



Winnie Mutevu - Kenya

The organization that I work for is called “HAART Kenya”, and basically what HAART does is counter human trafficking and it is the only organization in Kenya that exclusively deals with human trafficking. And through our work we have been able to mainly measure prevention and create awareness, and also protection, so we are able assist victims of human trafficking.

From our statistics, 80% of the victims are between the age of 20 and 35 years old, and then 90% of them are from informal settlements, both adults and children. We have been able to have a project that is called “Arts to End Slavery”, and basically what we have been doing is to have artists volunteer to come up with art pieces and showcase them in galleries, to sell some and then the funds go to assisting victims of human trafficking. Looking at the people who come to the galleries, we have not able to reach out the young people who are in the informal settlements or in the rural areas.

So, trying to come up with project, we have been able to do something called “Magnetic Theatre”, where you go to informal settlements and just have an event, whereby you are going to draw masses around you in order to be able to have a conversation with them. So, basically, how it is going to work is that we are going to select groups that are existing, drama groups and dance groups, and also there are some poets. They come with pieces on human trafficking, and they just perform them randomly in the streets or inside the informal settlements. After they have performed them, they are going to have discussions with the participants who have come to see what is happening. As they perform, we also going to have volunteers, who are going to walk around and share pamphlets and flyers on what is human trafficking, where you are able to get information and assistance in case one is forced to be a victim of human trafficking.

So, we are going to target young people and also children who are in these groups and it is meant to run for one year. The first year is basically going to be a period where we recruit people who are going to be involved in the program, train them in what is human trafficking, and then get an art director and a choreographer who is going to train them to be professionals, and so they are going to have, at least, one performance per month, where they will be performing at the Magnetic Theatre events.

We are going to have a major event on 30 July, which is UN World Day Against Human Trafficking, and we are going to have a national event, where these groups that have been trained, are going to be able to perform and they are going to perform before stakeholders – both nationally within Kenya, and also international stakeholders are going to come in, and this is going to give them visibility. They are going to be able to get people who will want to work with them, who will give them jobs.

So, basically, with us working with them throughout the whole year, and also using social media to share the clips of what they are doing, and also sharing their contacts, it is going to be able to help them, somewhat, to get a have livelihood, because they are going to be paid to perform in events. And also with them working with professionals – the choreographer and art directors – they are going to gain skills, which currently they do not have, given that they are coming from informal settlements.

So, we hope that through this we are going to be able to reduce their vulnerability to human trafficking and also, given that we are using people coming from informal settlements, they are going to become change agents in their areas. Also during the events, we are going to involve stakeholders from their communities; so we are going to get NGOs from the areas, we are going to get the women and men that come from that area to be involved in the whole program.

One challenge that we are bound to face in this whole process is that next year we are going to have our national elections, so we are going to have campaigns ongoing and everything else. For us to have events in the streets and just randomly anywhere else, you are bound to be mistaken as a political party or something else. So, how are we going to mitigate that? We are going to be involving and running the community a month before. We are going to share out posters, we are going to have them on the whole program and we are going to be able to get the people from the area with the ones that who are involved in planning, providing the equipment, and everything that is going to be required for the event. So this makes it easier for them to know what is happening and it is not going to be mistaken to be a political event.

Something else, when it comes to informal settlements, we have issues of security, whereby you stand losing your equipment or having gangs come and interfering in the whole program. And so we are going to get the young people from that area be those who are going to provide security during such events. Another thing would be, given that we are working with groups that are already existing, maybe a challenge of getting commitment,

them committing to the whole process. So what we are going to do is we are going to have them sign volunteer agreements, they are going to sign an MoU with the leadership of the groups saying they are going to be committed throughout the whole program.

Something that we are going to do is use the people that we have been able to meet in the art space, through "Arts to End Slavery" to mentor these young people. They are going to get mentorship, they are going to be able to meet people who have been able to go through what they are going through right now, for them to be exposed to what is out there when it comes to the art space and be able to put their talent to use to have a livelihood.

Basically, that is what we foresee ourselves doing, and the key or the main objective for this project is to create awareness on human trafficking, but to also improve the capacity of these artists or these groups that are in informal settlements, and the other thing is to create a network that is going to be able to work within those communities, so it is more or less them working together to be able to fight human trafficking and reduce the vulnerability of the people who are staying in that community.

Thank you very much.