

CLINTON'S STORY

In Uganda, human trafficking has been identified as a key threat, with research suggesting that Uganda is a source, transit and destination for men, women and children. The Salvation Army in Uganda is running a project focused on raising awareness, strengthening community capacity and supporting survivors of human trafficking.

Clinton is chairman of one of the young people's groups. He became involved in the project after The Salvation Army supported him to return home having been trafficked to Kenya. The group sessions involve discussions about human trafficking, how to spot the signs and keep themselves and one another safe. He shared his story:



'In 2020, a friend told me he had a connection and could get me a job in Kenya. The next day I crossed the river border into Kenya and started working on a construction site. The work involved offloading cement from a lorry and carrying it to the site. It was hard work and at the end of the day we would get paid 150 Kenyan shillings (KSH).

I stayed with some of my co-workers. We used the little money we received to pay rent. One very hot day, we went to buy some cold water and the manager immediately came and asked why we were not working. He chased us away, and whilst I was running I fell to the floor. I touched my lip and saw blood and realised that I had lost one of my teeth. We struggled from then on. It was hard to find enough money to buy food to eat and pay rent.

One day I met a man in town who was seeking someone to look after the cattle at his home. I quickly accepted the job.

He said I would receive three meals each day and 5,000KSH per month. However, later he told me I should be preparing my own food and paying 3,000KSH in rent. He made a note of the food I ate, and at the end of the month gave me only 100KSH. He said I owed him.

Over time I thought of going home, but I had no transport, and my employer had taken my



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phone. I often thought to myself, "I wish I had stayed home, and I wish I had a way to get home."

One day I was boiling water to prepare lunch, and my boss told me to come to him. I replied that I was making lunch and would be on my way. As I was leaving, I met him at the door and he pushed me back into the room. I told him I was on my way. In response he slapped me and said I was disrespectful. He grabbed the boiling water and poured it on my shoulder and hand.

I went to the neighbours and used their phone to call my parents. I told them I was in pain and needed help. They said they had no money to send, but they would see what they could do.

My parents asked their pastor for help and managed to arrange transport for me back to Uganda. When I reached home, I learnt that the money had come from The Salvation Army anti-trafficking project. When the staff visited me, they saw that I was seriously injured. They took me to hospital and supported my recovery.

As I continued in my recovery, I joined the project and have learnt more about human trafficking.'

Clinton and his friends, who play football together, have formed a savings group with Clinton being elected chairman.

'Together, we save money and can borrow from the treasury to boost our business, or to help if we have issues.



We are also supported by a champion. He mobilises us and teaches us a lot. We now look out for our friends, and if we hear that anyone is looking to cross the border for work, we speak up. This group has helped me and my friends. I realise how dangerous human trafficking is in my community so I keep talking to my friends about it.'

Football continues to be an important part of the group.



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'After we meet, we always get together to play football. This means we avoid the things in the community that could get us into trouble. We have no time for this because after football we just go home, shower and rest.

Alongside football we continue saving together and decide together how to use the money in the treasury. Recently we decided to grow spinach and sell it at the market. This way each of us in the group can get a little money. We take some of the profits for the treasury so this pot grows. Then if one of us has a challenge, we can use a bit of the money to help solve their problem.

If we have any issue, we can talk to the group. We support one another as friends here.'

The story of human trafficking does not end when a person returns home. For survivors, the journey of recovery continues. This is why follow-up care and counselling are essential parts of the project. Clinton's story is a great example of this and his enthusiasm to support others is inspiring.

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