MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN RIGHTS | POLICY & EVIDENCE CENTRE
Led by the Bingham Centre

Methodological Annex: Promising practices in the engagement of people with lived experience to address modern slavery and human trafficking

October 2022

Background and rationale

This research addressed growing interest from UK domestic and international facing policymakers in ethical, equitable and effective practices of survivor engagement. It was commissioned by the UK FCDO following the findings and recommendations of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) review into The UK's approach to tackling modern slavery through the aid programme and took place between February-June 2022.

Due to the commissioned nature of the research, responding to a timetable set by the needs of policymakers, this study was designed to be systematic but rapid in its approach to gathering, sifting and analysing evidence. It was devised to inform both UK-based policymaking processes and country-based programme design and delivery led by Heads of Mission (HOMs) and Ambassadors in contexts worldwide. The ICAI report recognized that the existing evidence base and analysis of survivor engagement initiatives is limited in both quantity and quality in the UK context. It was therefore expected that relevant material would be scattered across academic and grey literature, evaluative reports and toolkits in a range of disciplines, and that the search would need to be worldwide. This project was therefore designed to systematically gather information about promising practices from the extant evidence base and to consult with relevant practitioners – including those with lived experience – to produce new evidence in this area.

Summary of methods

i. Streams of Work

The findings of this study have been drawn from data gathered through three streams of work:

- **A rapid (4 month) desk-based evidence review** that identified 27 relevant peer-reviewed studies, theoretical papers or project evaluations that offered evidence of promising practice in active involvement of people with lived experience in policy and programming on modern slavery and human trafficking. This subset was selected from a larger body of over 550 sources that mentioned survivors of human trafficking in relation to policy and programming but did not have sufficient and clear focus on active involvement of people with lived experience in these activities.

In addition, a further 32 sources of evidence (in the form of toolkits, handbooks, programme brochures, event summaries, infographics, concept notes, studies from cognate areas of practice and others) informed the writing of this review. Though these did not offer specific case studies, they provided frameworks, recommendations, reflections and other insights to inform good practice and principles for engagement of people with lived experience of exploitation and abuse.

- **Interviews carried out by international experts with a range of stakeholders.** Six consultants were recruited to join the project, each possessing relevant expertise in survivor-leadership and experience of anti-trafficking policy and programming. The team comprised five individual experts and a survivor-led organisation. We intentionally created a team that valued a diversity of expertise in relation to anti-human trafficking work across a range of sectors. Our consulting survivor-led organisation used a mentorship model to deliver this work. It focused on meaningful inclusion of upcoming survivor-leaders in practice creating opportunities for capacity-building whilst actively earning a living. This approach enabled a small team of survivor leaders with mixed levels of experience in conducting research and a keen interest in developing those competencies to work together with more experienced colleagues in gathering and analysing data and writing up final project outputs. Our entire consultant team helped to co-design and deliver the research, gathering new evidence on existing promising practice in engagement of people with lived experience via semi-structured interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders in the following regions: East and West Africa, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), North America, Europe, South, East and South-East Asia.

- **Wider engagement including a global call for evidence.** Via this strand of work 20 key stakeholders both in the UK and broader international contexts were enabled to share evidence and learning from existing practice either via submitting evidence to the global call featured on the website of the Modern Slavery PEC, or in conversation and correspondence with the project team.

This study underwent a full ethical review by the Histories, Languages and Cultures Research Ethics Committee at the University of Liverpool (reference 11132).

ii. Ethical approaches

Each of the streams of work that constitute this study have been conducted in partnership with or informed by people with lived experience and survivor-led NGOs from a variety of global regions. The recruitment of a team of six Consultants, international experts who worked together with us on the project, enabled the creation of a space for continuous, meaningful engagement with concerned stakeholders including those with lived experience.

The focus of this study was on consulting with experts and professionals – including those with lived experience – about their views on how to effectively engage people with lived experience in policy and programming to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking. It did not ask interviewed stakeholders to discuss or disclose personal experiences of trauma. Nevertheless, the ethical review process at the University of Liverpool was helpful in developing robust project protocols and policies around safeguarding, confidentiality, data collection and storage. Local approval was not obtained separately for each individual country involved. This was because of the difficulty in

identifying relevant ethical committees to conduct reviews for projects outside of the public health sector in many global contexts. It is notable that we found that conducting routine ethical reviews before engaging with stakeholders was lacking in the context of international development around projects, policy and programming including evaluation.

We addressed this issue of context-relevant ethical assessment in collaboration with our consultant team who worked with us to develop context-sensitive protocols and policies. With our consultant team, we co-designed and finalised all research instruments (including consent forms, interview guide and participant information sheet) used in our study and also invited each to adapt these in practice to be relevant in the contexts where they would be gathering data. This team were also involved in the analysis and synthesis of interview data gathered: coding, offering reflections, sharing findings at each stage, as well as authoring individual regional reports. At each stage guidance documents, feedback and 1-2-1 support were offered by the academic team, alongside opportunities to discuss and troubleshoot any issues at team meetings involving all consultants, to ensure that all team members had support and access to the necessary technical tools needed to undertake this work.

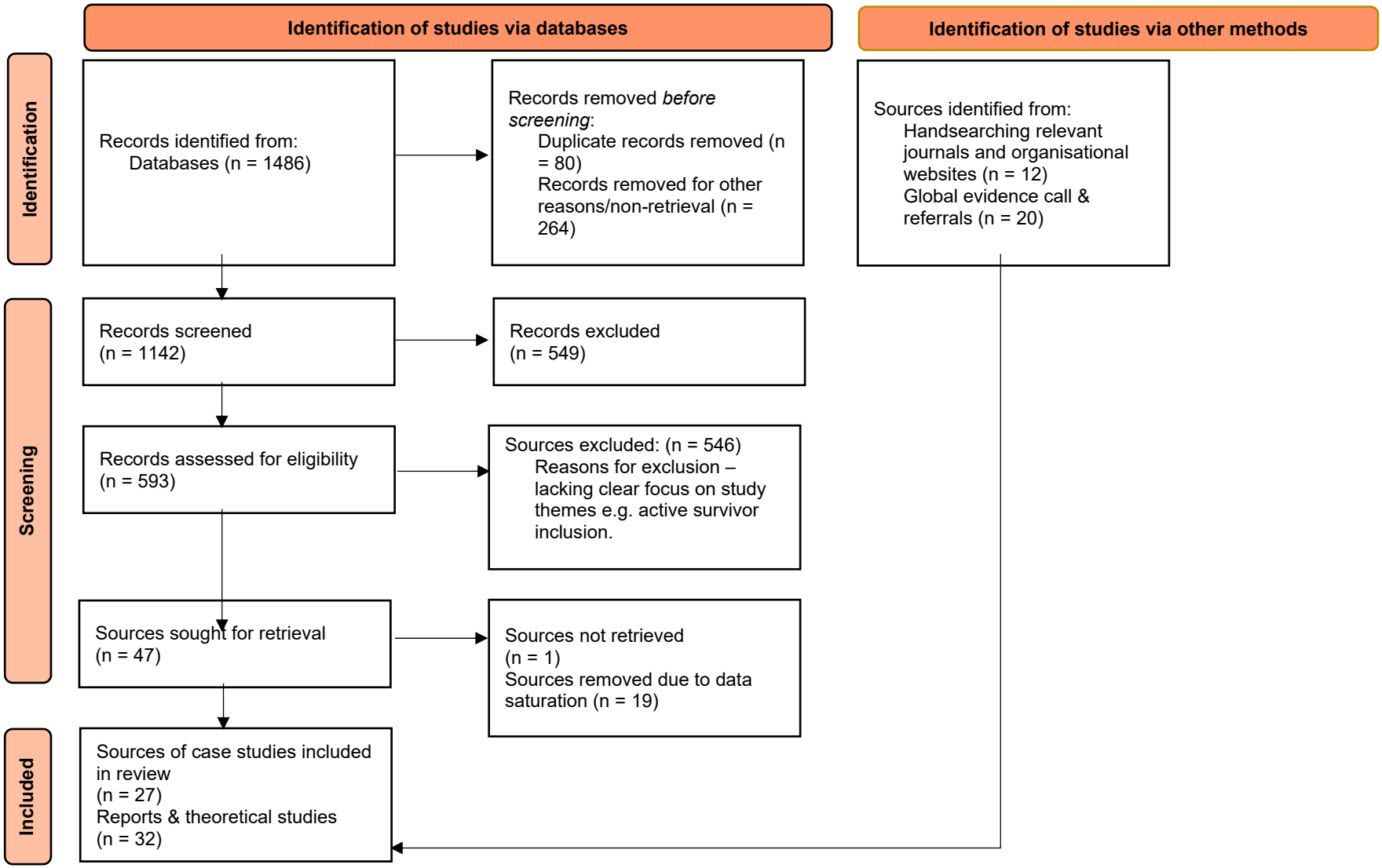
Results

This methodological annex accompanies the report: A Review of Promising Practices in the Engagement of People with Lived Experience to Address Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. The full report can be accessed on the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (the Modern Slavery PEC) website at https://modernslaverypec.org/resources/best-practice-engagement-lived-experience.

The PRISMA diagram below indicates the selection process used to identify studies and other sources for inclusion in this review. It is followed by a full bibliography for the review.

Please contact the authors for further details about the methods employed in this study.

PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for systematic reviews



From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. BMJ 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71. For more information, visit: http://www.prisma-statement.org/

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The Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre is funded and actively supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), from the Strategic Priorities Fund.