Across the United States and around the world, 2020 was anything but business as usual. The ever-present COVID-19 pandemic affected the sex trafficking industry around the world. It caused vulnerability to rise like never before. But Rescue:Freedom’s global impact was also on the rise. During these unprecedented times, abolitionists helped rescue more victims, prevent more sex trafficking, restore more lives, and empower more survivors.

“This is one of the hardest times in human history, human trafficking could have flourished, but freedom and generosity prevailed,” said a Team Freedom member in Los Angeles, California.

THE RUNDOWN ON RESCUE: FREEDOM’S GLOBAL IMPACT IN 2020:

- 769 women and children were set free.
- 1,961 people received life-changing holistic care.
- 1,208 women and children were empowered through vocational training and education.
- 183.335 survivors, victims, and at-risk individuals were impacted through restoration, prevention, outreach, and intervention programs.
- Local Partners launched 19 new projects to meet crucial needs during the global pandemic.
- Team Freedom saw the largest jump ever—from 265 to 434 members.
- Freedom Fighters broke records with over 250 individuals raising $475,000.
- Rescue:Freedom virtually hosted its 9th annual Freedom Dinner and together we raised $529,415.23 to set people free.

LETTER FROM RESCUE: FREEDOM CEO AND PRESIDENT, JEREMY VALLERAND

What a year, 2020! Just writing that number makes me feel like I need to pause for a deep breath. Breathe in. And exhale. There are so many words that come to mind when I think about 2020. But perhaps the most encompassing word is “unprecedented.” It seemed that every month of 2020 brought something that was “unprecedented.” Britain’s exit from the EU was unprecedented. The United States declared unprecedented air “without previous instance; never before known or experienced.” That sounds about right.

As I look back on the year, I can’t help but feel a sense of gratitude and pride for the way our team and our community navigated a season of incredible adversity and opportunity. As you may recall, when the world first realized how serious COVID-19 was, almost everything shut down overnight. Travel stopped, borders were closed, and strict quarantines were enforced around the world. Red-light districts came to a screeching halt. Sex tourism stopped. We saw an unprecedented opportunity to intervene. At the time it felt like a massive fork in the road. The stock market had experienced its biggest single-day drop since the Great Depression. Nobody knew what was going to happen next. Several world-leading experts told nonprofit organizations to slash their budgets and scale back programs. And yet, we felt compelled to act. We took bold action to take advantage of the opportunity where we could, but instead of scaling back programs, we decided to accelerate. We asked our community to join us in taking action, and the response and impact were incredible. In the first 14 weeks of COVID, we funded 19 programs in 15 countries.

As you read this report and celebrate the impact, the growth, and the lives changed in 2020, remember that this was all possible because of your generosity and commitment. In the face of adversity, when we had every excuse to scale back and hunker down, you leaned in. Together, we made 2020 our biggest year ever. We’re grateful for all of you who prayed, gave, and acted. Thank you for helping us reframe this past year, and when I speak for the survivors I’ve met in your face. Thank you for fighting for us, the victims of our own families, businesses, health, and well-being.

Thank you for letting hope triumph over fear. Thank you for continuing to dream with us about a world without slavery. And hopefully a world without pandemics too.

Onward,

Jeremy Vallerand, CEO & President
In Nepal, a young survivor now abolitionist is studying law and empowering other survivors to testify against their traffickers in court.

Binsa* spent most of her childhood in and out of brothels. She spent such a significant amount of time in exploitation that on the day of her rescue—on the way to the safe house—she asked, “Which brothel are you taking us to now?”

She was only a child sold for profit.

When she returned to her hometown in Nepal, one of the security men on the flight accompanying her rescue told our Local Partner to “pay attention to Binsa, she has the potential to be someone important.”

We noticed she was a fighter, a great student, and a person of integrity.

At our Local Partner’s safe house, we gifted her a teddy bear and learned that during her trafficking process, she had lost a teddy bear she loved. She took the gift as a symbol of restoration. Her life was becoming hers again.

She decided to protect others and started to learn about the most effective ways to help young women like her. She began calling other girls in India, encouraging them to leave exploitation and sharing that they would find a house, family, and a future at the safe house.

She began bravely rescuing other girls who had been trafficked like her.

Recently, she became passionate about studying law. She is now a law student and accompanies survivors to their court hearings to speak out against traffickers in the community.

From our Local Partner: “We know by her fierceness that the traffickers are already in trouble as she is coming hard against them. She is a fierce person, full of kindness too, caring, and genuinely loves people. We celebrate as we see her fate overturned and instead of being a victim, she became a protector.”

*Name has been changed to protect survivor.

SURVIVOR TESTIFIES AGAINST TRAFFICKER, STUDIES LAW TO EMPOWER OTHERS

AFTERCARE:

These programs provide services that promote healing and transformation for those who are no longer involved in commercial sexual exploitation or have been moved from vulnerable and high-risk situations.

HOPE AND HEALING, THOUSANDS RECEIVE CARE

Total served in non-residential aftercare: 1,086

Adults: 813

Children: 273

Total served in residential aftercare: 875

Adults: 344

Children: 531

In 2020, we had 49 operating safe homes in our network.
INTERVENTION: Structured or consistent programs, initiatives, or services designed to address the physical, social, emotional, or spiritual needs existing in the sex trade. The purpose of these intervention programs is to provide opportunities and avenues to take steps towards ending the sex trade and eventually receive services.

**Total involved in intervention programs: 1,236**

In 2020, intervention services shifted to virtual with things like therapy via phone, classes through Facebook Live, or offering socially distanced outdoor vocational training.

**ASK AN EXPERT:**

Q & A with Rescue:Freedom Program Manager, Meg Ammons

Tell us a bit about yourself:
Meg, my name is Meg and I am the Programs Manager at Rescue:Freedom International. I've been with Rescue:Freedom for about two and half years and I love the pleasure of working with our Local Partner network to ensure that the impact, advance for their projects and growth, and share their stories with donors and child-saving orgs around the world. One of my favorite things to do is talk with our Local Partners to dive into the local circumstances to understand the challenges they face and how our resources can help.

**What inspired you to work with Rescue:Freedom?**

My inspiration comes from the strength, determination, and hope I've seen in survivors. I’ve been inspired by stories of resilience and courage in the face of unimaginable adversity. Seeing the impact of our work and the transformation it brings to survivors’ lives is what truly motivates me.

**What stands out to you about Rescue:Freedom’s work in 2020?**

More than ever, we invested in Local Partner care and coaching in early 2020, because of the pandemic. Our Local Partners. They dug deep, innovated, stepped up, and served more people than ever. Above all, we were able to walk alongside the survivors who are new to our aftercare programs. Many moved in to virtual outreach through social media and text messages. Others moved intervention, such as becoming a victim herself.

**What are some of your favorite stories from Rescue:Freedom’s work in 2020?**

One of my favorite stories is from a Local Partner in Indonesia. A five-year-old girl is now in school and far away from the vulnerability of the sex trade, thanks to our Local Partner’s intervention.

**INTERVENTION:** A coordinated effort to connect with those who are actively being exploited to build rapport, offer resources, education, support, and a pathway to a new life of freedom. Outreach not only connects with those in the sex trade to provide services but is also a way for Local Partners to better understand what causes sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation in their communities.

Despite COVID-19, outreach efforts continued, some in person and a lot through new technology. In Myanmar, our Local Partner utilized an artificial intelligence chatbot to increase trafficking reporting and victim identification. They partnered with Myanmar’s leading tech company in the development of online content and communication tools to create an integrated set of technologies to disrupt the purchase and sale of trafficked women and girls. The mobile messaging program consists of three pillars:

**VISITOR OUTREACH:**
Finding potential victims online and building relationships through online platforms.

**VIRTUAL NeIGHBORHOOD Watch:**
Provides operator trafficking information and victim notification directly to known traffickers operating in the area, as well as to an operator, and a platform for reporting suspicious activity.

**Reporting:**
The chatbot will report illegal activity and trafficking activities directly to our team for thorough investigation and report to the police.

Across our network, human traffickers took through Facebook and Private Directs.

**IN SCHOOL AND OUT OF THE BROTHEL**
In India, a five-year-old girl is now in school and far away from the vulnerability of the sex trade, thanks to our Local Partner’s intervention.

**IN 2020:**

Outreach numbers:

| 2020, 26,547 people impacted through outreach | 150% increase from 2019 |

**Total involved in intervention programs:**

1,236

In 2020, intervention services shifted to virtual with things like therapy via phone, classes through Facebook Live, or offering socially distanced outdoor vocational training.

**Where is Rescue:Freedom headed in 2021?**

We have so many dreams for 2021 here at Rescue:Freedom! We’ve expanded into new regions, expanded our programs and infrastructure, and continued our work to meet the needs of victims and survivors. 2021 will be a year of momentum, of reaching more, and serving more than ever before. 2021 will be a year of expansion, of growth, and of reaching more and serving more than ever before.

**Why is Team Freedom an effective way to contribute?**

Because Team Freedom members commit to investing in an organization to not only survive, but to collectively survive and endure something that is challenging for all of us. In 2020, we’ve expanded our chatbot pilot to 3 new countries: Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Indonesia. We’ve expanded our team to include more people with expertise in human trafficking.

**How can Team Freedom member make a difference?**

We are currently an organization with 305 different programs building the dialogue and common needs of prevention and responding to human trafficking. We know in this day and age that there are many important causes that people can contribute to, but as a Team Freedom member, you can be sure that your monthly commitment means you can make a difference in more countries and in more ways to make the greatest impact.
SURVIVOR EMPOWERMENT: Vocational training focuses on the development of skills and knowledge that assist survivors in succeeding within a particular industry or trade. This gives them the ability to support themselves financially without exploitation, making freedom sustainable.

Total who received vocational training: 895
Total who gained employment due to vocational training: 509

Vocational & Job Skills Training Examples in 2020:
- Jewelry making
- Marketing & photography
- Sewing
- Baking/cooking
- Entrepreneurship
- How to create a résumé

I AM A PROFESSIONAL. I AM A PHOTOGRAPHER.
Chunhua* and Lian* are survivors who have been trained in photography, Photoshop, and videography. During this year, they have grown tremendously in their skills, output, and confidence as creators. This past quarter, Lian was responsible for shooting a majority of the photography content for an important campaign. She also directed, shot, and edited the video for a holiday promotion. Chunhua shared that in the past she would be nervous about making a mistake or not doing a good job when taking photos or creating content for the Local Partner’s marketing. However, this year she had several moments where she thought to herself, “I am a professional. I am a photographer. I take beautiful photos. I am good at this.” It has been incredible and inspiring to see the way that Chunhua and Lian have taken on new skills they have learned with confidence, creativity, and passion.

NEVER TOO LATE FOR A NEW START
When the COVID-19 lockdown occurred in March 2020, this included places where women in the sex trade worked like bars, massage parlors, pubs, and bathhouses. As a result, thousands of women lost their jobs. While these women were being exploited, it was the only means they had to support themselves and their families. Auntie Lynn* was one of these women. At 60 years old, she had worked in the sex industry for close to 30 years. She decided that she would not go back, even when bars reopened. However, she didn’t know what to do instead. Our Local Partner had begun offering free baking classes to women in need during this time. They met Auntie Lynn and heard her story. She was able to participate in the course, learn recipes, and develop a relationship with our Local Partner. Now, she is working on a business plan to sell fried baked goods at a nearby market. Our Local Partner is excited to help provide resources for her on this new journey when COVID lockdown is lifted!

*Names have been changed to protect survivors.

EDUCATION
In 2020, brick-and-mortar schools shut down for various periods of time for the safety of children and the community as we began to understand COVID-19. Local Partners supported students’ education as they were able to. Some Local Partners were able to facilitate homeschooling with adaptations like online classes or additional laptops, while others had interrupted schooling for extended periods of time. As schools slowly reopen around the world, investment in education is more critical than ever.

Total receiving academic support: 695
LOCAL PARTNERS MAKE GLOBAL PROGRESS AMIDST PANDEMIC

In a year that uprooted so many of our lives, 2020 only served to fuel the needs of women and their families, as well as the people currently in prison. We worked to provide food, PPE, emotional support, safe living spaces, and education and we reached out to vulnerable people.

In just a few weeks, they were able to provide emergency food and assistance to vulnerable families. In the Philippines, our Local Partner provided scholarships for vulnerable teens to continue their education and pursue a better future despite conditions caused by COVID-19. Their communities were hit by COVID-19. Their communities have been closed, including the brothels and stores that the community had, such as managing businesses and stores that are actually fronts for sexual exploitation. With so many restrictions, the Local Partners knew that they had to be able to use alternative means for caring jobs, all for the women in their care. The Local Partners in the Philippines have developed a positive relationship with the government for future partnerships.

CORONAVIRUS CAUSES VULNERABILITY TO RISE, LOCAL PARTNERS RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

Since the start of this year, our network has grown by 45%. Meet our 29 Local Partners by visiting rescuefreedom.info/our-work.
ACCOUNTABLE PORNHUB HELD INDUSTRY FEATURE: 75% of its content. Pornhub following accusations that thepornographic website showed videos of rape on Pornhub following accusations that the
announced they would block their customers On December 10, 2020, Mastercard and Visa announced they would block their customers
momentum in the fight against trafficking. columnist Nicholas Kristof, created major
Last year, this potential pressure, coupled with
In 2020, you signed a petition to shut down
TO LEARN FREEDOM GIVEN THE
152,231 TOTAL WHO RECEIVED PREVENTION
EDUCATION: 145,039,828 TOTAL WHO RECEIVED AWARENESS
shift culture, join abolitionist movement
Culture + Awareness campaigns target broad audiences and offer an “entry-level” understanding of sex trafficking by raising awareness and promoting how to look out for people in precarious situations, identifying community support systems, etc.
TOTAL WHO RECEIVED PREVENTION EDUCATION: 152,231 TOTAL WHO RECEIVED AWARENESS EDUCATION: 145,415,428
2020 ANNUAL REPORT PREVENTION ADVOCACY AWARENESS YOU MAKE NEWS THAT’S FIT TO PRINT RESCUE:FREEDOM
SPOTTING THE SIGNS, ROMANIA CITIZENS INCREASES ABOLITIONISTS
In Romania, a Rescue:Freedom Local Partner was invited to partner with local government agencies to fight human trafficking.
Right now, the government of Romania does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so.
These efforts include identifying more trafficking victims, participating in twice as many international investigations, and conducting more awareness campaigns.
Together, the government and our Local Partner developed key behaviors to better identify victims of exploitation and trained all 47村庄 of their child protection agency
They also published updated statistics for future prevention campaigns.

2,099 SUPPORTED, SAFE, AND FREE FROM SEX INDUSTRY
Prevention programs focus on breaking cycles and addressing the systemic and root issues that increase vulnerabilities to trafficking specifically for women, young adults, or families in vulnerable circumstances. These programs are for people who have been trafficked but are at risk or vulnerable to trafficking and exploitations due to fundamental or social vulnerability.
TOTAL IN PREVENTION PROGRAMS: 2,493
When COVID-19 closures hit the city of Patricia, Emma* was reeling with what to do to support herself, along with her son, daughter-in-law, and two baby grandchildren. Both Emma and her young adult daughter-in-law became vulnerable to the surrounding sex industry, especially with family members in nightclub work. One of our Local Partners was able to stay in touch and help walk her through essential protocols for prosecuting organized crime.

YOU CREATE THE FUTURE. What headlines do you want to see in 2021? Make it a reality: join Team Freedom. Open your smartphone camera and hover over this:

RESCUE:FREEDOM CROSSWORD PUZZLE
Edited by Communications Manager Lindsey Mireaux
ACROSS
1. The number of people we save this year
2. In 2020, the number of countries Rescue:Freedom launched in
3. We TPP, sex and each member of our
4. Each year since the start of the 20th century
5. Government leaders/legislators
6. Teachers/school staff
7. Pastors/priests/church leaders
8. Medical professionals
9. Community members
10. Local Partner
11. An all-star basketball team
12. Social media
13. Action
14. Resource
15. Freedom
16. How Rescue:Freedom has empowered women in Thailand
17. How Rescue:Freedom is engaged in anti-trafficking work
18. How Rescue:Freedom is engaging in anti-trafficking work

DOWN
1. Title of a song by Kacey Musgraves
2. The number of countries Rescue:Freedom launched in 2020
3. The number of our supporters
4. Government leaders/legislators
5. Teachers/school staff
6. Pastors/priests/church leaders
7. Medical professionals
8. Medical professionals
9. Community members
10. Local Partner
11. An all-star basketball team
12. Social media
13. Action
14. Resource
15. Freedom
16. How Rescue:Freedom has empowered women in Thailand
17. How Rescue:Freedom is engaged in anti-trafficking work
18. How Rescue:Freedom is engaging in anti-trafficking work

Complete the crossword puzzle to receive a 30% discount code to our shop! (rescuefreedom.com)
In one of the most difficult years in recent human history, your generosity and passion for freedom made good news a reality. Thank you for boldly believing that there is still good to be done, even in the darkest of times.

In 2020, Team Freedom grew more than ever before, going from 265 to 434 members. This team is ready to see slavery end in our lifetime. The generosity and loyal support of Team Freedom allowed us to respond in real-time to crucial needs caused by the pandemic. The only question remains, will we make it to 500 members in 2021?

GOING VIRTUAL: ABLUTIONISTS GATHER FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The 9th annual Freedom Dinner was the celebration of hope we needed in 2020. In lieu of our normal in-person gathering, the event was held virtually and allowed us to gather with even more abolitionists from around the globe. 767 abolitionists, friends and donors, joined together for freedom all in real-time, together. Rescue:Freedom supporters made the event extra special by hosting events and family with their own event too. You passed our goal of $500,000, and together we raised a total of $529,415.23 to set people free.

FROM HIKING TO BAKING, YOU ARE ESSENTIAL

While 2020 threatened to put a stop to Freedom Fighters, this community of over 250 individuals stepped up to break records and raise over $475,000 to set women and children free. 2021 promises to be their biggest year yet.

I have sat in the room with Rescue:Freedom International and listened to the stories of those still trapped in this horrific enterprise. I have heard the stories of those still trapped in this horrific enterprise. I have sat in the discomfort of these stories and I have also felt the hope and passion of my friends on the front lines. I know these stories are true, I know the fight is real, and I know that when you are unsure what to do, you do the next right thing. That is when I joined this community.

-Kara V., Rescue:Freedom Fundraiser
AND
TOMORROW
WILL BE
EVEN
BRIGHTER