Across the United States and around the world, 2020 was anything but business as usual. The ever-present COVID-19 pandemic affected the sex trafficking industry around the world. It caused vulnerability to rise like never before. But Rescue:Freedom’s global impact was also on the rise. During these unprecedented times, abolitionists helped rescue more victims, prevent more sex trafficking, restore more lives, and empower more survivors.

“In one of the harshest times in human history, human trafficking could have flourished, but freedom and generosity prevailed,” said a Team Freedom member in Los Angeles, California.

**LETTER FROM RESCUE:FREEDOM CEO AND PRESIDENT, JEREMY VALLERAND**

What a year. 2020. Just writing that number makes me feel like I need to pause for a deep breath. Breathe in. And exhale. There are too many words that come to mind when I think about 2020. But perhaps the most encompassing word is “unprecedented.” It seemed that every month of 2020 brought something that was “unprecedented.” Dictionary.com defines unprecedented as “without previous instance; never before known or experienced.” That sounds about right.

As I look back on the year, I can’t help but feel a sense of gratitude and pride for the way our team and our community navigated a season of incredible adversity and opportunity. As you may recall, when the world first realized how serious COVID-19 was, almost everything shut down. Travel stopped. Borders were closed. Strict quarantines were enforced around the world. Red-light districts came to a screeching halt. Sex tourism stopped. We saw an unprecedented opportunity to intervene. At the time it felt like a massive fork in the road. The stock market had experienced its biggest single-day drop since the Great Depression. Nobody knew what was going to happen next. Leading world-health experts were telling nonprofit organizations to slash their budgets and scale back programs. And yet, we felt compelled to act. We took bold action to take every opportunity where we could, cut instead of scaling back programs, we decided to accelerate. We asked our community to join us in taking action, and the response and impact were incredible. In the first 14 weeks of COVID, we funded 19 programs in 15 countries.

As you read this report and celebrate the impact, the growth, and the lives changed in 2020, remember that this was possible because of our generous community. In the face of adversity, when we had every excuse to scale back and hunker down, you leaned in. Together, we made 2020 our biggest year ever. I’ve placed a lot of process of gratitude this past year, and when I think about the impact and work you have done, I’m so grateful for you. You were the answer to those prayers. Thank you for fighting with us. Thank you for risking when you could have played it safe. Thank you for fighting for others in the midst of fighting for your own families, businesses, health, and well-being. Thank you for letting hope triumph over fear. Thank you for continuing to dream with us about a world without slavery. And hopefully a world without pandemics too.

Onward,

Jeremy Vallerand, CEO & President

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**THE RUNDOWN ON RESCUE:FREEDOM’S GLOBAL IMPACT IN 2020:**

- **789 women and children were set free.**
- 1,961 people received life-changing holistic care.
- 1,190 women and children were empowered through vocational training and education.
- 18,155 survivors, victims, and at-risk individuals were impacted through restoration, prevention, outreach, and intervention programs.
- Local Partners launched 19 new projects to meet crucial needs during the global pandemic.
- Team Freedom saw the largest jump ever—from 265 to 434 members.
- Freedom Fighters broke records with over 250 individuals raising $475,000.
- Rescue:Freedom virtually hosted its 9th annual Freedom Dinner and together we raised $529,415.23 to set people free.

“Freedom prevails despite pandemic!” said a Team Freedom member in Los Angeles, California.
In Nepal, a young survivor—now abolitionist—is studying law and empowering other survivors to testify against their traffickers in court.

Binsa* spent most of her childhood in and out of brothels. She spent such a significant amount of time in exploitation that on the day of her rescue—on the way to the safe house—she asked, “Which brothel are you taking us to now?”

She was only a child sold for profit.

When she returned to her hometown in Nepal, one of the security men on the flight accompanying her rescue told our Local Partner to “pay attention to Binsa, she has the potential to be someone important.”

We noticed she was a fighter, a great student, and a person of integrity.

At our Local Partner’s safe house, we gifted her a teddy bear and learned that during her trafficking process, she had lost a teddy bear she loved. She took the gift as a symbol of restoration. Her life was becoming hers again.

She decided to protect others and started to learn about the most effective ways to help young women like her. She began calling other girls in India, encouraging them to leave exploitation and sharing that they would find a house, family, and a future at the safe house.

She began bravely rescuing other girls who had been trafficked like her.

Recently, she became passionate about studying law. She is now a law student and accompanies survivors to their court hearings to speak out against traffickers in the community.

From our Local Partner:

“We know by her fierceness that the traffickers are already in trouble as she is coming hard against them. She is a fierce person, full of kindness too, caring, and genuinely loves people. We celebrate as we see her fate overturned and instead of being a victim, she became a protector.”

*Name has been changed to protect survivor.

SICK AND TIRED OF INJUSTICE?

SURVIVOR TESTIFIES AGAINST TRAFFICKER, STUDIES LAW TO EMPOWER OTHERS

We salute her as a fighter, a great student, and a person of integrity.

In 2020, we had 49 operating safe homes in our network.

HOPE AND HEALING, THOUSANDS RECEIVE CARE

**RESCUE**: When a person escapes or exits commercial sexual exploitation and joins restorative services after being identified as a trafficking victim who has experienced sexual abuse or exploitation, or is a child of a woman who is brought into a restoration home.

**AFTERCARE**: These programs provide services that promote healing and transformation for those who are no longer involved in commercial sexual exploitation or have been removed from vulnerable and high-risk situations.

**AFTERCARE INCLUDES:**
- Housing
- Counseling
- Medical care
- Legal services (Visas, passports, advisement, etc.)
- Recovery programs
- Case management
- Education
- Emotional and spiritual care
- Vocational training

*Wear clothes that make you feel as good on the inside as they look on the outside.*

**TOTAL SERVED IN NON-RESIDENTIAL AFTERCARE:** 1,086
- Adults: 813
- Children: 273

**TOTAL SERVED IN RESIDENTIAL AFTERCARE:** 875
- Adults: 344
- Children: 531

IN 2020, WE HAD 49 OPERATING SAFE HOMES IN OUR NETWORK.
Despite COVID-19, outreach efforts continued, some in person and a lot through new technology. In Myanmar, our Local Partner utilized an artificial intelligence chatbot to increase trafficking reporting and victim identification. They partnered with Myanmar’s leading tech company in the development of online content and communication tools to create an integrated set of technologies to disrupt the purchase and sale of trafficked women and girls. The mobile messaging program consists of three pillars:

Artificial Intelligence Joins the Fight Against Slavery!

**OUTREACH**: A coordinated effort to connect with those who are actively being exploited to build rapport, offer resources, education, and support, and a pathway to a new life of freedom. Outreach not only connects with those in the sex trade to provide services but is also a way for Local Partners to better understand what causes sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation in their communities.

**INTERVENTION**: Structured or consistent programs, initiatives, or services designed to address the physical, social, emotional, or spiritual needs of those still involved in the sex trade. These people demonstrate an interest (or express the goal) in escaping their trafficking situation and have a desire to be free.

**REPORTING**: The chatter will report illicit activity and trafficking activity clearly on a platform for reporting suspicious activity.

**OUTREACH NUMBERS**

2020, 26,647 people impacted through outreach
15% increase from 2019

**Total involved in intervention programs**: 1,236

In 2020, intervention services shifted to virtual with things like therapy via phone, classes through Facebook Live, or offering socially distant outdoor vocational training.

**ASK AN EXPERT**: Q & A with Rescue:Freedom Program Manager, Meg Ammons

**Tell us a bit about yourself.**

Hello! My name is Meg and I am the Programs Manager for Rescue:Freedom International. I’ve been with Rescue:Freedom for about nine years, seven of those years I’ve spent with our Local Partners has taught me, women in a brothel in East Asia. Every moment

**IN SCHOOL AND OUT OF THE BROTHEL**

In India, a five-year-old girl is now in school and far away from the vulnerabilities and shame of the sex industry. This is due to our Local Partner’s intervention.

**Vicariously Outsourcing: Finding potential victims online and building relationships through video calling platforms.**

**Virtual Neighborhood Watch:** Provides spotter trafficking monitoring in communities, peer-to-peer trafficking monitoring of known trafficking hot spots, and a platform for reporting suspicions online.

**Reporting:** The chatter will report illicit activity and trafficking activity clearly on a platform for reporting suspicious activity.

Across our network, human traffickers take root through local PPE deliveries.

**What do outreach look like in 2020?**

**What did outreach look like in 2020?**

**What were some of your favorite stories from Rescue:Freedom’s work in 2020?**

**What stands out to you about Rescue:Freedom’s work in 2020?**

**Where is Rescue:Freedom headed in 2021?**

We have so many dreams for 2021 here at Rescue:Freedom! We’ve increased our network in Myanmar by 46%, vastly expanded our support to the United States, and invested in research, infrastructure, innovation, and grassroots efforts, We’ve expanded into new regions, launched parent- protection counseling and reporting, and have created more resources than ever before. 2021 will be a year of transformation, of building, and building towards a future of growth.

**Why is Team Freedom an effective way to fight slavery?**

Empowerment and unity are two vital elements for an organization to not only survive but thrive and dream. Here at Rescue:Freedom, our Team Freedom members and volunteers come from our 20 Local Partners every month which in turn create trust, visibility, and room to grow and dream within the network. As a Team Freedom member, you are part of a special group who continually supports over 100 different programs building the diverse and complex needs of preventing and responding to human trafficking. We know this in 2021 and we hope that there are many important causes that people can contribute to, but as a Team Freedom member, you can see that every month’s commitment means we can tackle the issue in more countries and in more ways to make the biggest difference.
SURVIVOR EMPOWERMENT:
Vocational training focuses on the development of skills and knowledge that assist survivors in succeeding within a particular industry or trade. This gives them the ability to support themselves financially without exploitation, making freedom sustainable.

Total who received vocational training: 895
Total who gained employment due to vocational training: 509

Vocational & Job Skills Training Examples in 2020:
- Jewelry making
- Marketing & photography
- Sewing
- Baking/cooking
- Entrepreneurship
- How to create a résumé

I AM A PROFESSIONAL. I AM A PHOTOGRAPHER.
Chunhua* and Liang* are survivors who have been trained in photography, Photoshop, and videography. During this year, they have grown tremendously in their skills, output, and confidence as creators. This past quarter, Liang was responsible for shooting a majority of the photography content for an important campaign. She also directed, shot, and edited the video for a holiday promotion. Chunhua shared that in the past she would be nervous about making a mistake or not doing a good job when taking photos or creating content for the Local Partner’s marketing. However, this year she had several moments where she thought to herself, “I am a professional. I am a photographer. I take beautiful photos. I am good at this.” It has been incredible and inspiring to see the way that Chunhua and Liang have taken on new skills they have learned with confidence, creativity, and passion.

NEVER TOO LATE FOR A NEW START
When the COVID-19 lockdown occurred in March 2020, this included places where women in the sex trade worked like bars, massage parlors, pubs, and bathhouses. As a result, thousands of women lost their jobs. While these women were being exploited, it was the only means they had to support themselves and their families. Auntie Lynn* was one of these women. At 60 years old, she had worked in the sex industry for close to 30 years. She decided that she would not go back, even when bars reopened. However, she didn’t know what to do instead. Our Local Partner had begun offering free baking classes to women in need during this time. They met Auntie Lynn and heard her story. She was able to participate in the course, learn recipes, and develop a relationship with our Local Partner. Now, she is working on a business plan to sell fried baked goods at a nearby market. Our Local Partner is excited to help provide resources for her on this new journey when COVID lockdown is lifted!

*Names have been changed to protect survivors.
29 LOCAL PARTNERS MAKE GLOBAL PROGRESS AMIDST PANDEMIC

COLOMBIA
In Colombia, we opened a new safe home to help survivors impacted by COVID-19. Many women in Colombia are Venezuelan refugees, making them vulnerable for any kind of government assistance, so we stepped up to help. This home supports survivors and their children by providing a safe space to quarantine and also receive medical care, food, and educational support for their children.

MEXICO
Because of COVID-19, streets have been closed and trade has been slowed causing many of their traffickers to be additionally vulnerable. Our Partner in Mexico provides legal security, housing, a case manager, and employment training for these women during this challenging season. This is being done in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior of the American General of Mexico.

In Mexico, our Local Partner made online learning more accessible by providing laptops to children in their care. Originally, online learning would have to occur during the week which meant some were falling behind in their studies. An increased number of laptop donations continues to improve their education and provide a better future despite considerable challenges caused by COVID-19. Additionally, we provided scholarships for vulnerable teens to continue their education.

PHILIPPINES
In the Philippines, our Local Partner conducted outreach to women who were vulnerable to exploitation. In just a few weeks, they were able to distribute over 1,500 food packages. Providing people with essential help keeping them from turning to exploitation to survive.

UGANDA
Your donations allowed 10 trafficking survivors and their 41 children to safely delay plans. Our Local Partner unchained a 9-day supply for food, soap, supplies, and medicine for each of the families. Methodist women volunteers who had been trained in the community also were able to arrive virtual support. Their reaching out and meeting with our partners took place via mobile phones and video calls that allowed them to share the urgent plan from the government to transport vulnerable women to access shelter. This Local Partner has worked hard to connect their community which is a very important step in the fight against human trafficking.

THAILAND
In Thailand, COVID-19 has created a unique moment in the fight against human trafficking for the first time in decades. Businesses and men have shut down completely. This left trafficked women and their children and survivors and victims without means to support themselves and their survival and trafficked women, and provide legal assistance to women and provide support to women and girls in Thailand. This Local Partner is especially critical for women who need to exit the workforce.

NEPAL
In Nepal, our Local Partner provided emergency food distribution for people who have been impacted by COVID-19. They have been able to expand their production capacity to make masks for those in need.

ETHIOPIA
In Ethiopia, our Local Partner has helped women in their care who have lost their job security because of the lockdown. There are powerful events that are still operating and need food for essential personnel, so our Local Partner has been able to secure catering jobs for all the women in their care. This keeps them out of forced labor and allows them to develop a positive relationship with the governments for future partnerships.

CAMBODIA
In Cambodia, our Local Partner introduced a new hotline called "The Freedom Line" for women and girls who are vulnerable to exploitation due to conditions caused by COVID-19. Hotlines are often one of the most effective tools for victims to access emergency assistance, connect to services, and learn about available resources. As Cambodian authorities also serve as the first point of contact for the public police human trafficking victims, Cambodia’s hotline is staffed by certified social workers who are trained to handle victim situations, provide appropriate interventions to keep victims safe while building a database that will contribute to the community’s resistance to trafficking long-term.

TURKEY
In Turkey, COVID-19 has had a major impact on people’s lives, including those who have been impacted by COVID-19. Our Local Partner is working hard to provide support and relief to those affected.

SPAIN
In Spain, our Local Partner has worked hard to connect them to various programs with jobs that offer a living wage. With the pandemic, many people have lost their jobs, especially in the service industry and health sector. In addition, they are often the ones who were not able to provide their families with food. They have been able to make children/teens/people more vulnerable to exploitation. In addition to providing educational opportunities and continued community support, they have continued providing food aid for families in need.

SOUTHEAST ASIA
This Local Partner already had a successful program but as the crisis ramped up this spring, our 2020 donors in the last moment did not have access to masks, especially women who have been impacted by COVID-19. They have been able to expand their production capacity to make hundreds of masks and secure jobs for those in need.

They made phone calls to survivors and program graduates, that currently provide programs, over 42 survivors to receive emergency support.

COSTA RICA
They are continuing providing phone "top up" access for 404 women as their first generation programs. They are also providing learning materials and resources to offer them. They are continuing to provide food for those in need. They are currently providing food, an emergency relief package, to our network.

RESCUE:FREEDOM's 2020 Annual Report
SPOTTING THE SIGNS, ROMANIA INCREASES PREVENTION TACTICS

In Romania, a Rescue:Freedom Local Partner was invited to partner with local government agencies to fight human trafficking.

Right now, the government of Romania does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so.

These efforts include identifying more trafficking victims, participating in twice as many international investigations, and conducting more awareness campaigns.

Together, the government and our Local Partner developed key behaviors to better identify victimization of exploitation and trained all 47 members of their child protection agency.

They also provided updated statistics for future prevention campaigns.

7,815 EVERYDAY CITIZENS TURNED ABOLITIONISTS

When people are equipped with knowledge on how to identify and respond to victims of slavery, our network of abolitionists grows.

Some people have specialized skills, like police officers or nurses. Other people are citizens who want to make a difference. Either way, we can all take action to stop the cycle of slavery.

Total professionals trained: 7,815
Service providers/church leaders: 1,077
Law enforcement: 127
Teachers/school staff: 115
Ministry staff: 1,500 people
Medical professionals: 96
Lawyers: 133
Social workers: 950
Governmental leaders/legislators: 760
Others: 2,391

2,099 SUPPORTED, SAFE, AND FREE FROM SEX INDUSTRY

Prevention programs focus on breaking cycles and addressing the systemic and root issues that increase vulnerabilities to trafficking specifically among minors, young adults, or families in vulnerable circumstances.

These programs are for youth who have been trafficked, but are also at risk of vulnerable trafficking and exploitation due to emotional or social factors.

In 2020, 2,099 victims were provided with support and resources, education, support, and a pathway to a new life of freedom.

PREVENTION ADVOCACY AWARENESS

More than 30 countries participated in the 2020 Freedom Dinner.

This year, our programs focused on increasing awareness of human trafficking and ways to support and protect survivors.

They also educated the community on the importance of antitrafficking work in their country or internationally.

In 2020, 12 of our Local Partners were involved in policy work.

The Policy and Advocacy Director, in consultation with our partners, offered policy advice and support to draft new bills that help to protect survivors from exploitation.

In Romania, a Rescue:Freedom Local Partner was invited to partner with local government agencies to fight human trafficking.

Right now, the government of Romania does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so.

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They also provided updated statistics for future prevention campaigns.

152,231 GIVEN THE FREEDOM TO LEARN

Prevention education focuses explicitly on human trafficking and topics directly related to sexual exploitation or vulnerabilities to exploitation.

This includes identifying, violence against girls, trafficking victims, identifying community support systems, etc.

PREVENTION EDUCATION: 152,231

TOTAL WHO RECEIVED PREVENTION EDUCATION: 152,231

MILLIONS HELP SHIFT CULTURE, JOIN ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT

Culture = Awareness campaigns target broad audiences and offer an "entry-level" understanding of sex trafficking by raising awareness and providing links and resources to support.

These initiatives can also include ways to participate in the antitrafficking movement.

TOTAL WHO RECEIVED AWARENESS EDUCATION: 165,439,428

Make the News. Want to Read. You Create the Future. Open your smartphone camera and hover over this.
GOOD NEWS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

434 MONTHLY GIVERS RESTORE HOPE DAILY

In 2020, Team Freedom grew more than ever before, going from 265 to 434 members. This team is ready to see slavery end in our lifetime. The generosity and loyal support of Team Freedom allowed us to respond in real-time to crucial needs caused by the pandemic. The only question remains, will we make it to 500 members in 2021?

GOING VIRTUAL: ABOLITIONISTS GATHER FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The 9th annual Freedom Dinner was the celebration of hope we were needed in 2020. For the first time in-person gathering, the event was held virtually and allowed us to gather with even more abolitionists from around the globe. We celebrated freedom, shared stories, and raised funds for freedom all in real-time, together.

Rescue:Freedom supporters made the event feel even more meaningful by having friends and family join us online for safety. You passed our goal of $500,000, and together we raised a total of $529,415.23 to set people free.

FROM HIKING TO BAKING, YOU ARE ESSENTIAL

While 2020 threatened to put a stop to Freedom Fighters, this community of over 250 individuals stepped up to break records and raise over $475,000 to set women and children free. 2021 promises to be their biggest year yet.

“Rescue:Freedom supporters made this event their own by inviting friends and family into the cause and hosting events in small numbers or outdoors for safety. You passed our goal of $500,000, and together we raised a total of $529,415.23 to set people free.”

RESOLVE:FREEDOM COMMUNITY OUTDOES ITSELF AGAIN

In one of the most difficult years in recent human history, your generosity and passion for freedom made good news a reality. Thank you for boldly believing that there is still good to be done, even in the darkest of times.

2020 FINANCE GRAPHS

“Rescue:Freedom supporters made this event their own by inviting friends and family into the cause and hosting events in small numbers or outdoors for safety. You passed our goal of $500,000, and together we raised a total of $529,415.23 to set people free.”

See our finance page for more information.

www.rescuefreedom.org/finance

RESCUE:FREEDOM BY THE NUMBERS

“Rescue:Freedom supporters made this event their own by inviting friends and family into the cause and hosting events in small numbers or outdoors for safety. You passed our goal of $500,000, and together we raised a total of $529,415.23 to set people free.”

WHERE WE SPENT IT

TOTAL INCOME: $3,332,743
TOTAL NET ASSETS: $3,511,585

Our Board

Betsy Miller
Chairperson of the Board
Nancy Richardson
Founding Board Member
Rebecca Hixon
La General Mick Kicklighter (Ret)
Derek Green
Peter McGowan
Jeremy Vallerand
CEO & President of Rescue:Freedom International

From survivors of human trafficking I have heard the stories of those still trapped in this horrific enterprise. I have sat in the discomfort of these stories and I have also felt the hope and passion of my friends on the front lines. I knew these stories are true, I know the fight is real, and I know that when we are unsure what to do, you do the next right thing. That is why I joined this movement.”

- Kara V., Rescue:Freedom Fundraiser
AND
TOMORROW
WILL BE
EVEN
BRIGHTER

@RESCUEFREEDOM
RESCUEFREEDOM.ORG