



GETTING STARTED

- When you think about labour exploitation, what sort of sectors come to mind?
- What do you think would be some of the signs that someone was working against their will?



WHAT IS LABOUR EXPLOITATION?

Victims of labour exploitation are made to work long hours, often in hard conditions, without relevant training and equipment. They are forced to hand over the majority, if not all, of their wages to their traffickers. In many cases, victims are subjected to verbal threats or violence and often several people are kept in the same house in horrific conditions. Victims tend to lead isolated lives and have little or no unsupervised freedom. Their own privacy and comfort will be minimal, often sleeping on a mattress on the floor.

Cases of labour exploitation have been widely reported in car washes and nail bars, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. Victims have been found in the manufacturing, entertainment, travel, farming, hospitality and construction industries.

Labour exploitation can sometimes involve forced criminality, where victims are forced to commit crimes. For example, where they are forced to pickpocket, traffic drugs or work on a cannabis farm, tending the plants.



WATCH HANA'S STORY

<https://youtu.be/5oxbpLdtY3U>



QUESTIONS FROM THE FILM

- What struck you from the film?
- Did anything you heard surprise you?
- How did Hana's story make you feel?
- What inspired you?
- What questions does it leave you with?

DID YOU KNOW?



Worldwide women and girls make up

**58% OF ALL FORCED
LABOUR VICTIMS³**



Worldwide women and girls make up

**41% OF ALL STATE
IMPOSED FORCED
LABOUR VICTIMS⁴**

Only **30%**

**OF PEOPLE ARE CONFIDENT OF SPOTTING
THE SIGNS OF SLAVERY⁵**



Hana's story

"I came with my husband from Syria in hope of a better life... We paid a criminal gang a lot of money to transport us... We were so vulnerable. We had nowhere to live, we couldn't speak the language. We were in a country with no right to work and we were desperate to work to pay off the debt. The gang housed us."



WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favour with his master, because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "if only my Lord were with the Prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." So Naaman went in and told his Lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. (2 Kings 5 v1-4)



EXPLORATION

Labour exploitation and forced labour is too easily ignored. There is some moral indignation about sexual exploitation, but a lot less is known about those who work in unseen supply chains.

Women can be particularly vulnerable as they seek work to feed families and provide a home. The opportunities for work are often in sectors with large workforces where they can easily be invisible.

In the passage from 2 Kings, we have a typical scenario. The story highlights how women are often forced into labour in foreign countries because of political and economic unrest. A man who is Lord and Master, is disfigured by leprosy. A young girl who is a slave, a forced labourer or domestic slave, with no rights, is the one who can bring healing. And Naaman's wife, is an example of how we so easily collude with keeping the status quo because it brings many benefits, in the way of cheap goods and services.

However mindful we are about our spending habits, there will always be hidden aspects where we have unwittingly contributed to the black-market economy. It is easy to become complicit in supporting criminal industries when we seek a good bargain in buying cheap clothes, or we pay cash for services.

We can believe forced labour is not happening in our own communities due to its hidden nature. In the desire for a quiet life, we can ignore the signs and remain blinkered.

Alternatively, some of us can feel overwhelmed or lack the confidence to speak out against injustice. The young girl is our rallying cry to encourage us to speak out against accepted injustices, and where we can, be the agents of healing and transformation.



FOR REFLECTION

- 1 How can we sometimes be guilty of maintaining the status quo of social injustice without speaking out? List five examples and discuss together.
- 2 Are there places in your community where hidden employees might be working?
- 3 Are there businesses in your area that you could talk to about their supply chains and challenge them about whether modern slavery might exist without their knowledge?



PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Almighty God, help us hear the voices of all who call for help, for themselves and for others, that we may be agents of your healing power – so that lives may be restored and relationships made right in your sight.

We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

Hana's story

"I couldn't let my family back in Syria know what had happened. I was so ashamed of what my life in England had become. I couldn't tell anyone at work because I was afraid I'd be deported."



DIGGING DEEPER

What are the signs to look out for?

Victims of modern slavery can be of any age, race, or gender. There is no 'typical' victim. However, there are physical and behavioural indicators that may mean someone is being exploited.

Appearance

- Show signs of abuse and untreated injuries.
- Appear malnourished, unkempt, withdrawn and/or neglected.
- Seem under the control or influence of others
- Wear the same clothes every day.
- Wear no safety equipment even if their work requires it.

Accommodation

- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation.
- Living and working at the same address.
- Appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work.

Travel

- Rarely allowed to travel on their own.
- Regularly collected and dropped off early in the morning or late at night.
- In a crowded minibus with other workers.
- Have no control of their identification documents such as their passport.

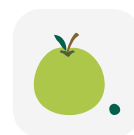
Seeking help

- Reluctant to seek help and avoid eye contact.
- Appear frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers.
- Fear of the police, don't know who to trust or where to get help.
- Afraid of deportation, and risk of violence to them or their family.

Sometimes, it can be the "absence" of signs that may draw your attention to a situation. If a woman never relates any personal information about her life outside work, that might be a sign that she is being held against her will. If she can't tell you anything about her weekend plans or what she does in the evening or who her friends are, that might be cause for concern.

ACT TODAY: DOWNLOAD TWO ESSENTIAL APPS

To help you stay alert to labour exploitation, why not download The Clewer Initiative's **Farm Work Welfare App (FWWA)** and **Safe Car Wash App**?



**Farm Work
Welfare App
(FWWA)**



**Safe Car
Wash
App**

Both Apps are designed to help identify victims of modern slavery – the first is relevant for the rural sector where both farm business and workers can fall victim to criminal labour providers, the second is used to monitor hand car washes.

You can use the apps to flag up concerns or suspicions and the information gathered is processed by the Modern Slavery Helpline. It enables the authorities to identify hot spots, pursue criminal investigations and most importantly, support victims. Even if you are not sure about something, it is worth reporting your concerns. No one will get in trouble if nothing criminal is going on. For more information, visit

www.theclewerinitiative.org/farmworkwelfare and
www.theclewerinitiative.org/safecarwash



FURTHER READING

To further apply what you've discovered in today's session, you may like to spend some time during the week reflecting on what you have learnt about labour exploitation and how your own spending habits may unwittingly contribute to the black economy.

You can also read more about Harriet's radical ministry:

HARRIET MONSELL - REHABILITATION AND HOPE

The Community of St. John Baptist (CSJB) was founded for the specific purpose of rescuing 'fallen women' – or prostitutes – from the streets of Clewer Fields. These women would live in a penitentiary setting and they would be called penitents, but not in the way that modern minds might define those terms. Instead of being a prison-like system of punishment, the Houses of Mercy run by the Anglican Sisters were places of rehabilitation and healing where women could gain tools to forge a new identity and turn their lives around.

From the frontlines

“Exploitation can take many forms. We have a responsibility to go looking for it and do something about it.”

Shayne Tyler, Group Compliance Director

This was a radical approach that destigmatised and helped prostitutes, rather than marginalising them further in jails and workhouses. This system, with its methods of educating and empowering women, considered that any woman traumatised by poverty, abuse, and exploitation might see prostitution as the only way to earn a living. The Clewer Houses of Mercy provided structure, nurturing, and a sense of family that many of the women had never experienced. Penitents, in this setting, were being helped to repent not by feeling shamed and punished, but by turning their lives around and making a real conversion to a new and better way of life.

- 1 Mother Harriet wanted the Houses of Mercy to be communities for healing, nurture and hope. How might this wisdom inform our response today?
- 2 Do you know of any local projects which are committed to educating vulnerable people and giving them new skills so they can find work and freedom from poverty?
- 3 How could you support these projects or offer your skills to help others?



WOMEN IN THE SHADOWS

resource: www.theclewerinitiative.org/womenintheshadows

³ https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2020/10/09024229/Stacked-Odds_201008_FNL1_LR.pdf

⁴ https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2020/10/09024229/Stacked-Odds_201008_FNL1_LR.pdf

⁵ <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/It-Still-Happens-Here.pdf>