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Are we 'leaving no-one behind'? How gaps in modern slavery programmes allow forced labour among adolescent girls in the garment and textile industries

Czy nikogo „nie zostawiliśmy z tyłu"? Jak luki w programach przeciwdziałania niewolnictwu umożliwiają pracę przymusową nastoletnich dziewcząt w przemyśle odzieżowym i tekstylnym

Abstract: This article will examine the efficacy of current programme services for adolescent girls at risk of forced labour through an analysis of Walk Free's Promising Practices Database. The Database is a collection of evaluations of anti-slavery and counter-trafficking programmes since 2000, categorised by type of intervention, location of programme, and target population, among other terms. This article identifies what lessons can be learnt, if any, to both prevent and tackle the forced labour of adolescent girls, with a particular focus on the garment and textile industries. We examine a subset of the Promising Practices Database of 81 evaluations, where at least one component in programme design was targeted at adolescent girls. We find that, in line with other critiques of human trafficking research, most evaluations are disproportionately focussed on programmes tackling sex trafficking to the exclusion of other forms of forced labour. Based on two existing evaluations, and related programmes in the garment sector, we determine the importance of community-led, inclusive, rights-based awareness-raising and the need to tailor interventions specifically to the needs and life-stage of the target group.

Keywords: adolescent girls, modern slavery, Walk Free's promising practices, best practice, garments, labour exploitation, forced labour

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Abstrakt: W niniejszym artykule przeanalizowana zostanie skuteczność obecnych programów dla dziewcząt zagrożonych pracą przymusową poprzez analizę bazy danych Walk Free's Promising Practices Database. Baza danych jest zbiorem ewaluacji programów przeciwdziałania niewolnictwu i handlowi ludźmi od 2000 roku, podzielonych m.in. na kategorie według rodzaju interwencji, lokalizacji programu i populacji docelowej. W niniejszym artykule określono, jakie wnioski można wyciągnąć, jeśli w ogóle, w celu zapobiegania i zwalczania pracy przymusowej młodocianych dziewcząt, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem przemysłu odzieżowego i tekstylnego. Analizujemy podzbiór bazy danych Promising Practices Database, obejmującej 81 ewaluacji, w których przynajmniej jeden komponent programu był skierowany do nastolatków. Stwierdzamy, że zgodnie z innymi krytykami badań nad handlem ludźmi, większość ewaluacji jest nieproporcjonalnie skupiona na programach zajmujących się handlem seksualnym, z wyłączeniem innych form pracy przymusowej. Na podstawie dwóch istniejących ewaluacji i powiązanego z nimi programowania w sektorze odzieżowym, stwierdzamy, jak ważne jest podnoszenie świadomości w oparciu o prawa i potrzeby społeczności lokalnej oraz dostosowanie interwencji do potrzeb i etapu życia grupy docelowej.

Słowa kluczowe: nastoletnie dziewczęta, współczesne niewolnictwo, Walk Free's obiecujące praktyki, najlepsze praktyki, odzież, wyzysk w pracy

Introduction

Women and girls are disproportionately at risk of modern slavery: 71 per cent of all people living in situations of modern slavery in 2016 were female, equating to almost 29 million individuals (ILO, Walk Free 2017). According to best estimates, women and girls are most often exploited in commercial sexual exploitation and forced marriage, and most interventions are targeted accordingly. However, women and girls are also disproportionately affected by forced labour in the private economy (ILO, Walk Free 2017), with the garment and textile industry being particularly high-risk (Walk Free 2018). While much has been written about 'hotspots' of exploitation in the garment and textile sectors in South and South East Asia (see ILO 1996; Bhaskaran et al. 2010; Overeem, Theuws 2014; Crane et al. 2019; Kara 2019), there are few robust evaluations that identify what works to prevent and eradicate the forced labour of adolescent girls in these industries.

It is well established that effective and targeted programme design must be age-appropriate to better suit the needs of beneficiaries and take a 'life course approach' to identify critical risks and gaps across childhood to prioritise key interventions (World Bank 2005; UNICEF 2018). Yet, within Walk Free's Promising Practices Database (PPD) – a repository of 262 evaluations of anti-slavery and counter-trafficking programmes since 2000 – there is a dearth of evaluated, targeted interventions specifically designed for the needs of adolescents (n=10), as compared to younger children (n=20) and adults (n=51). Less than 3 per cent of the total number of evaluations housed in the PPD are of programmes targeted solely at adolescent girls (n=6). Instead, adolescents are more likely to be beneficiaries of broader programmes targeting multiple age groups (n=71). This highlights a

significant gap in the evidence of what works, as the risks that girls face from birth are magnified during adolescence (Walk Free 2020a). Adolescent girls sit at the crux of intersecting forms of discrimination that increase their risk to modern slavery, including gender and age (Ricker, Ashmore 2020). They often experience modern slavery in the form of commercial sexual exploitation and child marriage (Walk Free 2020a) as a result of social and cultural norms related to the onset of puberty (UNICEF 2014).

The emphasis on child marriage and commercial sexual exploitation is replicated in intervention and evaluation efforts: out of a total of 81 evaluated interventions in the PPD which included at least one component in the programme design that targeted adolescent girls, the vast majority (n=44) were focussed on child marriage and sex trafficking, while just under one quarter of the programmes (n=20) were designed to combat forced labour, child labour, or the worst forms of child labour. This is consistent with previous critiques levelled at the human trafficking research landscape for its disproportionate focus on sex trafficking to the exclusion of labour trafficking (see, for example, Weitzer 2014; Sweileh 2018). Notably, five of the six evaluations of programmes designed solely for adolescent girls in the PPD aimed at reducing child marriage; only one targeted debt bondage (Joseph et al. 2019). While those aged between 15 and 17 years are far less likely than their younger sisters, or male peers, to be in hazardous work (Guarcello, Lyon, Valdiva 2016), they are significantly over-represented in heavily feminised and informal industries, such as domestic work (O'Neil, Fluery, Foresti 2016) and the garment and textile industry (see Clean Clothes Campaign 2005; ILO 2015; Svarer, Meiers, Rothmeier 2017). However, there are very few robust evaluations of programmes designed to protect adolescent girls from experiencing forced labour in these industries. This could point to a gap in programmes for adolescent female victims of forced labour. To assist in meeting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and to fulfil the stated aim of 'leaving no-one behind' (UNCDP 2018), effective interventions are required to assist adolescent girls who are forced to work.

This study analyses the current state of anti-slavery and counter-trafficking interventions which seek to enhance protections for adolescent girls. It identifies gaps and lessons learnt in these contexts and good practices in programmes designed to combat forced labour among other beneficiaries, ultimately in order to provide recommendations to enhance protection and prevention services for adolescent girls exploited in forced labour. While men and boys are also victims of forced labour, this paper responds to a gap in the literature of evaluated programmes for adolescent girls, who are far more likely to receive assistance after experiencing commercial sexual exploitation or a forced marriage. For this reason, in addition to recognising the feminised nature of informal work in the fashion industry, this paper focusses on findings and lessons learnt in the garment and textile industries.

Terminology

Modern slavery

For the purposes of this paper, modern slavery is used as an umbrella term that covers various specific legal concepts, including human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, and slavery and slavery-like practices. Essentially, it refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power (ILO, Walk Free 2017). Early marriage can fall within the concept of forced marriage and may involve informal or formal unions where either or both parties are under the age of eighteen (Girls Not Brides n.d.).

Vulnerability

As stated by Jacqueline Joudo Larsen and Davina P. Durgana (2017: 22), vulnerability to modern slavery is impacted by 'a complex interaction of factors related to the presence or absence of protection; respect for rights; physical safety and security; access to the necessities of life such as food, water, and health care; and patterns of migration, displacement, and conflict.' This paper adopts the understanding of vulnerability used in the Global Slavery Index (GSI) published by Walk Free (2018), which conceptualises vulnerability in terms of human security theory (Joudo Larsen, Durgana 2017). This is a developing subfield without a clear definitional consensus, although it is generally accepted to include a focus on 'the safety and well-being of individuals, regardless of their citizenship status or relationship to a nation-state' (Joudo Larsen, Durgana 2017: 22).

Adolescent

While there is no universally accepted definition, the UN and its agencies define adolescents as those between 10 and 19 years of age (WHO n.d.), and youths as 15–24 years (UNGA 1981). For the purposes of this article, adolescent refers to those aged 10 to 19 years.

Why focus on adolescent girls?

Adolescence is a turbulent period of human development, where rapid physiological changes precede psychological maturity (WHO n.d.). These changes coincide with fluctuating external influences, including changing social norms and roles, responsibilities, relationships, and expectations (UNICEF 2020b; WHO n.d.). This period of development is also impacted by globalisation, urbanisation, and social media and other digital technology that can increase the complex networks which adolescents navigate (UNICEF 2011, 2020b; WHO n.d.). Adolescent girls

are a particularly vulnerable group and as a result require special attention (UNGA 1981), even though they are less likely to engage in risk-taking behaviour when compared to their male peers (Reniers et al. 2016).

This is true in respect of vulnerability to modern slavery. Adolescent girls sit at the crux of two different but intersecting forms of discrimination that increase risk to modern slavery: the foremost being gender, and the other being age (Ricker, Ashmore 2020). Physical changes related to the onset of puberty and social norms that reinforce traditional gender roles and view menarche as the beginning of womanhood (UNICEF 2014) increase their vulnerability to forced sexual exploitation and forced marriage. Gender and age discrimination also intersect with discrimination based on race, geographic remoteness, indigenousness, and caste (LeBaron et al. 2018). Combined, these forms of discrimination increase vulnerability to forced labour by limiting adolescent girls' access to their documents – including birth certificates – reducing their access to education and increasing the likelihood of irregular migration status and poverty. This pushes adolescent girls into informal and unregulated sectors with higher risk of exploitation (LeBaron et al. 2018).

Prevalence of modern slavery among adolescent girls

Adolescent girls most commonly experience commercial sexual exploitation and child marriage (Walk Free 2020a). According to the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, in 2016, an estimated 3.8 million adults were victims of forced sexual exploitation and 1 million children were victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Ninety-nine per cent of these were women and girls (ILO, Walk Free 2017). A similar pattern emerges for those living in forced marriage. Eighty-four per cent of the 15.4 million people living in a forced marriage in 2016 were female, while more than one third (37 per cent) were under 18 years old at the time of marriage. Among this latter group, 44 per cent were forced to marry before the age of 15 (ILO, Walk Free 2017). These figures are likely to be conservative, with other estimates suggesting a higher incidence of early and child marriage. For example, UNICEF (2020a) estimated that 12 million girls under 18 are married each year. It is likely that the true rate of child marriage has risen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (UNFPA 2020). The coronavirus is also exacerbating the commercial sexual exploitation of children, online sexual exploitation in particular (Giammarinaro 2020).

Women and girls are not just overrepresented in commercial sexual exploitation and forced marriage. When examining the breakdown of forced labour, more women than men are exploited in the private economy (57.6 as opposed to 42.4 per cent) (ILO, Walk Free 2017). The sectors where women outnumbered men were accommodation and food service industries and domestic work. Women also made up 18 per cent of those exploited in manufacturing (ILO, Walk Free 2017). These forms of exploitation can intersect. Adolescent girls who were married

early and left education or other formal employment training are also at risk of exploitative child labour in informal work in sectors, including agriculture, small-scale manufacturing, and domestic work (ILO 2009).

Garment and textile industries and adolescent girls

The garment and textile industries, fuelled by the global demand for fast fashion, are key sectors to target interventions for the prevention and combating of modern slavery. Among products at risk of being produced by forced labour and imported into G20 countries, apparel accounts for approximately 36 per cent of all high-risk imports: a value of US $127.7 billion annually (Walk Free 2018). The production and manufacturing stages of the global garment and textile industries are largely based in South, South East, and East Asia, with hubs in China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Pakistan, Taiwan, and Korea. These hubs emerged after mass employment losses in Europe and coincided with a shift towards less regulation (ILO 1996). In recent years, Ethiopia and Kenya have emerged as new markets in the industry, as stronger laws and better labour conditions in Asia push manufacturers to identify newer and cheaper markets – minimum wages in Ethiopia, for example, are lower than their South Asian counterparts (Barrett, Baumann-Pauly 2019).

There are no agreed global estimates of the number of adolescent girls employed in the garment and textile industries,[1] nor how many of these individuals are at risk of forced labour; however, there is strong evidence that women and girls are exploited throughout the supply chain. This occurs from picking cotton in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to the production of ready-to-wear goods in Bangladesh (Theuws, Overeem 2014). In Bangladesh, adolescent girls work excessively long hours in unsafe conditions and suffer physical and verbal abuse from male managers (Brignall, Butler 2014). Anecdotal evidence suggests that adolescent girls are exploited in both formal and informal sectors. In formal garment factories, children are responsible for a variety of tasks ranging in intricacy from dyeing, sewing buttons, cutting and trimming threads, to folding, moving, and packing garments (Overeem, Theuws 2014). In countries such as India, women and girls from oppressed ethnic communities, working in informal and small-scale factories based within private homes, often work on complicated tasks including embroidering and embellishments (Bhaskaran et al. 2010; Kara 2019). They face significantly worse conditions than in formal factories, as there is little, if any, regulation or enforcement of government labour standards (Kara 2019).

These individuals are also often migrant workers who have limited social networks and few social and legal protections, which places them at greater risk of

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[1]   Accurate estimates are difficult to obtain, with some estimating that the apparel sector is among the largest employers of women workers, with estimates ranging from 75 to 80 per cent (see Clean Clothes Campaign 2005; ILO 2015; Svarer, Meiers, Rothmeier 2017). Others argue that adolescent boys are more vulnerable to exploitation in India (see Kara 2019).

exploitation. They are vulnerable to debt bondage, where they are forced to work for little or no pay to repay the costs of their migration, including recruitment fees (Chuang 2017; David, Bryant, Joudo Larsen 2019). Female garment workers also face social stigmatisation, are incorrectly assumed to be sexually active, and suffer from numerous stress-related physical symptoms (Amin et al. 1998). Beyond instances of forced labour, child labour, and the worst forms of child labour, women and girls experience poor and discriminatory working conditions. These include poor health and safety practices, the restriction of movement, gender discrimination, verbal abuse, unfair pay, limited collective association, few formal contracts, and issues around freedom of speech (Crane et al. 2019). Perversely, in some contexts, working in the garment industry can assist adolescent girls from poor families in preparations for marriage, in part by providing an opportunity to accumulate a dowry (Solidaridad-South & South East Asia 2012). In parts of India, recruiters offer adolescent girls employment opportunities in spinning mills, where they are paid a lump sum at the end of their contract (Theuws, Overeem 2014). This '*Sumangali* scheme' contractually traps young girls, forcing them to work for years in often dangerous conditions, or else risk losing their earnings (Mayilvaganan 2020). Girls in the Tamil Nadu spinning industry are also essentially trapped in the mills, facing restrictions on movement and outside communication in addition to being forced to work 60 hours a week (Theuws, Overeem 2014).

Globalisation, fast fashion, and intermittent demand creates low profit margins and encourages the exploitation of garment workers (David, Bryant, Joudo Larsen 2019). Factory owners are incentivised to force workers to work long or consecutive shifts for less than minimum wages in order to fulfil extremely high quotas; suppliers, in turn, may seek out workforces – such as children, refugees, and irregular migrants – whose desperation, vulnerability, and restricted mobility leave them with little choice but to accept illegal working conditions (LeBaron et al. 2018). The global free market's drive to squeeze profit margins and meet consumer demand are often resilient in the face of exogenous shocks, and even thrive in the wake of disasters such as war, tsunamis, and public health crises (Klein 2007). The COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant impact on the garment industry in South East Asia particularly highlights garment workers' extreme vulnerability to exploitative labour practices, including forced labour (Walk Free 2020b). As the COVID-19 pandemic forced store closures across the US and Europe, the resulting drop in demand led many global apparel brands to cancel their orders for goods already manufactured (Business & Human Rights Resources Centre 2020). In Cambodia, for example, approximately 30,000 workers had their jobs suspended as more than 70 factories responded to these cancelled orders (Walk Free 2020b). Many workers have faced reduced working hours, unpaid leave, pay cuts, weakened worker bargaining power, and limited access to social security, all of which have disproportionately affected women (Clean Clothes Campaign 2021) and increased their risk of exploitation and trafficking.

Methodology

The Promising Practices Database

This paper draws on evaluations identified through the PPD, a systematic review of evaluations of anti-modern-slavery programmes and related social issues from 2000 to 2019 (Bryant, Joudo 2018). Since the ratification of the UN Trafficking Protocol in 2000, there have been many interventions and organisations involved in the fight against modern slavery (Bryant, Landman 2019). These activities were further reinforced by the SDGs, including Targets 8.7, 16.2, 5.3, and 10.7 (UNGA 2015), which include the eradication of modern slavery and its related forms by 2030. Between 2000 and 2013, more than US $4 billion in Overseas Development Assistance was spent on achieving SDG Target 8.7 alone, with spending for programmes to tackle human trafficking increasing year by year (Gleason, Cockayne 2018). Despite this commitment, little is known about what works to combat modern slavery. The PPD was created to help answer this question.

The database was developed in 2015 and now contains 262 evaluations identified through searches of academic databases, Google Scholar, and international organisation websites, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the ILO evaluation office, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Freedom Fund, and 3iE International Initiative for Impact Evaluation.[2] An evaluation is defined broadly to capture donor reports and end-of-project evaluations, using the following definition: 'evaluation measures progress towards outputs, or change in outcomes, or an assessment of an impact, of a development programme, policy, or intervention.'

Only evaluations that cover modern slavery or a related social issue are included in the PPD. At present, only evaluations published in English are included. Literature reviews, lists of good practices, mid-term evaluations, formative (or pre-assessment) evaluations, summaries where the longer-form document was unavailable, annual reports, systematic reviews of evaluations, or those evaluations without an explicit methodology[3] are also excluded.

Evaluations in the PPD are classified according to term lists organised under the following categories:

- *Type of modern slavery*
- *Sector*
- *Target population*
- *Country/region*

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[2]   Accessing institutional websites is essential to ensure the breadth of systematic reviews in international development when relevant research is often found outside of formal peer-reviewed channels (Mallet et al. 2012).

[3]   An explicit methodology was defined as the inclusion of a methodology section or a description of the actions taken by the authors to conduct the evaluation.

- *Type of programme and activities*
- *Independent vs internal evaluation*
- *Evaluation methodology*
- *Did the programme meet its objectives?*
- *A free text write-up of the programme's objectives and evaluation findings*

The development of lists of terms was an iterative process that drew upon the content of the evaluations and predetermined terms that could be used to search the final database. For example, the development of a list of terms for type of programme drew upon the anti-human trafficking framework, which predominantly follows a criminal justice approach as defined by the '3 Ps' of protection, prevention, and prosecution. As not every intervention could be categorised as a criminal justice approach, this was supplemented by identifying the activities described by the evaluations and then grouping these activities into types of programmes based on their commonalities. After testing a sample of the evaluations using these lists, three members of the research team independently categorised all remaining evaluations.[4]

Analysis for the purposes of this article

Evaluations included in the scope of this paper were those categorised under the 'target population' list of terms as 'youth' in the PPD. Evaluations were only categorised under a specific term when the individual term was explicitly mentioned within the evaluation. Evaluations were included in the paper if they explicitly mentioned that the programme was targeted to youths, or used relevant synonyms such as adolescents, those aged 10–19, or teenagers in the descriptions of the target beneficiaries.

Evaluation entries identified in this process were then exported to Excel, to allow filtering across key terms to identify common trends. These terms included the type of modern slavery, target sectors, target population, country, type of programme, activity, evaluation strength, and whether the programme had met its objectives. We also conducted a thematic analysis of the original evaluation documents to identify good practices.

This process resulted in a sample of 81 evaluations, all of which included some intervention or component targeting adolescent girls.

Limitations of this study

Despite best efforts to include all relevant evaluations, the PPD faces the common practical challenges of any systematic review (Mallet et al. 2012). Searching institutional websites, for example, leads to bias in the review process and means

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[4]   Full methodology and lists of terms are available to download from www.walkfree. org. See Bryant, Landman (2019) for a detailed description of the development of the PPD.

that some evaluations may have been missed, for example, those which are housed on individual NGO websites, or are not publicly available, or were not shared by partner organisations. The findings below are also dependent on the quality of the identified evaluations in the PPD. Their variable quality was apparent early in the process of developing the PPD: programme descriptions were often unclear and did not list specific objectives. As a result, it was not possible to identify whether these objectives had been met. Meta-analysis was not possible because of the limited quality of the data, an overreliance on qualitative methodologies, and the evaluations largely focussing on the measuring process rather than the outcomes. Further updates to the PPD should also include evaluations published in languages other than English.

The use of the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale in assessing the strength of the methodology is also not without challenges. While the meta-evaluation literature has not reached a definitive consensus on the best means of comparing the quality of methodology in outcome evaluations, the Maryland Scale is the leading approach (Farrington et al. 2002) and can be used to signal to the wider field whether a specific intervention is working or how much confidence can be placed in the findings (Puttick 2018). It is a simple 5-point scale developed in the field of criminology to assist in the assessment of the scientific validity of criminological interventions. The minimum level of methodology for results to be considered reliable is level 3 – evaluation designed with pre- and post-test measures with a comparable control. The highest level of validity is attained by testing the intervention with a randomised control trial (RCT) (level 5). The use of this scale is not without controversy, in particular because of the debate on the ethics and reasonableness of RCTs in development work (Burrell 2012; Harkins 2017) and their prohibitive costs. Further, interventions in the anti-modern-slavery sector are diverse and cannot always be assessed using a criminological approach. A modified scale was used to reflect this diversity, borrowing from the Maryland Scale, but adding important factors, including participative elements and qualitative methods. There is scope for further work on a modified scale to apply to evaluations in anti-modern-slavery work (Bryant, Landman 2019).

Findings

Of the 81 programmes that included some intervention or component targeting adolescent girls, few were designed solely for adolescent girls. Adolescent girls were more likely to be part of broader programmes targeting children or families (see Figure 1). Ten evaluations were of programmes targeting 'youths' of any gender: six evaluations of programmes targeting females and four for both females and males.

Figure 1: Number of evaluations where adolescent girls were included in the target population, by beneficiary group
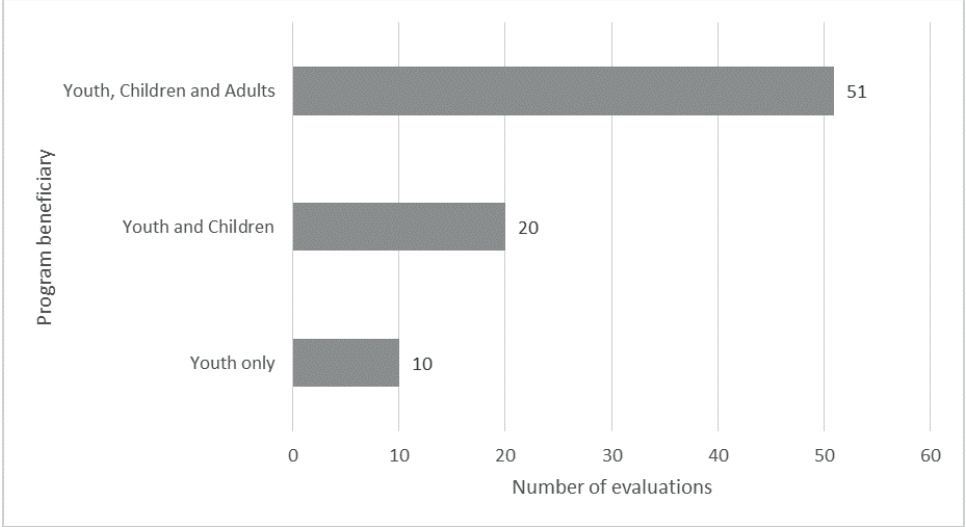
Most programme evaluations where any programme component targeted adolescent girls were located in India (n=16), followed by the US (n=12), Bangladesh (n=10), Nepal (n=5), and Pakistan (n=4).

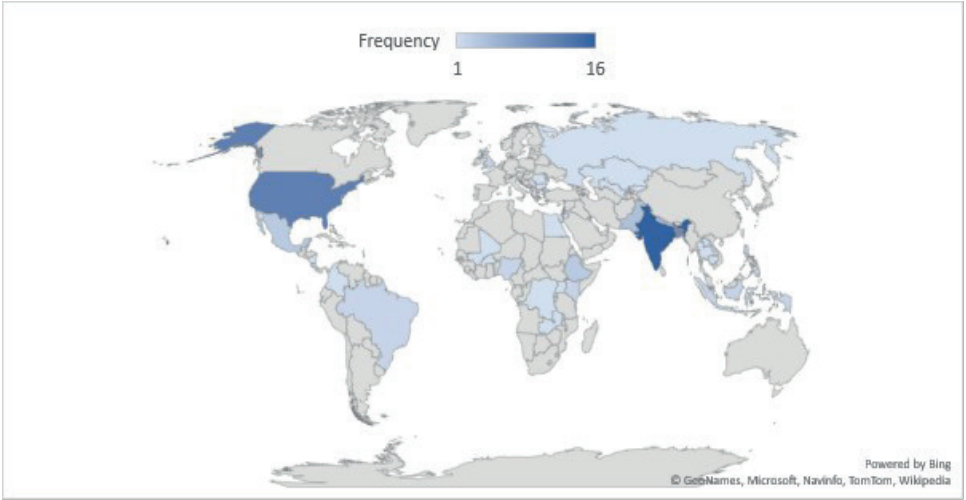*Figure 2: Geographic spread of programme evaluations with any component targeting adolescent girls*
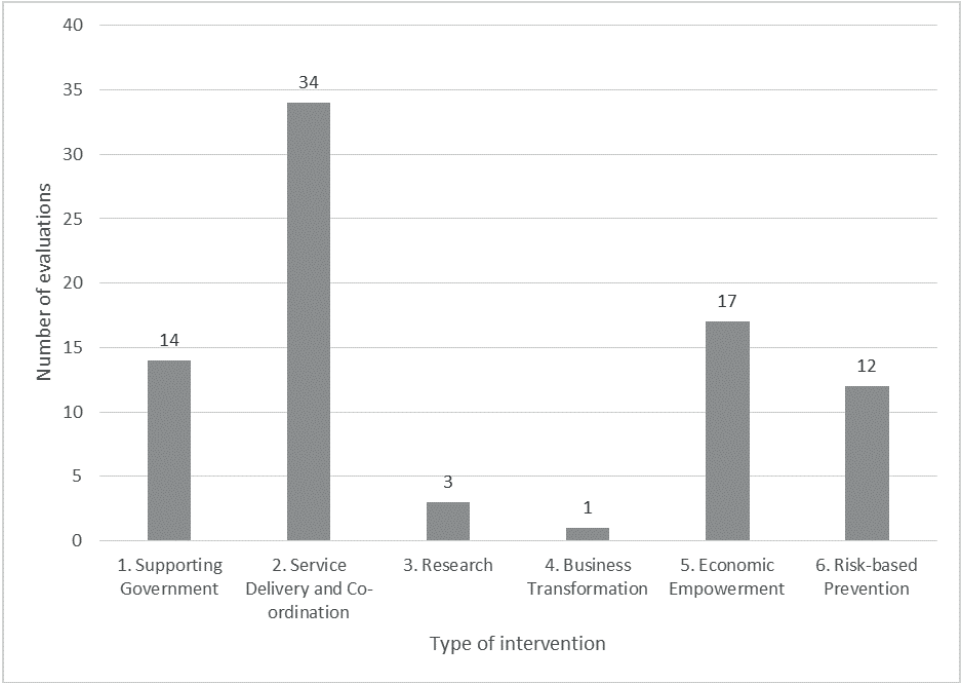
Figure 3: Type of intervention described by programme evaluations with any component targeting adolescent girls

Evaluations of programmes with any intervention or activity targeting adolescent girls largely provided support services to identified victims (Figure 3). These included emergency support, such as physical and mental health services, and the provision of shelters, case management services, and support groups, as well as long-term assistance such as vocational training and education. The provision of emergency support was more common than longer-term support. Economic empowerment programmes largely focussed on cash transfers (both conditional and non-conditional), while those interventions supporting governments contained technical support and advocacy activities. Some prevention activities were included, but these were limited to raising awareness and providing formal education services.

Figure 4: Sectors described by programme evaluations with any components targeting adolescent girls
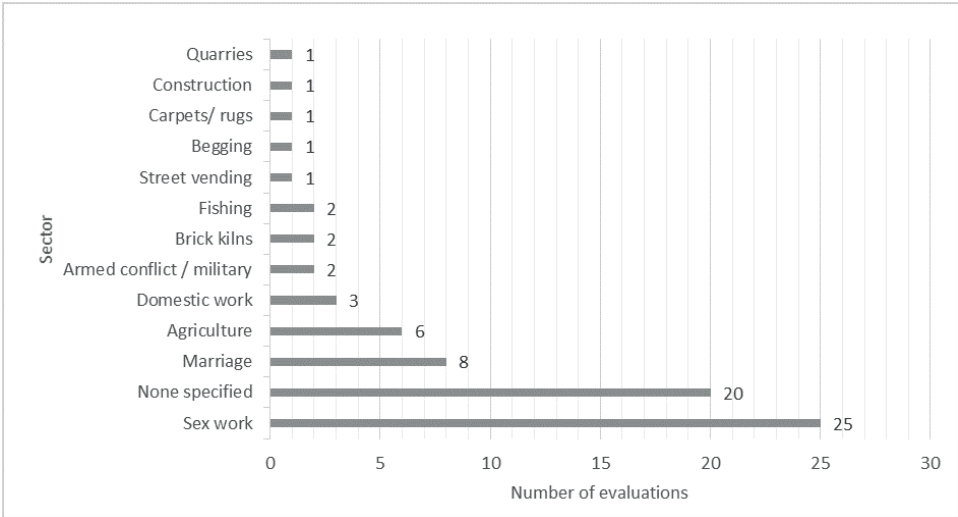
Where the interventions specified a target sector, the majority of the evaluations described programmes targeting exploitation in the sex industry, followed by forced and early marriage, agriculture, and domestic work (Figure 4). It should be noted that the number of sectors (n=97) exceeds the total number of evaluations with any adolescent girl component (n=81) because some programmes targeted multiple sectors. When looking at the evaluations of programmes which only focussed on adolescent girls (n=6), the majority were designed to reduce early marriage (n=4), whilst one targeted debt bondage within the garment and textile industries (n=1) and one did not specify a sector (n=1).

Similar to previous findings from the PPD (Bryant, Joudo 2018; Bryant, Landman 2019), the strength of the evaluations of programmes with any adolescent component is low, with the majority of evaluations limited to post review, without a baseline comparison. The methodologies most commonly used were interviews, focus group discussions, and a qualitative review of project documents. However, almost 14 per cent of these evaluations were RCTs (n=11), which are widely considered the gold standard for studying causal relationships (Akobeng 2005; Hariton, Locascio 2018).

Figure 5: Strength of evaluations of programmes with any adolescent girl component
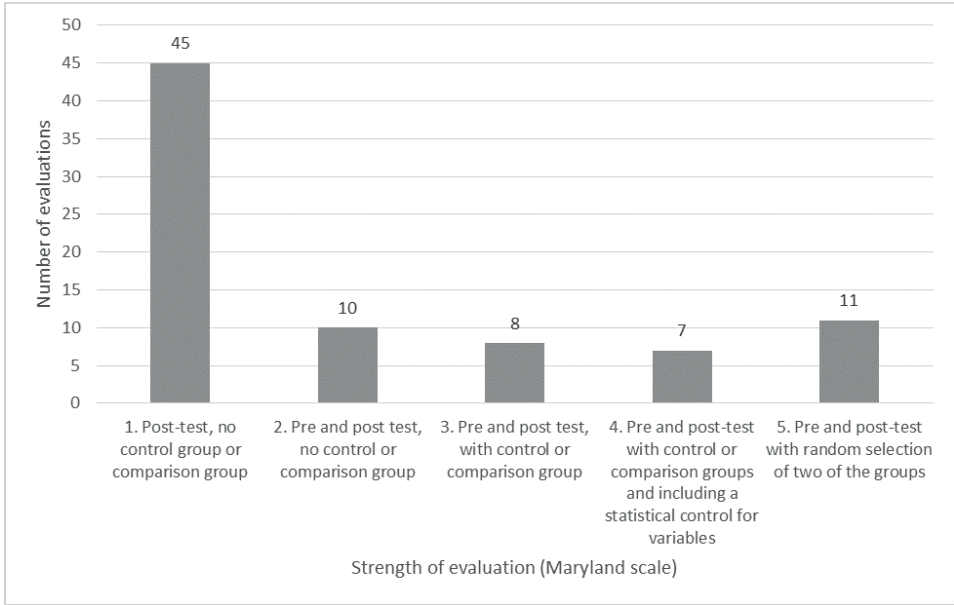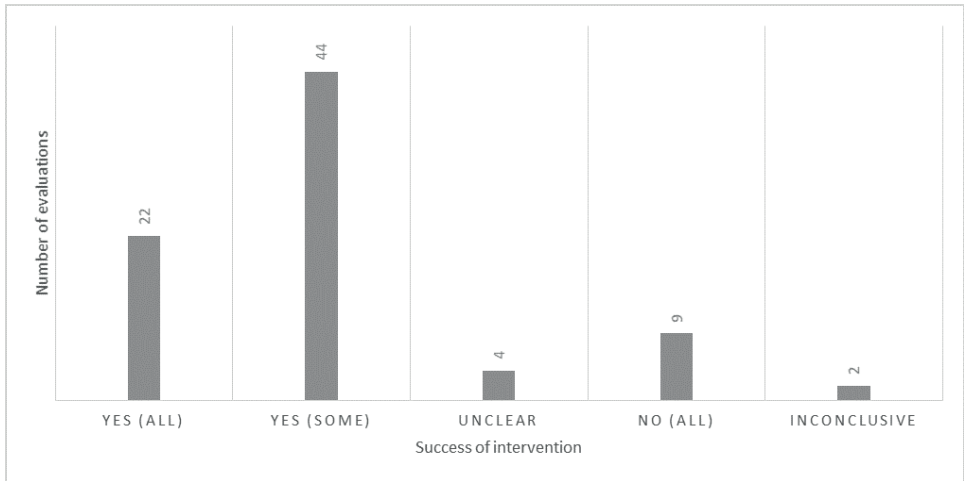

Figure 6: Success of programmes with any adolescent girl component

Overall, programmes with any component targeting adolescent girls reported some successes, with the majority (81 per cent) concluding that at least some objectives had been achieved.

Discussion

In many ways, the findings of the review of programme evaluations targeting adolescent girls in the PPD is consistent with the current literature of where and how modern slavery affects this population. The majority of these evaluations are of programmes that took place in locations with a high prevalence of modern slavery, such as India and Bangladesh. The exception is the US; while modern slavery arguably occurs everywhere, the US has a lower prevalence (as a proportion of the population) than the other countries included in this paper (Global Slavery Index 2018). Likewise, the majority of programmes target forced marriage and commercial sexual exploitation, which according to the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery are the forms of exploitation that disproportionately affect women and girls. However, this focus on 'feminised' forms of exploitation – and the lack of programmes to address forced labour among women and girls – reflects the broader commentary on the state of human trafficking research (as discussed above; Weitzer 2014; Sweileh 2018).

In terms of types of intervention, most programmes provide support services, but this is skewed to certain sectors and geographic locations. For example, almost 59 per cent of the 34 programme evaluations of victim support services (n=20) targeted the sex industry. Of this subgroup, 50 per cent were implemented in the US (n=10). The number of economic empowerment programmes (n=17) reveals the use of conditional and non-conditional cash transfer programmes to lower out-of-school rates and/or child marriage by incentivising parents to send their children to school (see, for example, Buchmann et al. 2017; Peruffo, Ferreira 2017; Dake et al. 2018; Field et al. 2018).

The strength of the evaluations assessed also aligns with previous work on promising practices in the anti-modern-slavery field; the quality of evaluations needs to improve before a clear understanding of what works can become a reality (Hames, Dewar, Napier-Moor 2010; Van der Laan et al. 2011; Davy 2015, 2016; Bryant, Joudo 2018; Bryant, Landman 2019). For example, when looking at programme evaluations with any adolescent girl component, less than one third were robust, with level 3 or higher on the Maryland scale (n=26). Few evaluations attempted to measure the impact of the programme on modern slavery itself, focussing instead on process evaluations. The high number of RCTs (n=11) is surprising in this regard. These were most often evaluations of programmes targeting forced and early marriage (n=8), the use of child soldiers (n=1), the use of child labour (n=1), migration (n=1), and female genital mutilation (n=1). The number of RCTs, and the fact that these have increased since 2015, is promising. It allows us to highlight lessons that can improve future programmes to prevent the forced marriage of adolescent girls. For example, an RCT to assess the development of skills-building programmes to reduce child marriage in Bangladesh found that it was possible to reduce the prevalence of child marriage by working with

communities to build life skills, formal education, and vocational training among girls (Amin, Saha, Ahmed 2018). This finding could conceivably apply in other countries with high rates of child marriage.

Although women and girls are overrepresented among the victims of forced labour, just under 30 per cent of the 81 evaluations included a programme component to assist adolescent girls in some form of forced labour, namely in sectors such as agriculture, domestic work, construction, street vending, fishing, carpet weaving, quarries, and textiles/garments. Further, among the six evaluated programmes designed solely for adolescent girls, only one focussed on forced labour (Joseph et al. 2019).

The dearth of evaluations of programmes that tackle forced labour among adolescent girls is concerning. It arguably highlights an underlying issue: we expect women and adolescent girls to be exploited in the sex industry or in a forced marriage, and therefore target our programmes accordingly, to the exclusion of other sectors and vulnerable groups. Much has been written of the conflation of prostitution with forced sexual exploitation and trafficking (Weitzer 2007; Zhang 2009; George, Vindhya, Ray 2010) and this is evident in the evaluations of programmes targeting women and girls, with a bias towards these forms of exploitation. Critical feminist discourse supports this point, where female labour is seen as both reproductive and productive, but ultimately subordinated to the patriarchy and capitalism (Paltasingh, Lingham 2014; Cruz 2018). In practice, funders of anti-modern slavery programmes want to see visible results and invest in programs that address forms of modern slavery that are more visible and emotive, such as child and forced marriage, and commercial sexual exploitation. This theory is supported by the analysis presented here. We anticipated that the results of the systematic review would highlight certain sectors over others, but not to the extent that transpired (Figure 4).

Given the high risk of exploitation faced by adolescent girls working in the garment industry (Bhaskaran et al. 2010; Theuws, Overeem 2014; LeBaron et al. 2018; Crane et al. 2019; Kara 2019), it is encouraging that the only evaluation of a programme targeting forced labour of adolescent girls also focussed on the garment industry (Joseph et al. 2019). A further relevant evaluation was released in 2020 (Burns et al. 2020) and while it falls outside the Database's reporting period, its findings have been included here.

What works to support adolescent girls exploited in the garment and textile industries?

Both evaluations of programmes supporting adolescent girls in the garment and textile industries were conducted by the Freedom Fund, an anti-modern-slavery NGO, who use a hotspot model. Their Southern India hotspot aims to 'reduce bonded labour and exploitation in textiles, especially affecting young girls, young women, and migrant workers in spinning mills' (Freedom Fund n.d.). The 2019 evaluation used a pre- and post-assessment to measure the impact of a film-based curriculum. This was a group-based intervention which brought together girls and young women to discuss problems and develop common solutions to the issues they face at home and in the workplace, specifically in spinning mills. It found that the curriculum had a high retention of participants and a positive attitudinal change regarding gender-equitable employment and safer working conditions among the young women who participated (Joseph et al. 2019). The 2020 evaluation highlighted the importance of a community-based approach to reducing the prevalence of bonded labour. Activities included raising awareness of worker rights, poverty alleviation, education promotion, and collective action, as well as engaging with government, business, and other powerholders to address reform of the textile industry (Burns et al. 2020). The evaluation found that raising awareness of debt bondage and trafficking led to normative changes and that women demonstrated greater engagement and agency. However, qualitative evidence suggested that as the community became more protective of workers' rights and entitlements, there was an increase in the number of migrant workers in the textile industry who became vulnerable to exploitation, as they often did not speak the local language and were not specifically targeted by the programme (Burns et al. 2020).

These evaluations point to important lessons for the prevention and reduction of exploitation of adolescent girls in the textiles industry. They highlight the importance of tailoring awareness raising to the target population and the impact of these interventions on women in particular. However, consideration must be given to the potential consequences for migrants, who may be less aware of their labour rights. Further, to improve the sustainability of interventions, the evaluations note that training to enhance leadership, resilience, and conflict resolution skills should be incorporated into the programme design.

Other promising practices?

Without further robust evaluation of forced labour programmes for adolescent girls, it is not possible to identify what works to prevent this form of exploitation in the global economy, particularly in the garment and textile industries. What else can we draw upon to identify what works in these industries? Regarding adolescent girls who migrate for work, an RCT addressing the impact of a rural information campaign on safe migration conducted in Nigeria provides some useful insight

that can be applied to anti-slavery efforts. It found that students exposed to an information campaign showed a greater understanding of the dangers of irregular migration and that this could reduce the risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking by more than 50 per cent (Obi, Bartolini, D'Haese 2019). However, it also found that success was based on whether the information campaign was disseminated through appropriate channels, with the right messaging, and tailored to a specific group (Obi, Bartolini, D'Haese 2019).

Some evaluations targeting adolescent boys and grey literature on forced labour provide additional insight into what could work to reduce the risks for adolescent girls. Developing respect for labour rights, including freedom of association and collective bargaining, may help to empower female workers and protect them from exploitation. Arguably, doing this in isolation without tackling the fundamental unequal power structures at play, including gender discrimination, capitalism, and globalisation, will render these interventions impotent. This is evident from the collapse of Rana Plaza in 2013, which killed 1,134 Bangladeshi garment workers, a majority of whom were women and girls (ILO n.d.). In the immediate aftermath, the number of unions grew from fewer than 100 in 2013 to 500 by 2018 (Russel 2018), many with women in senior positions. However, a 2019 survey of 1,500 workers found that while there had been improvements in workplace safety, other problems remained widespread and intractable, notably mistreatment at work (reported by 75 per cent of respondents); half of the respondents noted that relations with managers were still described in terms of 'command and control' (Ashwin, Kabeer, Schüßler 2020).

A collaborative approach and integrated strategy aimed at removing youth from hazardous jobs could be fruitful. This needs to be coupled with policy measures addressing the role of gender in determining whether children are sent to work (ILO 2017). There is significant overlap in the forms of exploitation targeted by programme designers for adolescent girls, which could be used to add more breadth to programme design to reach more sectors and expand the evidence base. Indeed, tackling child marriage through community empowerment models and access to education could have flow-on effects on vulnerability to forced labour. Regardless of the sector, women and girls are overwhelmingly at risk of sexual assault, so any forced labour intervention would still need to consider prevention activities and assistance for victims of sexual exploitation.

Recommendations

Drawing on findings from relevant evaluations in the PPD, we make the following recommendations:

Key recommendations for programme design

- *Rights-based awareness-raising should be inclusive and community-led* – training members of communities to deliver awareness-raising campaigns allows message delivery to be tailored to specific local contexts (see Joseph 2019; Obi, Bartolini, D'Haese 2019; Burns 2020). In at least one evaluation (Joseph 2019), this process led to a positive change in attitudes towards gender and social norms among the participants. These processes must also be inclusive of marginalised groups, such as migrant populations, to prevent exposing them to greater vulnerability (Burns 2020).
- *Tailor interventions specifically to the needs and stage of change of target group* – ensure that programmes are appropriate for adolescent girls, rather than erroneously treating this group as children (Chaudhuri, Majmuder 2014; ILO 2018). This also means interventions must be tailored according to assessments of the participants' stage of change (Wilson, Nochajski 2018; Rothman et al. 2019). Measuring change should also consider the length of the project; for example, Rothman et al. (2019) aimed to measure levels of hopelessness, but found that the measure of hope used by the study either did not adequately identify change or that changes in levels of hopelessness would take longer to observe than the planned assessments at six and twelve months.

Key recommendations for evaluation design

- *Ensure programme objectives are clear and measurable* – many programme evaluators could not report across all objectives or outcomes due to issues with programme logic, where outcomes were often not mapped to indicators or activities. As a result, it was difficult to understand how objectives had been achieved: they were either too ambitious or not clearly linked by a theory of change. In the latter case, it was unclear how the activities implemented would achieve the outcomes or outputs identified. There is a clear need for more explicit and robust descriptions of programme logic in initial programme design.
- *Measurement and evaluation must be embedded within project development* – without this, the project development cycle is hindered, as programme design does not build on prior findings, while relevant data is not collected during implementation to ensure accurate measures of effectiveness or impact. In turn, this limits the quality of evaluations and the lessons that can be gleaned from them.

Conclusion

To date, evaluations of interventions tackling modern slavery and the exploitation of adolescent girls have largely focussed on programmes that prevent child marriage and support those in commercial sexual exploitation. Few evaluations have been conducted of programmes that tackle forced labour, and even fewer have focussed on the garment industry – despite the fact that women and girls account for 58 per cent of victims of forced labour. This reflects broader issues in the emphasis on sex trafficking in human trafficking research, to the exclusion of other forms of exploitation, and is a particular issue for women and girls. Labour exploitation in the garment and textiles industries is worthy of further scrutiny, as garments are the second-highest risk import in the G20, yet very little is known about what works to prevent the exploitation of adolescent girls in this sector. This represents a real gap in the literature and demonstrates the need for more robust evaluations of interventions to prevent forced labour. It could also indicate a gap in programmes available for adolescent girls in forced labour.

Some initial promising practices and recommendations are presented above, and more can be found in community empowerment and labour rights programmes. The effective prevention of forced labour requires a multi-faceted response that accounts for the myriad disadvantages and discrimination faced by adolescent girls. Such responses must also consider the need to prevent other forms of exploitation, such as commercial sexual exploitation and forced marriage. Further, labour rights in the industry have worsened in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, exposing vulnerable workers, including many adolescent girls, to greater risk of modern slavery. Interventions with robust evaluations are urgently required to understand what works at reducing vulnerability to modern slavery in this growing but relatively ignored sector. Until a collaborative and integrated approach is taken to disrupt the status quo of inequality and poor working conditions which are endemic in the sector, and until the approach is robustly evaluated, we will continue to fail on the promise of the SDGs to ensure that no-one, including no adolescent girl, is left behind.

Declaration of Conflict Interests

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