How NGO-Social Enterprise Partnerships Improve Outcomes for Human Trafficking Survivors

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INTRODUCTION

Breaking cycles of abuse and exploitation is often seen as a government responsibility, but partnerships between nonprofits and businesses can also drive meaningful change. This research examines how social enterprises and NGOs in India collaborate to expand opportunities for human trafficking survivors. While businesses pursue profit, they can also support social impact by empowering vulnerable populations.

Because supportive services alone are not enough to break cycles of poverty, this project emphasizes the importance of access to stable, dignified employment. Research shows that household income is the strongest factor in long-term stability, meaning that without sustainable economic opportunities, other aid has limited impact. This study explores how shifting from short-term support to employment-focused solutions can create lasting change.

DATA AND FINDINGS

Indicators by survey order ↑	Timepoint 1	Timepoint 5	Improved	Maintained	Regressed	T1 priorities that improved
Household Income			38%	58%	5%	80%
Money Management			43%	43%	15%	60%
Literacy and Numeracy			20%	73%	8%	100%
Education and Skills for Employment			35%	65%	0%	100%
Skills for Success			40%	53%	8%	100%
Mental and Emotional Health			38%	50%	13%	100%
Self-Worth			40%	55%	5%	100%
Self-Confidence			43%	48%	10%	100%
Self-Esteem			30%	63%	8%	100%

Household income is the largest vulnerability for survivors, partnerships with Social Enterprise businesses provide opportunities for long term income.

Education and Skills for Unemployment improved significantly with no signs of regression.

	India		Philippines	
Organization	NGO	SE	NGO	SE
Name	Freedom Firm	Aruna Project	EverFree	International Sanctuary
Funding	Grants, donors	Product sales, donors	Grants, private donors	Jewelry sales, donors
Government Support	Minimal; tax-exempt	None direct; tax-exempt	Indirect (supportive laws, local enforcement)	Partial (≈23% from aid, COVID relief)
Primary Mission	Rescues trafficking victims; provides rehab and reintegration support	Employs survivors; provides stable income and long-term support	Reduces vulnerability through economic empowerment	Employs women; provides job skills and life training

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

Partnerships between NGOs and social enterprises are most effective when they combine **community expertise** with **financial sustainability**. NGOs provide advocacy, education access, and survivor-centered services, while social enterprises generate consistent funding through business models.

What Makes Partnerships Work:
Successful collaborations require:

- programs are aligned to match the needs of participants
- shared mission and goals
- clear decision-making structures
- transparency and accountability
- participant-centered programming
- diversified funding sources

Implications:
Partnerships that balance social impact with financial stability create more sustainable educational opportunities and long-term independence for vulnerable populations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Meta-analysis

- Comparative analysis of government structures in India and the Philippines (corruption, public spending, incentives, political system, executive structure, lobbying)
- Synthesis of qualitative findings to identify patterns across NGO and social enterprise sectors

Data sources

- **Qualitative:** two interviews with NGO leaders supporting human trafficking survivors in developing countries
- **Qualitative:** secondary literature on governance, policy frameworks, and NGO effectiveness
- **Qualitative:** Freedom Life Maps measuring survivor wellbeing outcomes

Coding framework

- Pre-existing codes: success, funding, budgeting, advocacy, policy
- Identification of recurring themes related to organizational effectiveness and collaboration opportunities

DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

1. **NGOs and social enterprises have complementary strengths**
   NGOs specialize in survivor care, education programs, and advocacy, while social enterprises provide financial sustainability through revenue generation.
2. **Financial sustainability improves program effectiveness**
   Organizations that rely only on grants may face instability, while social enterprises generate consistent funding that supports long-term programming.
3. **Government structure affects partnership success**
   Both India and the Philippines show corruption challenges caused by weak accountability systems. However:
   - India's corruption tends to be bureaucratic
   - Philippines corruption is more influenced by elite political power

   These differences affect funding transparency and NGO operations.
4. **Shared goals increase partnership success**
   Partnerships are most effective when organizations share similar missions related to ensuring long-term pathways to income generation, empowerment, education, and long-term independence.

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