



Poverty & Sex Trafficking

Millions of individuals wake up every day unsure of where their next meal will come from. This kind of desperation creates vulnerability—vulnerability that creates opportunity for exploitation.

Poverty—and the vulnerability it creates—is one of the most significant drivers of human trafficking. **When we see a rise in poverty, we see a rise in trafficking.**

What defines poverty, anyway?

Extreme poverty is defined as living off of less than \$1.90 a day. It is estimated that over 700 million people* on the planet fall into this category (*World Bank). When someone is living in poverty, meeting their basic human needs is a daily struggle. Desperate to survive, they become vulnerable to exploitation.

The Cycle of Poverty and Exploitation:

Traffickers target poor and marginalized communities, offering people false jobs with illegitimate promises to improve their circumstances. The cycle of poverty and exploitation looks like:

- People are living below the poverty line. With no money and few options, they are desperate to meet their basic needs.
- Traffickers prey on desperate people, offering false jobs and empty promises. Lacking better options, desperate people say yes to risky situations to provide for their family.
- Once they have said yes, traffickers force people to engage in sex or labor trafficking. People are never reimbursed for their “work,” resulting in a continuation of poverty.

This cycle can continue for generations.

