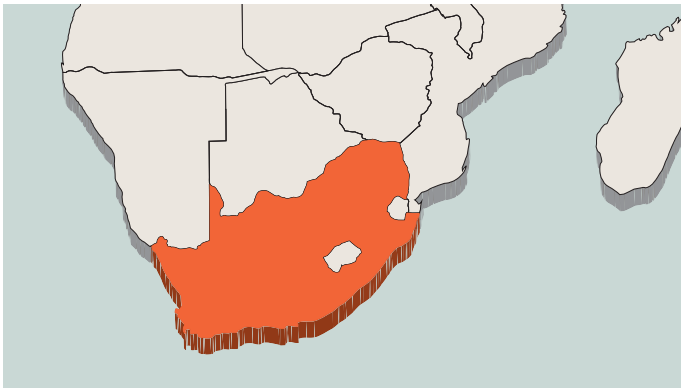
IMPACT REPORT 2023

SOUTH AFRICA

Situated on the southernmost tip of the African continent, South Africa boasts a population of just over 60 million people.[1] According to the Walk Free Global Slavery Index assessment, 'South Africa is rated 52 and has below-average vulnerability for the region' (based on a scale from 0 to 100, with 100 being the highest vulnerability), with modern-day slavery prevalent amongst 2.7 of every 1,000 people.[2] The assessment further notes inequality in South Africa to be the highest factor when assessing vulnerability to modern-day slavery.[3] The appearance of opportunity and economic success in South Africa, particularly to those in fellow African nations, makes opportunities to relocate to the country attractive and convincing and is often utilised by traffickers to lure victims there. This is reflected in the increased number of foreign nationals reported to the A21-operated National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) in 2023, with victims originating from Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mozambique and Malawi in addition to South Africa. Furthermore, false job opportunities remained the most common recruitment method.



According to the 2022 United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report, the South African government remains on the Tier 2 Watch List. Although South Africa made 'significant efforts', it did not accomplish the State Department's minimum requirements for a country to eliminate trafficking within that reporting year.[4] A 'prioritised recommendation' of the report highlighted, amongst others, increasing resources and training for frontline responders. A21 has been actively involved alongside government agencies to assist in this endeavour along with increasing outreach and awareness efforts to vulnerable populations.

A21'S RESPONSE

Since 2013, A21 South Africa (A21) has operated using a three-pronged strategy to combat human trafficking. Prevention and awareness strategies actively work to reduce the prevalence of trafficking; identification and intervention programs aim to disrupt the ongoing criminal activities and identify victims, including through the NHTH; and restorative aftercare services and reintegration programs support survivors of trafficking in their journey after identification.

PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

SUSTAINABLE IMPACT WITHIN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

A21 achieved incredible growth and impact in its prevention and awareness strategies, doubling its impact in almost every area. In 2023, A21 conducted 196 events and reached 268,687 people. This included 16,648 minors reached with prevention programs, a 129.75% increase from 2022. More than general awareness, these prevention initiatives are designed to empower and equip the most vulnerable in society with safety tools to stop exploitation before it starts. These targeted resources also focused on false opportunities and online exploitation in particular. A21's awareness efforts expanded beyond South Africa to Kenya, Botswana and Cameroon, with A21's 9th annual Walk for Freedom (WFF)[5] awareness event. There, WFF participants at the 12 walks occurring across these four nations, gathered with like-minded individuals to learn about human trafficking.



A21 strategically focused on building strong relationships with the Department of Basic Education (DBE), community leaders, mission-aligned non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and large businesses throughout the year. As DBE social workers play an instrumental role in providing access and insights to schools in vulnerable communities, A21 continued building and fostering intentional relationships with school social workers in 2023.

In response to a greater demand for speaking engagements from within the education system, A21 achieved a more sustainable strategy to make a lasting impact within communities in 2023 than in 2022. A21 conducted extended programs for several age groups per school over three sessions rather than one while still reaching a comparable number of schools than in the previous year.

A21 forged a fruitful partnership with United Way South Africa, a global NGO focused on social impact. Through this partnership, A21 trained community leaders and Life Orientation teachers in the Gauteng province to facilitate 'Bodies Are Not Commodities' (BANC), an A21 high school curriculum that educates students on human trafficking. A21 trained 61 facilitators and provided them with the tools and support to incorporate the material in high schools. When implemented by these trained facilitators, this educational curriculum has the potential to reach thousands of vulnerable minors.

Following the successful launch of the Early Childhood Prevention Program (ECPP) in 2022, the Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities and primary schools have shown great interest in implementing the program. In 2023, A21 presented the ECPP at 17 schools to 2,895 children and trained 335 facilitators. In response to a highlighted need for age-appropriate prevention materials, A21 created the 'Steps to Staying Safe Storybook', which addresses topics such as body boundaries and safe and unsafe people for three to six year olds. This storybook, used alongside the ECPP and launched in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa in 2022, was downloaded 3,666 times in 2023. The program will officially launch in isiZulu and Sesotho in 2024, allowing more people to access this program online.



CORPORATE SUPPORT TO TRAIN EDUCATORS

An $18,000 grant awarded to A21 by Dow Industries, a private global company, enabled A21 to translate, print, and distribute the ECPP across Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, two provinces known for trafficking activity. A21 trained 219 teachers from 141 ECDs to facilitate the program and provided them with program materials. As a result of these training sessions, this empowering prevention program has an estimated reach of over 20,000 children. This partnership alone contributed significantly to the noticeable increase in total facilitators trained, from 52 in the previous year to 459 in 2023, and provided avenues for additional facilitator workshops in 2024.



In response to the increase in foreign national victims of trafficking identified by A21 in South Africa, A21 implemented a new targeted approach to reaching vulnerable communities across Africa with A21's range of prevention materials in 2023. Newly formed relationships with like-minded individuals and organisations have allowed in-person training opportunities beyond the borders of South Africa into Zambia and Mozambique.

A21 partnered with Seeds of Hope, a non-profit children's organisation, to provide training on A21's prevention programs at Grace Academy in Ndola, Zambia, a home providing shelter, care, and education to over 170 orphans. These programs included the ECPP, Primary Prevention Program and Human Trafficking Awareness Program.[6] Orphans are a particularly vulnerable group to trafficking, specifically once they have turned 18 and 'aged out' of children's homes. After witnessing this vulnerability, Seeds of Hope integrated preventative material into their extracurricular programs. A21 provided various in-depth sessions and workshops for children residing at Grace Academy. To ensure continued, long-term impact, A21 also provided the Grace Academy leadership team and teachers with facilitator training on all of A21's prevention programs. Through this partnership, A21 educated 144 children and trained 89 staff.

Through prioritising and strengthening relationships with local radio stations, A21 participated in 25 radio interviews resulting in 11.5 million impressions. Stations included Bush Radio, Radio

Pulpit, and RX Radio at the Red Cross Children's Hospital, and the topics discussed were human trafficking, digital safety, and service opportunities.

A21's *Can You See Me?* campaign,[7] a global public awareness campaign depicting different human trafficking scenarios and providing contact information for the South African NHTH, resulted in 524,000 impressions each month in 2023. These scenarios highlighting common trafficking scenarios in South Africa, including domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and forced labour were strategically featured on digital billboards, played on screens in buses travelling across the country and displayed at schools and local clinics that receive professional training.

IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION

LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS LEAD TO IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION

A fundamental objective of A21 is to increase opportunities to identify victims of trafficking, and to utilise a survivor-centred approach during the intervention process. To this end, A21 prioritises 'frontline professional training' in its identification and intervention efforts. Frontline professionals are those who have a high likelihood of encountering potential victims of trafficking through the performance of their daily duties. In 2023, A21 trained 715 professionals, a 22.4% growth from 2022. These trainings focus on increasing the successful identification of victims and providing proper assistance and referral to services by employing a victim-centred approach.

This growth is attributed to the calibre of frontline partnerships forged and built over time. In 2023, A21 strengthened existing partnerships with the Department of Health and the South African Anti-Money Laundering Integrated Task Force (SAMLIT),[8] whilst also establishing new relationships with Neighbourhood Watch groups in local trafficking hotspots and collaborating with the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) to provide training to prosecutors and Thuthuzela Care Centre staff.



Partnerships with the Department of Health continue to be a key focus for A21, as studies show that victims of trafficking often access healthcare while being exploited, uniquely placing healthcare professionals in a position to identify and assist victims.[9] This is highlighted in the 248 health professionals trained across the year. A21 delivered a second annual train-the-trainer workshop with the Department of Health and trained all 14 primary healthcare clinics within the Drakenstein sub-district of Paarl, Western Cape. Each clinic is in the centre of local, rural communities, where many stakeholders agree about the commonality of labour trafficking on fruit and vegetable farms and the regular occurrence of sexual exploitation of young women.

Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCC)[10] are 'one-stop facilities' in South Africa that combine services rendered by medical, law enforcement, and legal providers for victims of sexual offences. In December 2023, A21 trained prosecutors and, for the first time, TCC staff on recognising and responding to suspected human trafficking.

After the training, a TCC Head of the Department of Clinical Forensic Medicine referred to A21 South Africa as 'the glue that holds all stakeholders together'.

Such training ensures that prosecutors don't overlook possible trafficking in person charges, where the case may initially seem to only involve a sexual offence, employment or immigration matter. At this event, A21 trained 21 prosecutors, four legal staff and eight TCC staff.

In 2023, A21 developed a new partnership with Neighbourhood Watch (NW)[11] groups in areas and suburbs with high reports of trafficking in persons, with A21 training 17 NW members. Connections from within these groups led to A21's subsequent training of 42 law enforcement professionals from various South African Police Service (SAPS) stations across Cape Town. This, in turn, led to A21 training 20 leaders and managers within the hospitality industry at the V&A Waterfront, where prostitution and suspected trafficking for sexual exploitation are prevalent.

A21 strengthened collaboration efforts with SAMLIT during 2023 and educated 100 professionals in the banking sector from across Africa on the common trafficking trends in South Africa at a Standard Chartered Bank annual conference. SAMLIT also invited A21 to join the SAMLIT Expert Working Group (EWG), a group of representatives from various financial institutions, the NPA and civil society represented by A21 to focus on increasing the identification of trafficking and understanding the role of the financial sector. This presents an exciting opportunity for further partnership in 2024 and the development of the private and public sector's role in targeting the financial aspect of trafficking in persons' crimes.

NHTH COLLABORATES WITH PARTNERS TO REPATRIATE AFRICANS TRAFFICKED ABROAD

A21 operates the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH), where it receives reports of potential cases of trafficking, identifies victims of trafficking and provides service provider referrals to survivors around South Africa. The NHTH collaborates with law enforcement, key governmental departments and non-government organisations (NGOs) within South Africa. The NHTH operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, receiving reports of suspected trafficking through phone calls and electronic means. The call specialists are equipped to respond to calls in 230 languages through a tele-interpreting service.



A growing trend of trafficking through cyber scams has emerged in Southeast Asia, with Africans being recruited along with victims from other countries. In the last year, two such cases reported to the NHTH involved a South African and a Zimbabwean victim recruited through false job opportunities and controlled by physical abuse, lack of free movement, debt bondage and the withholding of their identification documents and passports. Both victims were initially unable to gain assistance from their embassies as they presented as illegal immigrants. However, they were successfully repatriated after being assisted by the NHTH and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This partnership with IOM is vital as more cases of Africans with urgent assistance needs emerge.

According to reports submitted to the NHTH, false job opportunities (47.6%) remained the most prevalent recruitment method recorded in 2023. In response, the NHTH also provides a 'job vetting' service for the general public, where the NHTH researches potential job opportunities to verify their legitimacy. Call specialists then submit feedback to the callers on the potential risk or possible exploitation involved with the opportunity, along with advice on safely pursuing employment.

For further insights on the reported scope of trafficking across the year, an in-depth breakdown of trends and statistics emerging from the National Human Trafficking Hotline can be reviewed in the accompanying A21 South Africa's 2023 Annual Hotline Report.

AFTERCARE

In 2023, A21's Aftercare Program supported 47 survivors, with 23 new survivors entering the program through referrals from the NHTH, a substantial increase from nine in 2021 and 17 in 2022. A21 attributes this growth to the strategic partnerships built over the years and the robust professional training delivered by A21 to key stakeholders.

SURVIVOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Most survivors entering the Aftercare Program in 2023 were South African (82.6%), consistent with 2022 data. Over the past three years, A21 has observed an increase in the number of nationalities represented in the program, all of which are African, namely, Nigerian (8.7%), Mozambican, (4.4%), and Ethiopian (4.3%).

The recruitment methods previously employed against survivors entering the program in 2023 include false job opportunities (65.2%), the 'loverboy' method (21.7%), being sold by a friend or family member (8.7%) and abduction (4.4%). False job opportunities are most often informal, verbal job offers. Sex trafficking remained the most prevalent exploitation type (91.3%) reported by new survivors entering the program, with the remaining 8.7% exploited via domestic servitude and forced labour.

PARTNERSHIPS INCREASE EMPLOYMENT AND REDUCE VULNERABILITY

On the journey to independence, A21 assisted four survivors with A21 apartments, five with assisted rent, and four transitioning into independent accommodation. A21 coordinated 10 domestic relocations back to family or home provinces for those choosing to return home.

Within the weekly schedule at the Freedom Centre, Life Programs are a core element. These Life Programs include valuable life skills such as budgeting, conflict resolution, understanding legal rights, cooking lessons and fun creative activities such as art, candle and soap making.



Survivors are also offered the opportunity to access vocational training and further education. In 2023, four survivors enrolled in a course to complete their high school education, four completed vocational training to improve employment prospects, and eight found employment. Successful employment remains a vital part of the journey to independence and reduces survivor vulnerability. Therefore, A21 staff continues to prioritise employment avenues for survivors.

A21 formed a partnership with 'Not I But We' (NIBW), an NGO that creates employment opportunities for trafficking survivors. NIBW rendered skills development workshops for the survivors at the Freedom Centre, where they make products such as scrunchies, headbands, earrings and lip balms. Twenty-two survivors in the A21 Aftercare Program have been contracted by NIBW to make these products, earning a wage for the items created. In June 2023, NIBW opened its premises, providing survivors with a safe and supportive work environment outside the Freedom Centre. For some survivors, this experience and exposure to more working environments was a confidence boost needed to pursue more employment opportunities outside of the vocational training offered within the Freedom Centre. After developing her sewing skills in the NIBW program, one survivor received an opportunity to create patterns for a sportswear company.



Lastly, some favourite moments for both survivors and A21 staff are celebrations. Many survivors report that they have never celebrated their birthday or received a birthday gift or cake. Special occasions such as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day can be lonely and triggering, especially for survivors exploited in what they thought was a loving relationship or those separated from their children. For this reason, A21 prioritises celebrating milestones in a survivor's journey to independence and honours these special moments. Celebrated moments have included a high tea to celebrate Mother's Day, a Valentine's Day lunch, Aftercare Program graduation ceremonies, a cultural dress-up for Heritage Day, and birthday parties.



SURVIVOR GRADUATES FROM A21 AFTERCARE PROGRAM AND IS APPOINTED AS AN A21 SURVIVOR CONSULTANT

In June 2023, A21 South Africa celebrated its second survivor, Nikki,* graduating from its Aftercare Program. Nikki entered the Aftercare Program when she was five months pregnant, without any family or other support. She initially stayed at a partner shelter while attending the Freedom Centre to participate in weekly programs, such as life skills, survivor support groups, and vocational training. After some time, Nikki transitioned into an A21 apartment and took her next steps toward independence. With the skills she learned from the vocational training program, she accepted a position she still holds today as a production manager for a sewing social enterprise, training new hires and ensuring product quality. Nikki soon transitioned into independent accommodation in an area she chose. Throughout her time in A21's Aftercare Program, she demonstrated she was ready to step out into the world and rebuild a beautiful life for herself and her child. At her graduation ceremony, she recited a poem she wrote thanking A21 for all the support she had received. Nikki now serves as a Survivor Consultant in A21's Global Survivor Consultant Group, using her lived experience expertise to review and help shape A21's programs. A21 has been so honoured to be part of Nikki's journey to restoration!

*Name changed to protect the survivor's identity

ENDNOTES

[1] South African Census (2022). Retrieved June 28, 2024, from https://www.gov.za/about-sa/south-africas-people

[2] Walk Free. (2023). Modern slavery in South Africa, Global Slavery Index 2023 Country Snapshot. https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2023/09/28085853/GSI-Snapshot-South-Africa.pdf

[3] Ibid

[4] United States Department of State. (2023). *Trafficking in Persons Report: South Africa*. Retrieved February 14, 2024, from https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/south-africa

[5] Walk for Freedom is a day of 'global awareness and local action' in the fight against human trafficking, where individuals engage their community through local walk events to raise awareness about human trafficking in their cities and collectively result in a ripple effect around the world.

[6] See Appendix A for a detailed description of these programs.

[7] The *Can You See Me?* campaign is A21's global campaign intended to equip the general public on recognising human trafficking and reporting suspected trafficking to the country's relevant hotline. The real life scenarios depicted through the CYSM campaign attempt to bring awareness to the millions of men, women and children currently trapped in modern day slavery across the world. By partnering with law enforcement, governments, businesses and NGOs, the goal is to turn awareness into action.

[8] SAMLIT is South Africa's Anti-Money Laundering Integrated Task Force. It is South Africa's first public private partnership, between the banking sector and government regulatory authorities, aimed at enhancing collaboration and coordination in combating financial crime, money laundering and terrorist financing.

[9] Lederer and Wetzel (2014) The Health Consequences of Sex Trafficking and Their Implications for Identifying Victims in Healthcare Facilities. https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Health-Consequences-of-Sex-Trafficking-and-Implications-for-Identifying-Victims-Lederer.pdf

[10] "Thuthuzela Care Centres are one-stop facilities that have been introduced as a critical part of South Africa's anti-rape strategy, aiming to reduce secondary victimisation, improve conviction rates and reduce the cycle time for finalisation of cases. The Thuthuzela project is led by the NPA's Sexual Offences and Community Affairs Unit (SOCA), in partnership with various departments and donors as a response to the urgent need for an integrated strategy for prevention, response and support for rape victims". https://www.npa.gov.za/sites/default/files/resources/public_awareness/TCC_brochure_august_2009.pdf

[11] Neighbourhood Watch is a group of residents who volunteer within their neighbourhood to improve safety and prevent crime.

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