



University of
Nottingham
Rights Lab

Helping to end global slavery

Rights Lab

nottingham.ac.uk/rights-lab



Rights Lab researchers and Survivor Alliance members Minh Dang and Valentine Nkoyo at the launch of the Rights Lab's new Post-Slavery Mental Health Managed Innovation Network.

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The historic possibility of ending slavery in our lifetime

A mural created by slavery survivors. The Rights Lab's commitment to ensuring that survivors have leadership roles is influencing antislavery policies.

Foreword from the Rights Lab Director

Ending slavery by 2030 is an ambitious goal. But in the Rights Lab, we believe it is achievable. And to help achieve this goal, we are working with a global community of policy-makers, civil society actors and businesses – a community with a shared vision of ending slavery in our lifetime. If you are part of this antislavery community, we want to work with you.

Some highlights from our work so far include our close partnership with the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, which has resulted in multiple joint reports; a multi-day series of presentations by the Rights Lab team at the United Nations (UN); the publication of prize-winning work mapping slavery from space; and our support for the survivor-led NGO Survivor Alliance, currently incubated within the Rights Lab.

We know that ending slavery will only happen if everyone works together. We work towards findings that can be useful for antislavery action beyond academia: for example, for the business community, through guidelines for different sectors based on the outputs of our supply chain specialists, and for civil society, through our provision of data showing where and why slavery is prevalent or our impact assessment of antislavery programmes.



We are committed to purposeful partnerships and to translating our research into recommendations, consultancy, briefings and advice that help to effect change.

By scaling up breakthroughs to become global research-led strategies, we can help to end slavery. We have the long-term support of the University through being part of its ambitious Beacons of Excellence programme, and I am proud that the University of Nottingham will play a key role in ending slavery. This will be a watershed moment – when the world finally rejects *the* great lie of history, that some people are sub-human, and embraces the great antislavery truth: that labour must not be forced and that people are not for sale.

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Professor Zoe Trodd.

Professor Zoe Trodd
Director of the Rights Lab

Find out more about what we do:
rightslab@nottingham.ac.uk
nottingham.ac.uk/rights-lab



There are **40.3 million**
people enslaved around
the world today

“We deliver applied research with value for governments, intergovernmental organisations, civil society and business. Our central goal is freedom from slavery and we seek a real-world impact for our work.”

Introduction to the Rights Lab

There are 40.3 million people enslaved around the world today. The global modern antislavery effort is nearly 20 years old and a commitment to end slavery by 2030 is part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (target 8.7). But we lack long-term, robust, evidence-based strategies for abolition.

We have therefore built the world's first large-scale research platform for ending slavery. We tackle a key challenge of global development and what the Prime Minister has called “the great human rights issue of our time.” The largest group of modern slavery scholars in the world, and home to the world's leading academic experts on modern slavery, the Rights Lab is underpinning antislavery with an advanced research agenda.

Our team of more than 100 academics on campus is answering four main questions:

1. **How many slaves exist in the world and where are they?**
2. **Why does slavery persist?**
3. **What works to end slavery?**
4. **What difference does freedom from slavery make to the world?**



Rights Lab Director, Research Director and Executive Director, Professors Zoe Trodd, Kevin Bales and Todd Landman

Each question forms a central Rights Lab programme, on Data, Survivors, Policy and Business, led by our four Associate Directors and staffed by senior and early-career scholars who work closely with our NGO, business, policy and slavery survivor partners around the world.

As a Lab, we are an experimental space. We bring diverse methods to bear on a critical problem, without adherence to disciplinary boundaries. We leverage the theories and methods from political science, law, sociology, history, geospatial science, computer science, corpus linguistics, and mental health, among numerous other disciplines, and mix methods, data, tools, and techniques into the best combination for solving a real-world problem.

As a Lab, we also take practical application as our main purpose. We have built our transdisciplinary approach upon a fusion of rigorous empirical research and advocacy. As our programmes unfold, we use their results to update what we call a Freedom Blueprint: a plan for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 – the end of slavery.

We update this roadmap as we make discoveries, test intervention techniques, and complete our evaluation processes. We hope it will offer a global plan for what everyone must do – individuals, communities, businesses, national governments, corporations, and intergovernmental organisations – to achieve a slavery-free world by 2030.

Find out how to work with us at
nottingham.ac.uk/rights-lab

The Rights Lab in numbers 2017/18

**95 Survivor
Alliance
members
globally**
after only
2 months

**Over
1.2 billion
audience**
reach for print,
online, broadcast
and media coverage

**515,700
twitter
impressions**
from @rightsbeacon
and counting



130 
**academic staff
across three campuses**
(UK, China, Malaysia)

£56m value of
grants submitted,
integrating partners from
the private and public sectors,
and civil society

4
**UK Government
Departments
trained**
in monitoring
and evaluation
approaches to
**modern
slavery
activity**

**200+ local, national and
international individuals**
or organisations in the
Rights Lab partner network



**70 articles or
books by team
members**
published or
submitted since
launch

**7 joint
reports**
with the
UK Independent
Anti-Slavery
Commissioner



12 addresses
to parliamentary
bodies or the UN
by the team

**8 evidence
briefings**
submitted to
Parliamentary
calls for
evidence



**4 Rights Lab
researchers**
included in the
top UK 100
Modern Slavery
Influencers

Testimonials

"A position of understanding will empower evidence-led action to improve prevention, justice and victim care. High quality research is therefore a crucial tool in the fight against this crime; to support its development. I have partnered with the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab to better understand the UK modern slavery research picture."

"One of my five key strategic priorities is to identify, promote and facilitate partnership working in the fight against modern slavery. To this end, I am delighted to be working with the University of Nottingham."

Kevin Hyland OBE,
the UK's First Independent Anti-Slavery
Commissioner (2015-2018)

"Walk Free Foundation and Nottingham share a deep commitment to human rights, innovation and the importance of data to driving social change. This partnership will enable us to look at modern slavery from new angles, whether through the use of geospatial mapping to identify slavery sites or economics to understand the true costs to society of this crime. Far from being an academic exercise, this is research to inform action."

"Thanks and gratitude to every one of the team who has worked so incredibly hard on the Government Responses data collection. Not only has the team been super capable, fast to learn and generally just 'getting it', they've also shown real commitment and dedication. It has been an absolute pleasure to have them on our team."

Fiona David,
Executive Director of Global Research,
Walk Free Foundation

"Cooperation between the Rights Lab and the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery is highly valuable and we greatly welcome the opportunity to exchange ideas and to join forces with the Rights Lab... the team is amazing!"

Satya Jennings,
Office of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights

"We are really excited about piloting this new computer programme to uncover slave labour. We worked closely with Dr Trautrimis and Dr Chesney to help develop it and have high hopes about what it can achieve. We're really stepping up a gear now to combat this horrific abuse and exploring all avenues to prevent it from happening in Nottinghamshire."

Detective Superintendent Austin Fuller,
Nottinghamshire Police

"We work in partnership with the Rights Lab in their ground-breaking efforts to eradicate modern slavery: we share a common ambition in this critical area of research and public policy, and Rights Lab team members are excellent ambassadors for this work."

Anthony May,
Chief Executive,
Nottinghamshire County Council

"The Rights Lab engagement was really helpful and interesting. Monitoring and evaluation is such a key part of a project management which we have to improve. Thank you very much, and it would be very useful to have similar sessions on a semi-regular basis. We are incredibly grateful."

**Participants in a Rights Lab training session
for modern slavery officials in the Home Office,
FCO, DFID and the Cabinet Office.**

The Data Programme – how many slaves are there in the world, and where are they?

“The Rights Lab’s Data Programme has changed the nature and quality of evidence available to policy makers and provided evidence for NGOs working on the ground in rescue activity.”

The challenge

In order to tackle modern slavery, we need to know how many people are enslaved and where they are. Robust measurement and analysis gives the antislavery movement credibility, confidence and the foundations from which to build effective action: governments need to be able to measure slavery prevalence in order to design and resource appropriate policy responses; an accurate understanding of the location and prevalence of slavery can help NGOs plan more effective rescue and support missions on the ground; businesses benefit from understanding slavery prevalence linked to particular commodities, or the risk of slavery in their supply chains. In short, data on slavery can help to shape better antislavery policy, NGO activity and business practice.

Our response

In the Rights Lab’s Data Programme, geographers, political scientists, sociologists, mathematicians and business systems specialists have made globally recognised advances in measuring the risk and prevalence of modern slavery. Stakeholders as various as major NGOs, national governments, the United Nations (UN), the Church of England and businesses confirm that data generated by the Rights Lab staff has been essential to their efforts.

The Data Programme has included the pioneering use of statistical methods to estimate and understand slavery prevalence and risk in the UK and around the world. This has provided governments and international bodies such as the UN, with the data they need for policy, legislation and advocacy.

The Data Programme’s Slavery from Space initiative adds a further level of complexity to this global prevalence estimation. In the world’s first use of geospatial observation to map and measure slavery, including new machine-learning techniques and citizen science, the team has uncovered sites and industries with high levels of slavery. NGOs now use this information to inform their interventions on the ground.



Professor Kevin Bales interviewing a former child slave during fieldwork in Bangladesh.

Combining statistical estimates with geospatial data has allowed the Lab to measure the economic value of slavery-free commerce. New data on the relationship between slavery and eco-systems has been able to show businesses the costs of using slave labour in their supply chains, and conversely, the benefits of using sustainable labour and resources. Demonstrating the slavery footprint on our environment, it has calculated for the first time the environmental costs of slavery and the environmental gains of ending it.

Next steps

Rights Lab Associate Director Dr Doreen Boyd says, “From this year, new partnerships with multinational data-led or finance-focussed companies will harness the value of big, open source data (including satellite data) for antislavery activity; policy-makers at the UN will use geospatial outputs to help them identify high slavery-prevalence industrial and agricultural activity; innovative combinations of data sets will model slavery occurrence in developing country contexts. The combined expertise and ingenuity of the data team is focussed on a single, albeit multi-faceted problem. No other grouping of scholars in the world has so many different disciplines all facing the same direction and combining their intellectual and disciplinary resources to address modern slavery.”

Find out about our latest activity:
nottingham.ac.uk/rights-lab

The Survivors Programme – why does slavery still exist?



“The Rights Lab’s Survivors Programme has ensured that slavery survivors’ perspectives are key to the antislavery evidence base. Partnering widely with survivors and NGOs, it is helping to make antislavery into a survivor-led movement for the first time.”

The challenge

If we understand why slavery exists and persists today, we will have a better chance of ending it. Key to understanding why slavery exists and persists are the ideas and perspectives of slavery survivors. To date, the NGO and policy communities have rarely sought input from former slaves on definitions, antislavery policies and programmes. This can lead to policy and practice which is top down and not fit for the actual experience of enslaved people and their recovery needs.

The response

In the Rights Lab Survivors Programme, political scientists, sociologists, health scientists, historians, philosophers, and scholars of law, area studies, and literature have put survivors’ voices at the heart of the antislavery movement. This has included the creation of the world’s first large-scale database of contemporary slave testimonies. When fused with our prevalence, geospatial and business data, these millions of words have revealed why slavery persists in particular hotspots around the world. We have shared patterns in the data with policy teams working to understand trafficking routes into the UK and with other major stakeholders.

The Survivors Programme includes an examination of forced marriage as a form of slavery, responding to the new estimate that there are more than 15 million people in forced marriage today. By focusing on survivor accounts of forced marriage, the team has been able to provide robust definitions of the phenomenon. Team members have now joined with partners in the UN for a major new report on slavery and forced marriage. We recently addressed delegates at the UN, hosted by the key global antislavery network Alliance 8.7, about the importance of survivors’ ideas to understanding and tackling slavery.

Integral to this programme has been the perspective of the Survivor Alliance, a new NGO incubated within the Rights Lab and directed by survivor-leader Minh Dang, a current Rights Lab PhD student.



Alison Gardner introduces a new national policy report at a joint conference with the UK Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner.

The Survivor Alliance unites and empowers survivors of modern slavery around the world and brings the ideas of survivors into policy and research.

Next steps

Rights Lab Associate Director Dr Andrea Nicholson says, “Our research is responding to gaps in knowledge, bringing survivor solutions to bear on current proposals for change and to the forefront of our recommendations. We deliver sustainable survivor-led approaches to the UK’s strategic response to modern slavery, publishing rich new empirical data, providing evidence in support of legislative developments, and preparing recommendations for local and national policy-makers on service interventions that can help to promote recovery. This year, we will be working with the business community to more fully integrate the voices and experiences of survivor leaders into their compliance work and employment practices; with health practitioners to more fully understand the mental and physical health and wellbeing needs of survivors over the long term; and with law enforcement to better understand approaches to intelligence-gathering. And we will be ensuring the wider work of the Rights Lab continues to place survivors at its heart.”

Find out about our latest activity:
nottingham.ac.uk/rights-lab

Our Leadership and Administration Team



Dr Alexander Trautrim,
Associate Director of the
Rights Lab: Business Programme



Minh Dang,
Rights Lab Director of the Survivor
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Sarah Kerr,
Rights Lab Head of Policy,
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Professor Zoe Trodd,
Rights Lab Director



Professor Todd Landman,
Rights Lab Executive Director



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Charlotte Lloyd,
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Some of our experts



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Rights Lab Assistant Professor
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Bethany Jackson,
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The Policy Programme – what works to tackle slavery?

“The Rights Lab’s Policy Programme has ensured that timely, accessible evidence forms the basis of legislation, programming, implementation and review. Partnering widely with policy-makers on briefings, training, advice and consultancy, it is bringing rigour to the policy-making process at the local, national and international levels.”



The challenge

Our aim of helping to end slavery by 2030 can only be delivered if policy is informed by a clear roadmap – what the Rights Lab calls the Freedom Blueprint. Without this blueprint, policy-making and legislation cannot be evidence-based, or draw upon practices which have been proven to be successful at all levels of anti-slavery activity – from slavery-free supply chains, to survivor care and local multi-agency partnership working.

Our response

In the Rights Lab Policy Programme, sociologists, political scientists, and scholars of education, law, and business, are showing how communities can become slavery-free and slavery-proof. Drawing on evidence from the Data and Survivors Programmes, it has become the go-to academic partner for national and international policy-makers seeking evidence-based antislavery strategies. Its many policy initiatives include seven joint reports with the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.

This Policy Programme includes a major examination of slavery as a local issue, lodged in our work to help make Nottingham the world’s first slavery-free city. The team is identifying the most effective types of policy in varying local contexts, with a transferable model that it is now scaling up nationally and internationally. This prize-winning work with city partners has supported one of the UK’s first city and county-wide antislavery taskforces, which brings together councils, the Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority, the Police & Crime Commissioner’s Office, the NHS, the Diocese, and the Salvation Army, as well as the Rights Lab.

The Policy Programme is home to a large-scale antislavery monitoring and evaluation (M&E) platform, which is demonstrating effective processes of antislavery intervention and helping our partners to develop evidence-based approaches. Our team members have provided slavery-specific M&E training to the Home Office, the Cabinet Office, the Department for International Development, and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, and we serve as the only academic presence on the Prime Minister’s Modern Slavery Task Force.



Professor Sir Bernard Silverman at the United Nations in July 2018, where he and other Rights Lab experts were invited to share their insights.

Our podcast series the Rights Track, our MA in Slavery and Liberation, and our Massive Open Online Course on Ending Slavery have been taken up in more than 150 countries by NGOs and policy partners.

Next steps

Rights Lab Associate Director Dr Alison Gardner says, “We specialise in creating academic research that is relevant to – and in dialogue with – front-line service delivery. We are lucky to have in our team experienced policy professionals who now work as academics, bringing practical experience to bear on the design and communication of our research. This year will see us develop our successful consultancy offer in monitoring and evaluation for modern slavery programmes, continue our work on migration and conflict zones as sites of slavery, and test the theory of change on creating slavery-free communities. We are exploring the attitudes of small and medium-sized business to modern slavery, and looking at how they can engage in sustainable change. Our findings will inform recommendations and briefings through a Modern Slavery Evidence & Analysis Unit. Answering questions posed directly by policy-makers, or anticipating potential shifts in the landscape of modern slavery will help us to inform more effective policy-making. This in turn will ultimately help us to reduce risk and prevalence, and to build resilience against modern slavery.”

Find out about our latest activity:
nottingham.ac.uk/rights-lab

The Business Programme – what difference does freedom make?

“The Rights Lab’s Business Programme has delivered intelligence to industry bodies that has improved implementation practice. Partnering widely with the business community, it is improving supply chain sustainability at scale in key sectors of the global economy.”

The challenge

Slavery exerts a disproportionate drag, inhibiting social and economic development for free people as well as the enslaved. The UK Government’s own 2018 analysis calculates the economic cost of modern slavery at between £3.3 and £4.3 billion. Ending slavery would mean a better world for everyone – what we call the Freedom Dividend.

Our response

In the Rights Lab’s Business Programme, business and law scholars, sociologists, political scientists, and computer scientists have shown the global benefits from ending slavery: dividends to social and gender equality, educational enhancement, peace, health, the environment, and to our economies.

Combining statistical estimates and geospatial observation by the Data team, testimonies by the Survivors team, and M&E data from the Policy team, this programme has shown the economic value of slavery-free production. The outcomes of its research help to make the business, as well as the ethical, case for slavery-free supply chains. Findings on the negative impact of slave labour on production costs and efficiencies has helped to engage businesses with antislavery practice. This research into slavery and decent work, with an extended analysis of slavery’s economics, has let us measure demand and supply for slave labour, demonstrate slavery’s impact on a country’s economy, and show the economic benefits of ending slavery for whole regions and countries.

At the heart of this programme is research into slavery in supply chains. Working in partnership with businesses on their risk assessment and response, we are detecting slavery in their supply chains and changing supply chain design in response. Team members have worked closely with Baroness Lola Young on her new bill about slavery and supply chains, also now welcoming Baroness Young as a Rights Lab honorary professor. We have given written and oral evidence to the environmental audit committee in Westminster about the hand car wash sector, and to a parliamentary panel exploring the potential inclusion of public sector bodies in the Modern Slavery Act’s reporting requirements.



Rights Lab honorary professor Baroness Young with Alexander Trautrim.

Our guide to implementing antislavery practice in procurement has been adopted by over 3,500 construction companies and has become the gold standard for other industries. Team members have given evidence to the Director of Labour Market Enforcement, work with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe on their own procurement in field missions, advise the Modern Slavery Unit of the Home Office on supply chains, serve on the Fashion Supply Chains Round Table in the House of Lords, and participate in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development human rights due diligence forum.

Next steps

Rights Lab Associate Director Dr Alexander Trautrim says, “The UK’s Modern Slavery Act has been a game changer in terms of how businesses think about, plan for, and evaluate the transparency of their supply chains. This year we will be building on the work we have done in the construction sector, hand car wash sector, and care sector, to pilot a ‘commodities slavery index’ with a leading fund manager. Our experience this year has been that a lot of companies want to excel rather than just comply. They are asking ‘what else can we do’ rather than ‘what do we have to do?’”

Find out about our latest activity:
nottingham.ac.uk/rights-lab



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Discover more about our world-class research

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