



THE SCALE OF THE ISSUE

Worldwide, one in four victims of  
**MODERN SLAVERY**  
are children

Almost **1 IN EVERY 10**  
children worldwide is a  
**VICTIM OF CHILD LABOUR** (World Vision)

**48%**  
of these child labour  
victims are aged 5 to 11  
years old (World Vision)

**21%**  
of all global victims of  
sexual exploitation are  
children (ILO)

Children represented  
**18%**  
of those subjected  
to forced labour  
exploitation (ILO)

**13 MILLION**  
teenage girls have  
experienced forced sex in  
their lifetime. (Walk Free)

**37%**  
(5.7 million) of those forced  
to marry are children (ILO)

Worldwide, the ILO  
estimates that **22,000**  
child labourers  
are killed at work  
each year.



DIG DEEPER

An incredible 160 million children aged between 5 and 17 are engaged in child labour. This is the sort of statistic that feels impossible to process. Each one of these children is an individual, made in the image of God, with a unique personality, skills, and aspirations. Yet when you read a figure like 160 million or 13 million teenage girls experiencing forced sex, it is easier to hold these individuals at a distance and view them as an anonymous group rather than allow your heart and mind to grasp the awful reality that they are people, just like yourself, with hopes and dreams and potential that will never be realised.

The key driver behind child labour is poverty – children are sent out to work and deprived of an education, keeping them in the cycle of poverty and

exploitation. It is estimated that children who have to work instead of going to school increase their likelihood of being poor in later life by as much as 30 per cent. That’s why education and empowering children and families to know their rights is a key tool in fighting child labour.

Child labour is concentrated in the world’s poorest countries or fragile contexts where there is insecurity or armed conflict. However, child labour is not confined to low-income countries - 1.6 million child labourers live in high-income countries.

According to the ILO, 70 per cent of child labourers work in agriculture. The rest are trapped in factories, domestic service, the commercial sex trade or forced to work as child soldiers.

As well as child labour, children are often recruited and transported for the purpose of exploitation – this is called **child trafficking**. Many children are trafficked into the UK from overseas, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another.

Traffickers use grooming techniques to gain the trust of a child, family or community. Child trafficking can involve a network of organised criminals, or individuals or even a child’s own family. Some people might not be directly involved in trafficking a child but may play a part in other ways such as falsifying documents, bribery, owning or renting premises, or money laundering.

Migrant and refugee children – many of whom have already been uprooted by conflict, disaster or poverty – are at high risk of being forced into work and trafficked, especially if they are migrating alone or taking irregular routes with their families.





## REFLECTION

Read Luke 18 v31-34

Jesus tells His disciples about the way of the cross – a journey involving challenge, conflict and opposition. Yet on the third day He will rise again. The mystery of Easter for which we prepare in Lent. The global picture of child exploitation is a scene inviting challenge, conflict and opposition – our witness is to be part of this way of the cross. Of course, the disciples could not grasp His message. But now we ask for guidance to perceive this miracle of salvation and to play our part.

- What are the large-scale issues that allow this global exploitation to flourish?
- How should these complex challenges inform our prayers and our public witness?
- How can we support each other to better know the faith that trusts in God's victory and glory?



## PRAYER

*Father of all, inspire us to trust that in our own worship and witness, we can face the huge and mysterious challenges which allow so many of your children to suffer. Inspire us to trust in your power, witness to your love, and know that in Jesus crucified and risen there is always new life and new possibilities. May our journey towards the day of resurrection deepen this faith and this confidence so that our ministries may evermore bring hope and healing. We ask in His most holy name.*

*Amen.*





### A STORY OF HOPE - USING ART TO CONNECT WITH REFUGEE CHILDREN IN ITALY

The Clewer Initiative's trainer and facilitator, Bill Crooks, is currently based in Italy running art workshops with refugee and migrant communities. Previously he helped develop The Clewer Initiative's Hidden Voices and Breaking County Lines courses.

In collaboration with The Clewer Initiative's partner FCEI-Mediterranean Hope, he has started work on a number of projects including one for children in Calabria in Southern Italy.

He explains: "I am exploring the use of art to help children express their feelings and experiences of being part of a refugee resettlement project. Camini is a unique place as it is an Italian community that not only welcomes refugees but helps them rebuild their lives by either starting up their own small businesses or by being a part of the town's cooperative. This helps the refugees grow in resilience and reduce their risk of being exploited

by gangs and other groups who look for vulnerable refugees and migrant labourers to use and exploit in construction projects or agricultural business.

"I am particularly working with refugee children who have fled with their families from war-torn places such as Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan and Eritrea. We are creating art together with local Italian children. The mix and integration with local Italian families is really important and the art is a way of having fun together and sharing ideas as a diverse community. Our art project is being integrated into the after-school programme which is run by local volunteers. Making colourful kites together has been a wonderful experience."



[www.mediterraneanhope.com](http://www.mediterraneanhope.com)





## SPOTLIGHT ON MEDITERRANEAN HOPE

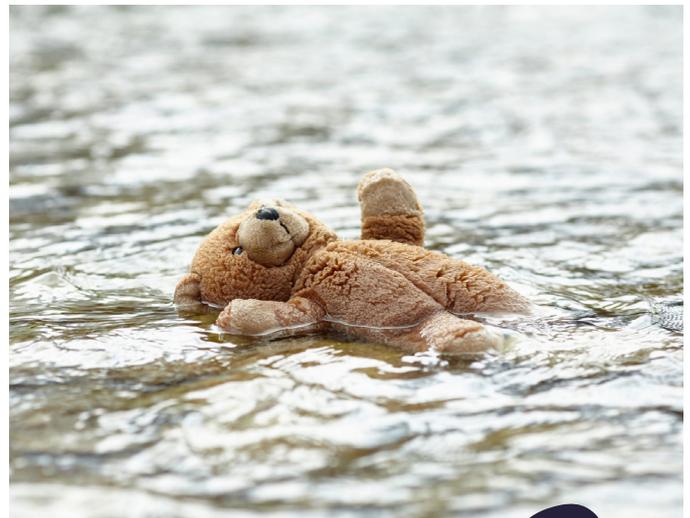
On 3rd October 2013, 368 people drowned in the waters off the coast of Lampedusa, a tiny Italian outpost around 70 miles from Tunisia.

For the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI), already active for some years in supporting displaced people, it was the trigger for diverting resources and energy to a project whose focus would be the plight of those at the border. That project would be called Mediterranean Hope.

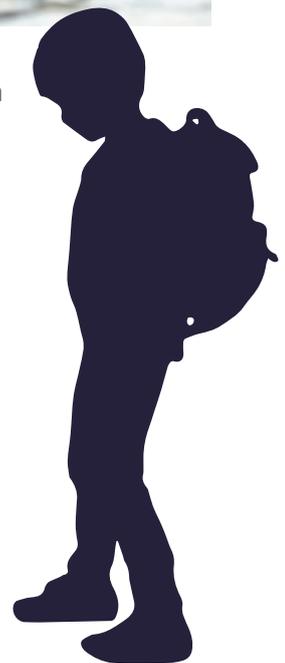
In the intervening years, the project has expanded significantly. A team still lives and works on Lampedusa welcoming those who arrive at the docks and beaches, gathering statistics and stories, reporting developments and curating the memories of those lost at sea. Another team, based in Calabria, supports exploited workers, through practical and educational projects which seek to address the rights deficit and to equip those affected to live and work in dignity. A third team works on Croatia's border with Bosnia to ease the appalling situation of the many displaced people trapped at that frontier.

Practical support for the most vulnerable is at the heart of FCEI-Mediterranean Hope's work. The Rome office has, since 2015, coordinated a large-scale reception programme called "humanitarian corridors". Through it, FCEI has welcomed more than two thousand refugees, primarily of Syrian origin, identified by its team in Beirut, and several legacy corridors now bring refugees from and to a number of other countries. This award-winning programme enables families, unaccompanied minors and individuals who are in need of international protection to begin a new life in Europe, supported to integrate and reach autonomy within a period of eighteen months.

Some of the most vulnerable are hosted at the Casa delle Culture, FCEI's reception centre in Scicli, Sicily. Currently, the centre is hosting individuals and families who have arrived through the Lebanese and Libyan corridors. The centre, a hub not only for its residents but for the local community, is a place of welcome for all. Staff and volunteers work together to accompany residents in learning Italian, navigating the asylum process, coming to terms with trauma they suffered, dealing with inevitable cultural challenges and taking up opportunities to advance education and find work. It's a process which enriches everyone involved.



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**ACTION 5 – A CALL TO PRAY**

Listen to Ben Lindsay, founder of Power The Fight underline the importance of prayer.



Scan me or go to The Clewer Initiative's YouTube channel and search for Ben Lindsay's clips

- Take some time to pray for the many child victims of slavery in the world today
  - pray for child victims and their families
  - pray for justice to come for child victims and the perpetrators of the crime to be thwarted
  - pray for churches and communities to grow in awareness of child exploitation
  - pray for churches and communities to notice victims in their midst
- Pray about your response to child exploitation – ask God to give you wisdom about what you could do in your community
- Pray for God's Kingdom to come soon.

