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INSIGHT SERIES

Global Estimates Methodology

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Measuring modern slavery is challenging. Imagine the sensitivities of trying to interview young women in Nigeria or Uganda about their experiences of forced marriage, given the recent histories of kidnapping young women and girls as “wives” for army commanders. Consider for a moment the practicalities of trying to estimate how many people are being subjected to State-imposed forced labour in the closed and secretive regime of North Korea.

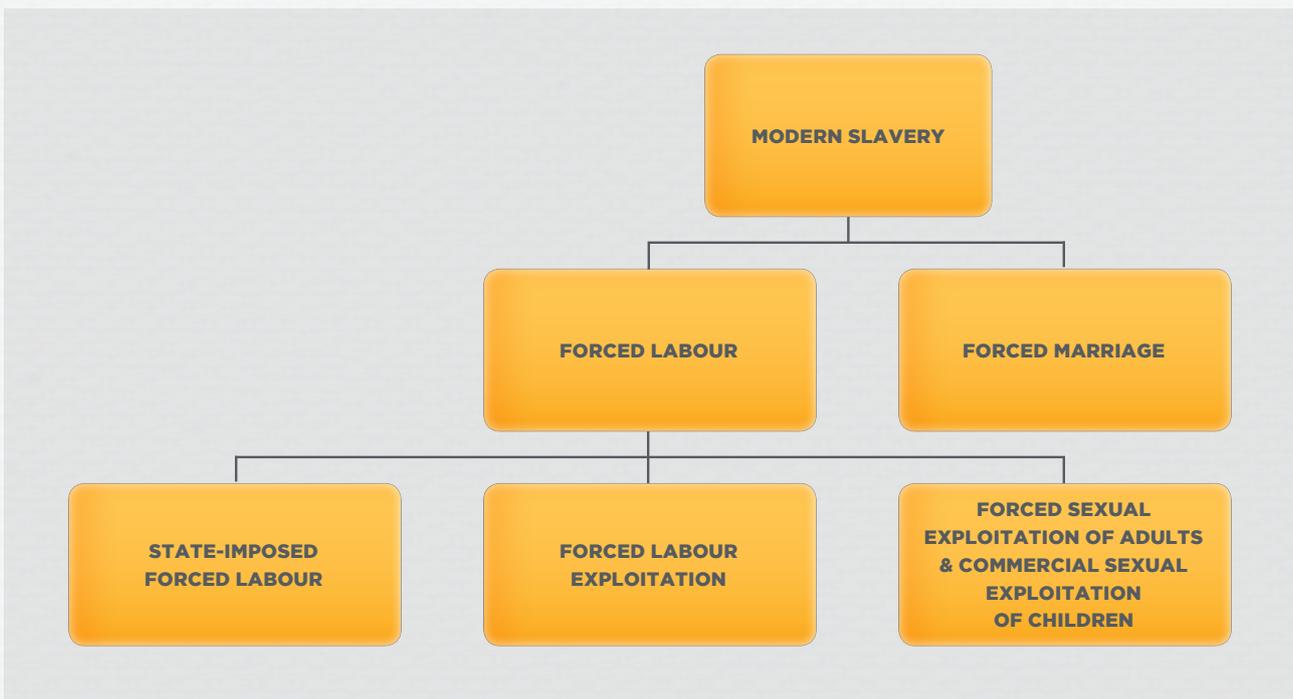
Preparing a Global Estimate of Modern Slavery is the challenge that the ILO and Walk Free Foundation, in partnership with the IOM, undertook when they first joined forces in 2015. It is no mean feat therefore, that the organisations were able in September 2017, to launch the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery which

reveals that an estimated 40.3 million people were victims of modern slavery in 2016. This estimate was released with an accompanying methods paper which can be found [here](#).

As you would expect, the methodology required to measure such a hidden and varied crime across the globe was comprised of several components.

What was measured?

The Global Estimate was comprised of two sub-estimates: an estimate of forced labour, and an estimate of forced marriage. The sub-estimate of forced labour was then further broken down into three categories: forced labour in the private economy, forced sexual exploitation and state-imposed forced labour.



How did we measure the Global Estimates?

As no single source provides data that is suitable for the measurement of all forms of modern slavery, a combined methodological approach was adopted. The core element of the methodology was the use of random sample, nationally representative household surveys.

The methods used to prepare the various components of the Global Estimates are described in separate sections below.

FORCED LABOUR (ADULTS) AND FORCED MARRIAGE

The estimates of forced labour in the private economy (excluding the sex industry) and forced marriage are derived from 54 nationally representative household surveys undertaken in 48 countries during the period 2014-2016. A total of 71,758 respondents were interviewed about their own experiences of forced labour and forced marriage, and those of their immediate family members. Interviewing is a personal process as you are literally in someone's home, asking them about their most personal experiences. Without doubt, the quality and training of interviewers is crucial to the success of the process. Only cases of modern slavery that occurred between 2012 and 2016 are included in these estimates, and all situations of forced labour are counted in the country where the exploitation took place. For example, if a woman interviewed in Indonesia reported that she was forced into domestic work in Oman during the reference period, that case would be attributed to Oman.

As survey countries are treated as a sample of the world, statistical adjustments (weights) are applied to ensure that the sample correctly represents the global population. These weights take into consideration both the likelihood of a country in a particular region being selected as a survey country, and the likelihood that a person residing in a survey country will be interviewed. Population statistics are used to adjust the sample so that it reflects the general population on gender, age, and, where reliable data are available, education or socioeconomic status.

FORCED SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND FORCED LABOUR (CHILDREN)

The surveys targeted people over the age of 15, so the information they provided on children was limited. Further, when the survey results were examined, it was clear there was insufficient data on sexual exploitation on which to base the estimate. Accordingly, alternative data and methods were used for the estimates of forced labour of children, and of sexual exploitation for both adults and children. The first step in constructing

these estimates was the examination of data on 30,000 victims of trafficking who had been assisted by IOM. This dataset was used to calculate ratios of the proportion of adults to children, and of 'sexual exploitation' cases to 'labour' cases in the data set. The second part in constructing these estimates was that these ratios were then applied to the estimates taken from the survey data, to arrive at an estimate of the number of children in forced labour; and an estimate of 'sexual exploitation'.

STATE-IMPOSED FORCED LABOUR

The surveys focus on the non-institutionalised population, meaning that people in prisons, labour camps or military facilities, and other institutional settings are not surveyed. Accordingly, the surveys were not suitable for estimating state imposed forced labour. Instead, the estimate of state-imposed forced labour was derived from validated secondary sources and a systematic review of comments from the ILO supervisory bodies regarding ILO Conventions on forced labour.

Estimates from these cases identified in 26 countries were aggregated to provide the total. No weighting or extrapolation was applied as the data used effectively formed a census of all cases. Data on cases of state imposed forced labour were added up, to provide a total.

LIMITATIONS

Like any research process the estimation process is subject to limitations. Some reflect gaps in data. For example, the existing data on child soldiers was not sufficiently robust to include in the Estimate so this form of forced labour was excluded from the coverage of the Estimates. Some limits reflect the extremely sensitive nature of the subject, such as commercial sexual exploitation of children. Every estimation process is subject to limitations and statisticians use margins of error, to calculate when the estimate is subject to an acceptable range of error. The margins of error for these Estimates have been calculated and are within an acceptable range.

International Labour Office (ILO) & Walk Free Foundation 2017, Methodology of the global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage. ILO. Available from: http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_586127/lang--en/index.htm