

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

BUILDING ON FOUNDATIONS



MEENAL AND
RISHI SACHDEV

Foundation

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Message from the Director

2020 was a year like no one has ever experienced. As a charity, not only were we faced with safeguarding our financial security in a way we had never imagined, our work became even more essential.

While increases in modern slavery offences were becoming the norm because of better awareness of the issue, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic raised different alarm bells. Many feared that the lockdowns resulting from the pandemic would push victims of modern slavery further into hiding, decreasing the chance of finding support. The crime already struggles with visibility; self-isolation and less interaction with others results in fewer incidents being spotted. Frontline services for survivors have been struggling to remain operational as staff try to work from home, while specialist accommodation services have had to close their doors to new arrivals due to fears of spreading COVID-19. The result is an increase in homelessness, which in turn leads to greater risk for modern slavery and exploitation.

As economic uncertainty turns to economic necessity, traffickers have seized the opportunity to prey on those who may be willing to accept riskier opportunities in order to feed their families. Likewise, businesses have been financially stretched and may rely on third party agencies to help with filling their employment needs; unscrupulous organisations have been taking advantage of these opportunities.

We are experiencing greater vulnerability and greater exploitation and abuse. And despite the uncertainty of the times, we have tried to help where we can. Working with Shiva Hotels, we pulled together a consortium of hotels to provide safe accommodation to victims of modern slavery and domestic violence when the traditional routes were overloaded. We have tried to stay nimble to respond to the needs of those we try to serve. As we look ahead to the coming year, we are determined to make even more difference by exploring the root causes of vulnerability, abuse and exploitation while identifying opportunities to address them. We have remained positive and see better outcomes for survivors on the horizon. Any impact we've had over the past year is down to our staff and volunteers on the ground, our trustees, our donors and our supporters. Our heartfelt thank you to all of you.



Meenal Sachdev
Co-founder and Director

Who we are

Vision

An end to human exploitation of all forms.

Mission

To foster collaboration between and increase the capacity of organisations working to prevent exploitation and support survivors.

Values



Survivor-centred



Collaborative



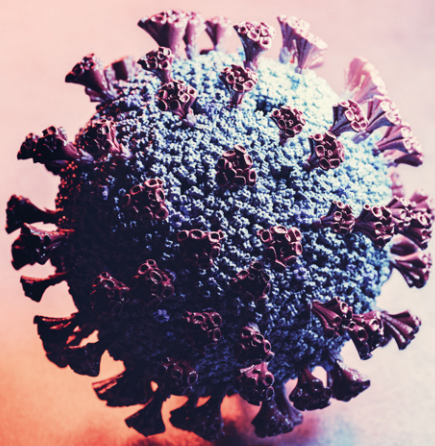
Rights-based



Evidence-based



Gender perspective



Rebuilding

The impact of COVID-19 on MRS Foundation and our activities has been noteworthy. We are entirely funded by the hospitality sector, which unfortunately was hit hard by the pandemic. With the help of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, we were able to retain our team until we could ensure a sustainable return to work. Projects were temporarily placed on hold, however after four months, the team was able to return to work on a part-time basis. We are in the process of diversifying our income to safeguard our staff and our projects for the long-term.



Why we do what we do

There are an estimated 40.3 million¹ people in modern slavery globally and an estimated 100,000 in the UK alone².

The UK made a landmark step by creating the 2015 Modern Slavery Act, however we have seen little impact since it came into force.

In the hospitality sector, for example, we have seen some great initiatives, some of which we have been involved with; however, a recent report found that three in four hotel company modern slavery statements did not meet the minimum requirements by the Act³. The sector remains one of the highest risk sectors in the country, which to us indicates that there is more work to be done.

In 2019, 10,627 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the National Referral Mechanism⁴. This is an increase year on year, which demonstrates the impact of training and awareness-raising, however that is still only 10% of the suspected victims.

COVID-19

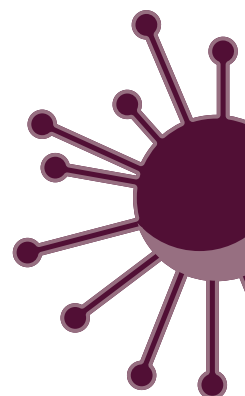
Unfortunately, COVID-19 has made matters worse. Vulnerable people face greater risk and lockdowns result in fewer people being identified. The impact COVID-19 has had on the economy has led to greater financial insecurity, both for workers, who may be more likely to take less favourable working conditions, and employers, who may be more willing to turn a blind eye to unethical practice.

1 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf

2 <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/It-Still-Happens-Here.pdf>

3 <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/blog/hotel-sector-failing-to-combat-modern-slavery-and-sexual-exploitation-finds-new-study/>

4 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/927111/FINAL_-_2020_Modern_Slavery_Report_14-10-20.pdf





Laying the foundations

Despite financial strain and reduced capacity experienced by the anti-slavery sector, organisations have been working hard to ensure survivors are receiving support and efforts to safeguard against further exploitation are intensified in consideration of the new risks.

Despite COVID-19 related disruptions, we have made great strides in laying the foundations for systemic change.

1

Strategic goal 1: Shifting corporate practice towards normalised ethical behaviour

We ramped up our efforts to help the hospitality industry in embedding anti-slavery policies and practices and have expanded our remit. Our successes in this area include:

- **89 hotels have adopted the Stop Slavery Blueprint⁵** and it has been downloaded a further 834 times (up until December 2019). We delivered six training sessions to hospitality organisations.
- A training module we co-developed with a hospitality training provider was **completed 16,978 times** (between May and December 2019).
- We inputted into an exercise at one group of hotels which aimed to elevate the voice of workers in keeping with some principles of **worker-led social responsibility**. This activity has been placed on hold while hotels have had to close during various lockdowns.
- Following from the success of the Stop Slavery Hotel Industry Network, we partnered with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) to set up a **Hospitality Protocol**. The Protocol is an agreement for hospitality businesses to work collaboratively with the GLAA to share information that will help stop or prevent the exploitation or abuse of workers. This is due to be launched in early 2021.

⁵ More details about the impact of our outreach activities can be found in our Blueprint Impact Assessment here https://www.shivafoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SF20_IA_report_1-final.pdf

- Recognising that there is little engagement with the Modern Slavery Act by small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), who do not reach the reporting threshold, we have partnered with Stop The Traffik to produce **a toolkit specific to SMEs**. This is due to be launched in January 2021. We are partnering with local Growth Hubs, Federation of Small Business networks and Chamber of Commerce to build the capacity of SMEs.

“I would refer (other hotels) to the Blueprint. It is opening the minds of your team members. It shows the risks specific to the industry and helps you at a very digestible level.” General Manager, London hotel

2

Strategic goal 2: Addressing root causes of exploitation⁶

We have continued to act as the Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership (HMSP) Coordinator and have used the learnings from this local level work to further understand some of the barriers victims face in getting appropriate support. Our successes in this area include:

- Conducting an **in-depth report on the barriers victims of modern slavery face** by speaking with local partners in Hertfordshire. The recommendations are being implemented at the local level. The report will be publicly available in early 2021.
- Running **awareness campaigns on sexual exploitation and homelessness** and the interlinkages with exploitation to build the knowledge of those who may be at risk. Up to 55 local and national partners supported efforts with these campaigns.
- The HMSP launched an **easy-read information flyer for those at risk of exploitation** to understand their rights and what services are available to them. This has been endorsed by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.
- Modern slavery awareness training has been extended to new partners, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, DWP Job Centres, and Environment Agency.
- The HMSP Coordinator has collaboratively designed **reporting pathways for both child and adult victims of modern slavery** with over 20 partners. These are integral to swiftly identifying and supporting potential victims.
- The HMSP Coordinator is joint-leading on an **Enforcement Powers Guide** to equip all agencies with any legal power to enter a premises information on which partners they can coordinate with in order to investigate potential exploitation. This will be launched in early 2021.

Root causes of exploitation can affect the potential victims as well as the structures that allow exploitation to flourish. For example, a potential victim may not be aware of their rights or migration status and will therefore be less willing to report exploitative practices. Likewise, we know that cases of modern slavery may start with smaller labour market infringements, like not paying a minimum wage for workers. We focus our activities on addressing both areas. By raising the awareness of those who may be vulnerable, they might be less likely to accept poor working conditions. And by collaboratively investigating all intelligence about minor infringements, through HMRC, Trading Standards and Environmental Health for example, we are sending a message that we will not accept any negative practice.

⁶ After designing a plan to embed our strategic goals, our previous goals of “cultivating a prevention mindset approach to address root causes” and “investing in activities that focus on the future and on longer-term sustainable change” have been reworked to allow for more practical action.

3

Strategic goal 3: Cultivating a prevention mindset to focus on longer-term sustainable change

We have been working with universities to educate future hospitality workers, giving them the tools they need to ensure addressing modern slavery risk is common practice.

Our successes in this area include:

- Delivering training to students in Bedfordshire University and Sheffield Hallam University.
- Working in collaboration with Sheffield Hallam University students to assess the efficacy of current modern slavery training programmes.
- We are redesigning a programme to enhance our training offer and extend it to a further 20 groups of students in 2021.

By working with the future hospitality workers, we are asking them to cast a fresh eye on some of the systemic issues that lead to exploitation, such as lack of transparency and complex supply chains. Our aim is that by running these training programmes, we are not only making anti-slavery practices common place within the industry, we are also educating a wide number of future workers on how the problematic structures can be shifted to prevent exploitation from happening in the first place.

In addition to the successes linked with our strategic goals, we have also introduced a number of organisational changes.



New website – along with our new strategy, we wanted to better represent our work publicly. We therefore created a new website which includes all of our areas of work.



New advisory board – in keeping with our value of maintaining a victim-centred approach, we set up a Board of Advisors who work directly with and/or bring perspectives of survivors of and those vulnerable to exploitation.



Feedback loops with workers – we have set up various partnerships with researchers and NGOs who work directly with workers in order to understand some of the challenges workers face. We continue to foster these relationships and have planned our work for 2021 and beyond based on this feedback.

Financial review

Financial highlights for the year ended 31 March 2020

Expenses

TOTAL = £226,292



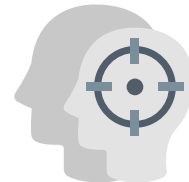
Projects
£108,535



HMSP
£18,000



Admin
£74,425



Tracking impact
£25,690

Income

TOTAL = £87,011



Donations
£87,011

Objectives, structure and governance

Structure and governance

The Meenal and Rishi Sachdev Foundation (“MRS Foundation”), initially registered as the Shiva Foundation, was set up as a charitable company, limited by guarantee (company number 10396742) in September 2016, with the purpose of tackling modern slavery in the UK. MRS Foundation was then registered as a charity in England and Wales in May 2018 (charity number 1178298).

MRS Foundation is governed by a Board of Trustees (“the Board”) in accordance with the foundation’s Articles of Association and charitable objectives. The Trustees have served from the date of appointment to the date of this report. Appointment of Trustees is governed by the Articles of Association; the Board is authorised to appoint new Trustees to fill vacancies arising through death, resignation and removal. The Board meets quarterly and is responsible for and oversees the management and administration of the foundation. The Managing Director is appointed by the Board and has day-to-day responsibility for running the foundation.

Charitable objects and public benefit

As per the Articles of Association, MRS Foundation aims to promote human rights in such ways as:



Raising awareness of human rights issues;



Providing public education about human rights; and



Partnering with other organisations which have similar objects and providing funds for their work.

As we look to the future, we consider the broader remit of MRS Foundation and the contribution we can make as an organisation. We envision a world that operates on the basis of value-based leadership, where individuals with power and privilege are equipped with the knowledge, frameworks and tools to act in service of equity, freedom and justice. On this basis, we are working towards better understanding our role in supporting civil society, businesses and governments to make this a reality. In particular, we are thinking about:

- the kinds of immediate support and relief we may provide to individuals via civil society partners;
- knowledge, frameworks and tools we might create and share for individuals in power who want to work towards positive social change;
- how we might use our strength as a convenor and bringing organisations together to streamline efforts to mobilise for change; and
- ways we could build on our advocacy efforts to amplify the expertise of communities with lived experience of marginalisation.

MEENAL AND
RISHI SACHDEV *Foundation*

Trustees:

Meenal
Sachdev,
Chair

Rishi
Sachdev

Dominic
Fitzgerald

Mark
Patterson

Meenal and Rishi Sachdev Foundation (Shiva Foundation)

Company number 10396742

Charity number 1178298, registered in England and Wales

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