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Combatting human trafficking of people with disabilities for begging in Ethiopia

Population Council
COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FOR BEGGING IN ETHIOPIA

Population Council researchers and partners in Ethiopia are developing and conducting one of the first interventions to prevent, protect, and prosecute those perpetuating forced begging among people with disabilities.

Background

Forced begging is a form of human trafficking and there is a dearth of evidence on patterns, prevalence, risk factors, and approaches to combat the practice. People with disabilities (PWD), including children with disabilities, are especially vulnerable to the practice. They face significant barriers to education and livelihoods and are often living in poverty, lacking family and social support, and experiencing significant social stigma and discrimination.

In Ethiopia, there are an estimated 15 million PWD with 95% living in poverty. PWD in Ethiopia face significant risks of being compelled to turn to begging due to lack of family support; social stigma; isolation; lack of education/work opportunities; and lack of rehabilitative care. They also face elevated risks of being trafficked into begging. To address the issue in Ethiopia and expand the global knowledge base, Population Council researchers and partners, ECDD and ELDA, are conducting a 4-year project to understand the patterns, practices and forms of begging in Ethiopia and to utilize the evidence to develop evidence-based interventions that prevent and protect those at risk of, and prosecute those perpetuating, forced begging of PWD.

The Project

Initially Council researchers will use mixed-method research to determine the extent, nature, and patterns of forced begging among PWD in three of Ethiopia’s largest cities: Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, and Mekelle. From these research findings, the team will develop prevention, prosecution, and protection interventions in partnership with ECDD and ELDA as well as a survivors’ forums and the Council’s advisory committee in Ethiopia. Project partners will pilot the interventions over an 18- to 20-month period. The teams will undertake monitoring, evaluation, and distil lessons learned, in addition to tracking the cost of the interventions. The teams will disseminate findings from all stages of the project to ensure that human trafficking of PWD in the form of forced begging receives adequate attention and response at the global level.
**Ethical Conduct**

Examining and addressing forced begging of PWD requires sensitive, ethical, and nuanced research to build evidence-based solutions. All consortium partners will prioritize the safety, dignity and respect of all victims, survivors, participants, staff, and associates. Approval from independent ethical review boards at both the Population Council and within Ethiopia will be sought. The project uses a trauma-informed approach and will facilitate support services for those who experience trauma or discomfort due to participation in the research. In addition, a support system for interviewers and project staff to address burnout from working in anti-trafficking efforts will also be available.

**Impact**

Findings from this project will not only contribute to combatting forced begging of PWD at the local level, but also at the global level. This project will raise awareness of this severe rights violation, add to the global evidence base, and create momentum and solutions to address the problem. This project will ensure forced begging among PWD receives the attention it warrants from the global development community, the anti-trafficking field, and disability advocacy groups.

**References**


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