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# Formative Research on Child Trafficking in Nepal

## Research Partner

- The Asia Foundation
- New ERA
- Shakti Samuha

## Research Methodology

- Qualitative
- Quantitative
- Participatory

In Nepal, child trafficking and child labor are interconnected and often linked to poverty, illiteracy, harmful cultural practices, gender-based violence, weak legislative mechanisms, biased registration processes, and an unregulated border with India.

The forced labor practices in the adult entertainment sector (AES), brick kilns, garment and carpet manufacturing, and domestic work are major contributing factors to child trafficking in the country. At the same time, cross-border child trafficking persists due to the porous and unregulated Indo-Nepal border and cross-border familial ties facilitating informal movements.

While there have been efforts at research and interventions to combat child trafficking in Nepal, a critical evidence-to-practice gap persists, which must be addressed to gain sustainable results. Nepal's legal framework on trafficking falls short in criminalizing all forms of trafficking, especially in the unregulated AES sector. It also lacks effective implementation enabling the emergence of new forms of child trafficking and exploitation in Nepal.

## Evidence for Effective Intervention

The 'Formative Research on Child Trafficking' project aims to generate data and evidence on child trafficking in Nepal that will inform the design of effective, culturally appropriate, and responsive programmatic interventions. The research will employ qualitative and quantitative approaches to define the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the target population. It will also explore systemic influences, cultural norms, and power dynamics that deter efforts to combat child trafficking. To garner contextual insight into the root causes of child trafficking in the targeted sectors, the research activities will provide space for diverse voices. Following the survivor-centric and trauma-informed principle, it will ensure participation of adult survivors of child trafficking in the target sectors, family members of child trafficking victims, community leaders, and social workers. This is also key to ensuring the inclusion of critical perspectives from populations directly impacted by child trafficking. Simultaneously, The Asia Foundation and its partners - New ERA and Shakti Samuha - will strengthen coordination and network with relevant government and sectoral stakeholders. In addition, the research will also provide insights into the prospective Child Protection Compact (CPC) set to be jointly implemented by the United States (US) and Nepal, targeting child sex trafficking and forced child labor issues in the country. The research is supported by the US Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

- **17 percent of AES workers were minors, and 62 percent entered the industry as children.** ([The Freedom Fund, 2019](#))
- **10 percent of the workforce in brick kilns are children.** ([International Labour Organization, 2021](#))
- **1.1 million child laborers are in Nepal.** ([Nepal Labour Force Survey, 2017/18](#))
- **1.63 percent of the workforce in the garment industry are children.** ([World Vision, 2021](#))

## Targeted Dissemination

The research will generate knowledge products to increase awareness, advocacy, collaboration, and potential policy discourse on addressing child trafficking and child labor in Nepal. It will follow a comprehensive dissemination strategy to reach key stakeholders, enabling them to better utilize the research findings and recommendations for informing future interventions. This initiative will include the publication of smaller policy or issue briefs focused on specific themes, an executive summary of the research findings, and infographics in local languages, as well as convenings at local, provincial, and national levels with government and non-government stakeholders.