ Do not raise your trafficking concerns with the person accompanying the potential victim.
- ▶ Do not begin the conversation with anything to do with documentation, legal status, or violations of any laws, as this could possibly scare the potential victim. Simply communicate you are there to help.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See [Victim-Centred Approach](#).

▶ DISSEMINATION AND TRAINING:

The policy should include guidance on how employees will be notified of the policy and be made aware of the prevalence of TIP. Below are some considerations for this document:

- ▶ How often the policy and related documents and contacts will be updated.
- ▶ Depending on the size and structure of the organisation, a group of individuals may be selected to receive more specialised training and be designated to assist in suspected trafficking situations. The policy may outline how many people should be on the designated team and what qualifications or training they ought to have.

NOTE: It is essential to assess whether or not the staff in your organisation should interact with a potential victim of trafficking. In some professional sectors, a best practice policy may require staff to report their observations and not approach a potential victim. In other organisations, there may be staff members who are trained to speak with a potential victim, and there may be others who are not. Your internal policies and procedures should clearly define which members, if any, are trained and equipped to intervene.

NOTE: A policy relating to identifying and reporting TIP need not be a standalone document. The policy may require reference to other internal policies relating to anti-discrimination reporting or other language-related policies such as 'trauma-informed language'. Further, a counter-trafficking policy may form part of your pre-existing child protection or safeguarding policies.

CONTACT A21

A21 seeks to equip frontline professionals with tools to identify, engage with, and communicate with potential victims in a victim-centred manner.

- ▶ To book frontline professional training, please contact **info.sa@a21.org**.

If you would like advice regarding a potential trafficking case, assistance on an upcoming operation, or repatriation support for a potential victim of trafficking

- ▶ Contact **(021) 551-0971**
- ▶ Email **info.sa@a21.org**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find supporting content on trafficking in persons training in a presentation format, see the [Slide Deck](#).