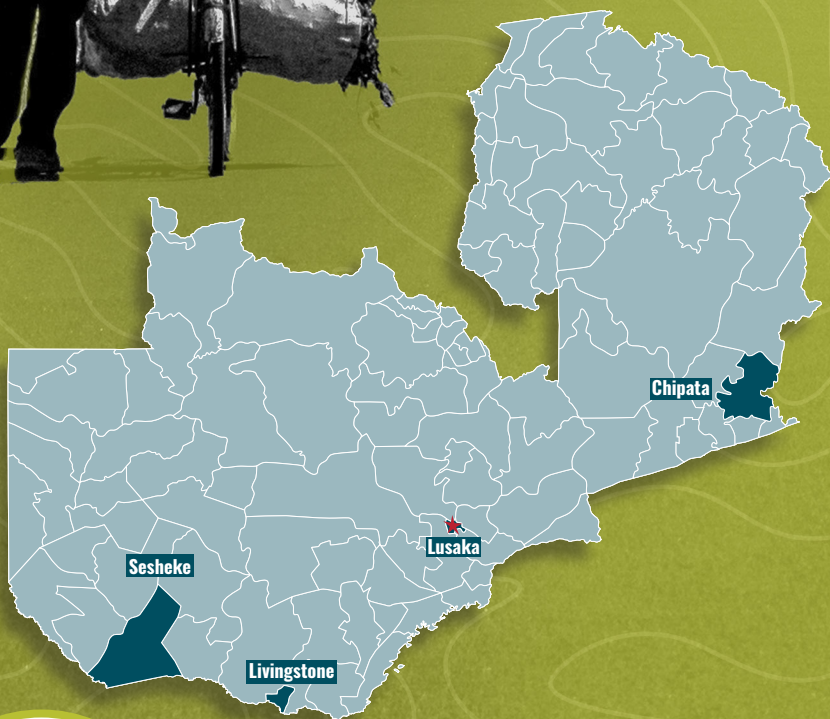


LABOR TRAFFICKING IN ZAMBIA



The **Center on Human Trafficking Research & Outreach (CenHTRO)** at the **University of Georgia** in partnership with the **Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR)** at the **University of Zambia** conducted mixed-methods research* in 2023–24 to estimate domestic and cross-border labor trafficking (LT) prevalence among youth and young adults aged 18 to 37 (YYAs) and the prevalence of YYAs at risk of LT. The study focused on four districts in Zambia — **Livingstone, Lusaka, Chipata, and Sesheke.**

CenHTRO will use these research findings to create a financial capability intervention for youth and young adults who are labor trafficking survivors or at risk for labor trafficking. Through an interactive workshop model, survivors and at-risk youth and young adults will co-create the intervention with the CenHTRO team. Stakeholders including financial institutions, social service agencies, and government officials will also share their perspectives on the intervention design. This approach ensures a culturally relevant program tailored to participants' needs.

The intervention will link participants to financial guidance, digital savings groups, and economic opportunities such as jobs, skills training, and entrepreneurship training. CenHTRO expects the intervention to increase participants' financial capability, economic resilience, and awareness of safer labor opportunities. In achieving these outcomes, participants' vulnerability to labor trafficking will be reduced. A randomized controlled trial (RCT) will rigorously assess the impact of this work.



LIVINGSTONE

CROSS-BORDER



LT VICTIM



LT RISK

DOMESTIC



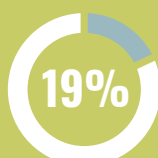
LT VICTIM

LUSAKA

CROSS-BORDER



LT VICTIM



LT RISK

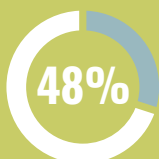
DOMESTIC



LT VICTIM

CHIPATA

CROSS-BORDER



LT VICTIM



LT RISK

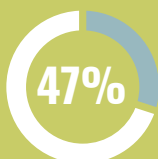
DOMESTIC



LT VICTIM

SESHEKE

CROSS-BORDER



LT VICTIM



LT RISK

DOMESTIC



LT VICTIM

**Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Quantitative data was collected via 2,024 household surveys and 1,925 Respondent-Driven Sampling surveys.*

KEY FINDINGS



Cross-border trafficking was double to triple the rate of domestic labor trafficking in three out of four districts

Urban areas of Livingstone and Lusaka had a higher concentration of domestic labor trafficking compared to more rural communities in Sesheke and Chipata, however, cross-border trafficking prevalence was more prevalent in each district by an increase of as much as 45%. Lusaka, was the exception, in this district the rates for both cross-border and domestic trafficking was 30%.



YYA survey respondents reported experiencing cross-border exploitation events primarily within cleaning and helping labor sectors (e.g., maid in household)

Surveyed YYAs reported experiences of cross-border labor trafficking and exploitation within the following labor sectors (% exploitation experiences):

- **Cleaners and Helpers:** 76% Sesheke, 67% Livingstone, 51% Lusaka, 30% Chipata
- **Sales and Service Workers:** 4% Sesheke, 16% Livingstone, 17% Lusaka, 37% Chipata
- **Trade crafts:** 7% Lusaka
- **Mining:** 7% Lusaka
- **Agriculture/Fishing:** 15% Sesheke, 7% Chipata, 5% Lusaka

"It is just that there is nothing I could do otherwise there is a lot of suffering. There is no freedom on the job. You can't say anything lest you are threatened with dismissal. At that they don't even give you transport money for your return to Zambia. Also when you think about where you are coming from you opt to just stay hoping that you will find something.... I was a domestic worker.."

Young Woman, Sesheke Respondent #11, Experienced LT in Namibia



Overall, the Republic of South African (RSA) and Namibia were the most commonly reported destination countries where YYAs experienced cross-border labor trafficking

Reported countries where exploitation was commonly reported varied by district (% exploitation experiences):

- **Lusaka:** 28% RSA, 17% Tanzania, 14% Malawi, DR Congo 11%, 10% Zimbabwe
- **Chipata:** 76% Malawi, 23% Mozambique
- **Livingstone:** 38% Zimbabwe, 32% Namibia, 13% RSA, 12% Botswana
- **Sesheke:** Only Namibia was reported as destination by YYAs from Sesheke

Respondents described situations where they traveled due to a promise of a job opportunity such as a maid or in domestic work only to experience wage theft, working in harsh conditions, and experiencing sexual exploitation upon arrival.

“As I mentioned earlier initially, everything seemed fine when I went to South Africa, but as I continued working, the woman who had invited me to South Africa took my earnings and never returned them. I was also confined to the premises and unable to go outside...Later on, the situation took a turn for the worse. The woman began bringing her two male friends and asked me to engage in intimate activities with them. Afterward, these men would compensate the woman who had invited me to South Africa, yet she never shared any of the money with me. She consistently withheld payment from me.”

Young Woman, Lusaka Respondent #15, Experienced LT in Zambia



Surveyed YYAs reported insufficient resources to save money, challenges with borrowing money, and challenges with knowledge and use of financial services, particularly in rural districts

YYAs, especially survivors of labor trafficking, relied heavily on mobile payment services through telecommunications companies to save money. When it comes to borrowing money, family, relatives, or friends were reported as the major sources. Informal savings group/club, banks, or other formal financial institutions were rarely considered by the YYAs.

Lusaka: 50% of YYAs reported insufficient resources to save and cope with emergencies

Livingstone: YYA victims were less likely to save money most months than the non-victims and, similar to Lusaka, 50% of YYAs reported insufficient resources to save and cope with emergencies

Chipata: YYA labor trafficking survivors reported being able to save less money compared with YYAs who did not experience labor trafficking.

Sesheke: Compared to the other three districts, more YYAs reported being able to save money, however, they reported increased challenges with accessibility, knowledge and use of financial and banking services and products.



Challenges for survivors in accessing support for exiting or reporting trafficking situations

Respondents described limited access to reporting and support for exiting exploitative situations. Some suggested that more needs to be done to strengthen capacity for protection stakeholders to take action when a case of trafficking is reported.

“I worked as a maid in...(Livingstone) and I wasn’t paid for 6 months. I went to report at a police station. My boss was called and when she arrived, she just said I can’t pay her because [survivor] broke my TV and cups.”

Adult Woman, Livingstone Focus Group #2

“I don’t think there is help offered to the young people who find themselves in exploitative situations. Labor trafficking is common here, but young people have nowhere to report such cases. Even when one reports a case, they don’t help you out.”

Young Woman, Chipata Respondent #10, Experienced LT in Zambia

“In the case of Zambia, we have those people from the labor offices they are there, and they are working, but such cases are not reported for fear of being victimized... There is a need for the government to work on that. In South Africa, I never knew where to report those cases.”

Young Man, Lusaka Respondent #5, Experienced LT in RSA



Constraints on service providers to support survivors

Respondents describe that resource limitations significantly affect the scope and sustainability of services for trafficking survivors, with insufficient funding constraining service availability, quality, and effectiveness.

“One of the constraints is that the availability of shelters, because from the report that we get from social welfare is that they don’t have enough shelter in every place of the country...let’s say if we have a case of trafficking and there is no shelter... we just get the witnesses and detain because we have no shelter...in that scenario the police or correction facilities is perceived to be a safe place... in places where there is no shelter, they are kept in collection facilities which ideally should not be the case.”

Direct Service Provider, Key Informant, Lusaka Respondent #8

They further highlighted that increasing funding through enhanced government allocations, donor support, and partnerships with private entities is essential. They also suggested innovative solutions like resource sharing, volunteer involvement, and community-based support to supplement formal services and extend their reach.



*This research was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State (PEMS 6 SSJIP22CA0029).
The opinions, findings, and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State.*

CENHTRO.UGA.EDU