Key Highlights: 2019

Introduction
The year 2019 was majorly a turning point for Counter Human Trafficking work in Kenya. And so was the case for CHTEA, whose existence is fairly young but abounds with both knowledge, expertise and experience, dating back to 2006.

Registered in August, 2018 as a Trust in Nairobi, Kenya, CHTEA which is a short form for “Counter Human Trafficking Trust-East Africa” its registration spurred growth and a sort of revolution within the counter human trafficking sector. Ranging from aligning with national, regional and international networks and institutions to providing leadership on matters of policy and advocacy, CHTEA focused on strengthening the core fabric of developing a clear cross border framework for the regional civil society.

The Year under Review
In the most unprecedented turn of events, the CHTEA Patron and Founder, Sr Mary O’Malley, MMM, travelled to Ireland for a medical check-up. Her departure created a sort of vacuum as the organisation was still searching for clear direction upon its formal registration in 2018. Even so, the momentum was sustained by the remaining directors, who continued with some of the pre-planned work and sought for some new potential funding opportunities.

Sr Mary however returned to Kenya a few months later after she was given a clean bill of health in Ireland.

Activity Overview
This segment is divided into two:
1. Counter Trafficking Actions
2. Enhancing the operating environment

Counter Trafficking Actions
This component speaks to “case lots” and it provides some insights on how the year under review brought some new but more discrete methods of human trafficking to the fore:

• Two twin boys (Kevin and Denis, 14) were reunited with their mother, Christine, after years of separation. A self-acclaimed barren Pastoress took away the boys from their biological mother and made them believe that the former was their mother by virtue of offering them good education. The Pastoress employed the boys’ mother as a farm hand and deployed her to her rural farm in Kitui County where she got isolated from her children for over ten years (who lived in Nairobi with the Pastoress). The boys were aged about 4 years when they last lived with their mother.

• Regarding the issue of surrogate mothers which CHTEA encountered in early 2018, CHTEA rescued six of victim. One in particular called ‘Rose’ was adamant to tell her story, as in her own words “we cannot stay quiet about it.” She willingly availed herself for an interview by the Directorate of Criminal Investigation (DCI) at Nairobi. After hours of discussions, the DCI officers were able to clearly understand how women are currently being used to procure the births of babies whose lives are purely at the mercy of ruthless baby traffickers outside of Kenya. Such babies are presumably used for organ harvesting outside the country. A total of 6 such victims were identified and contacted; though not all cases were conclusively processed. This form of trafficking is becoming more popular especially with young ladies who wish to give away their “eggs” for a pittance.

• Wayua, a mother of 3 got involved with a Ugandan man with whom they had a baby boy. The ‘alleged husband’ eventually duped Wayua to travel with him to Uganda in order to commence proper marriage proceedings. As soon as they arrived in Uganda, the alleged husband’s mother took away the baby boy from her. This case remains unresolved after the complainant went missing!

“Human Trafficking - the Ultimate Slavery”
• A young boy aged 6 years was trafficked to Nairobi by his father to be in the custody of his stepmother. He was never taken to school as promised but became the domestic helper to the stepmother’s children. Seen by neighbors who reported the matter to a voluntary child officer (VCO). CHTEA eventually rescued him and returned him to his biological mother at Busia. This was after supporting the mother to begin a second hand clothing business which has flourished since then.

• Four trafficked minor Ethiopian boys at Kyamaiko slaughter houses were arrested for engaging in underage sex with underage Kenyan girls, one of whom was in early pregnancy. They have since been placed at a Nairobi remand home where arrangements are underway to return them to Ethiopia but with a proper plan to place them in vocational training colleges and guide them to refocus their future out of bondage.

• An effort to profile the Tanzanian beggars along the streets of Nairobi was made around May 2019 upon a request from the head of Anti Trafficking in Persons, Tanzania Police. Profiling is yet to be completed.

• In July, CHTEA was actively involved in the return of the first Kenyan victims of human trafficking from Saudia. ‘Lizzy’ and ‘Ann’ were formally received at the JKI Airport by Sr. Mary O’Malley (Patron) and Mutuku Nguli (Chief Executive) before reunification with families. Lizzie’s mother was at hand to receive her at a reception organised for her. A rehabilitation programme commenced in earnest for both and it continues to date. It is a demonstration of how deep seated effects of trafficking impact on victims. Ann originated from Kitale. She had escaped a previous trafficking ordeal in the Gulf but due to the pangs of poverty, she made a second attempt in a different country. Both were assisted with microfinance budgets and are doing well in that respect.

• In July 2019, the first group of ex-Gulf/Saudi victims met in Nairobi to share any part of their experience with us. It was facilitated by the trauma counsellor whom we engage for all returnees who agree to attend counselling. This commenced the first (support) network of its kind in Kenya for ex-Gulf victims managed by CHTEA. A total of 7 victims participated at the meeting which was also attended by a representative from the Transnational Organized Crime Unit (TOCU).

• A 19 year old Ethiopian young mother, Hamida, (with 2 children) who was trafficked to Nairobi at the age of 13 years was rescued from Kyamaiko slum in Huruma. She had been forced into an early abusive marriage where the husband tormented her with daily assaults and threats to kill. CHTEA took her to a rescue centre in Kiambu County where she has since been enrolled into a vocational college where she continues to train on tailoring while her two children attend a school nearby. Upon completion, Hamida will be supported to begin a livelihood project at a place of her choice in Nairobi.

• A woman trafficker at the Pipeline estate Nairobi was discovered when CHTEA went out looking for Brian, an eight year old boy who had vanished from his father’s house at the Mukuru kwa Njenga slums. The trafficker later turned out to be working alongside the police at the Villa Police post, Imara Daima. This matter was later brought to the attention of the Anti-Human Trafficking and Child Protection Unit (AHTCPU) and they are currently pursuing the trafficker.

• A group of seven children were rescued from the jaws of a woman trafficker at the Mukuru kwa Njenga slums while transporting them out. This only happened after the trafficker’s car stalled in the middle of the road. Although the police at the Mukuru police post got involved, the trafficker was never arrested. CHTEA followed up the matter but it proved elusive as no police officer was
willing to follow on the case as an indication of complicity. The matter was brought to the attention of TOCU and AHTCPU. We have already presented the matter to them in this New Year and they will engage with it shortly.

- A Burundian lady trafficked to Kenya for “marriage” has remained on here even as she expresses a desire to travel back. Shantel got ‘married’ to a Pastor who eventually abused her and left her with her baby for another woman. The matter was mediated by CHTEA with a promise to regularize travel documents for both mother and child. The matter continues as at the time of filing this report.

- Following a request from the DCI (AHTCPU), CHTEA was able to coordinate and avail a Tanzanian father to receive his two children from a court in Nairobi. The whole exercise was almost a ‘mission impossible’ for the DCI until an specialist from CHTEA took up the assignment and delivered the children’s father within a record 2 days, just in time to be present at the court hearing.

- A total of 96 Karamoja girls were finally rescued from the Eastland’s suburb of Nairobi called Eastleigh. They were in a group of almost a thousand other girls who managed to escape from an open ground at the Shauri Moyo neighborhood. The rescue was a culmination of concerted surveillance and effort since November 2019 and the operation was scheduled to take place in December 2019. The rescue (of 12th Jan, 2020) of these girls was a major breakthrough by a combined effort of both the Kenya and Ugandan DCI and police. A ‘Kingpin’ trafficker was arrested and arraigned in court. Esther, (herself a Karamojo) the alleged trafficker was tracked down and led into a trap through the efforts of CHTEA and TOT volunteers based at Eastleigh and Majengo slums. We have trained them both in the past and in 2019. Her mother is the lead recruiter on the Uganda side of Karamoja. They hail from the Uganda border with Turkana and speak a dialect of Ki-Turkana.

Enhancing the Operating Environment

- At the beginning of 2019, CHTEA led a team of investigators from the Religious Against Human Trafficking (RAHT) to the Kyamaiko slaughter houses, where Ethiopian boys and girls as young as 8 years old work for pittance as their masters reap big profits. Under the cover of darkness, the team visited the slaughter houses at 4am one morning in February where their worst of fears were confirmed - that underage children (some as young as 7 years old) from Ethiopia had been trafficked in large numbers for exploitation. A report was prepared and shared with the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, Religious Superiors Conference of Kenya (RSCK) and Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya (AOSK). We also contacted the ‘People Daily’ newspaper and they ran a full two page article (on the trafficked children of Ethiopia) to coincide its release on 30th July, which is the World Day Against Human Trafficking. In October, 2019, we ran a phase 1 Training of Trainers for 33 young people from four surrounding parishes of Kyamiako. The trainees comprise four teams – currently they are committed to giving Awareness workshops in this high density population area of Nairobi.

- Strategic meetings and contacts were made with the following government institutions as a way to enhance collaboration and partnership: (i) Counter Trafficking in Persons Secretariat under the department of Children Affairs, Ministry of Labor, (ii) Children and Social Protection, (ii) a letter to the Inspector General of Police, (iii) the TOCU and AHTCPU, (iv) the Head of Interpol, Regional Bureau, (v) the Head of Anti Human Trafficking in Persons, Tanzania, (vi) Experts from the African Union, (vii) Experts from the East African Community

"Human Trafficking – the Ultimate Slave"
A Counter Human Trafficking training at Kitale activated a new network within the Kitale Catholic Diocese. The certified training of trainers course culminated into another training of schools’ Principals for all Catholic sponsored schools within the Diocese.

CHTEA participated in a number of organized Civil Society Organizations (CSO) forums/conferences within the year. Such included: (i) a Regional CSO conference in Kampala, Uganda, (ii) a National CSO Planning workshop in Nairobi, (iii) talks by UK visiting experts, (iv) launch of “Just Good Work” by the Anglican Development Service Desk, (v) participated at Freedom Collaborative online trainings and launch of share platforms for global data service, (vi) Online trainings and webinars by the Better Migration Management & Stop the Trafficking Kenya (BMM/STTK), (vii) participated in meetings and activities convened by both STTK and RAHT (networks) and many more.

CHTEA was instrumental in supporting the Training of Trainers course which was sponsored and facilitated by the Talitha Kum (a Rome based Catholic network of religious groups around the world). During the training, CHTEA offered a facilitator and a rapporteur to the event.

Once again, CHTEA offered a facilitator during the 2nd Africa Santa Marta conference held in Nairobi 1 – 3. October 2019. During the conference, CHTEA’s role also in evaluating the final communique statement was crucial before it was adopted by conference delegates at the plenary.

Following an invitation by the East African Child Rights’ Network (EACRN), CHTEA’s Chief Executive Officer facilitated a Kampala conference/training which brought together a combination of civil society organisations and the investigative arms of the police services (Kenya and Uganda), Immigration, IGAD, and Interpol. The conference achieved big mileage by way of providing clear guidance of areas of cross border human trafficking, reviewing the Kampala Declaration and the various other regional protocols.

Following a journalists’ training programme (Kenya and Uganda) by the EACRN, the Chief Executive Officer of CHTEA delivered a paper on the “Do No Harm” Principle as a basis for strengthening media reporting within the East African Community (EAC) region. This was followed by a guided investigative detour of Nairobi by the New Vision journalists from Uganda regarding the Karamoja trafficking of girls. The detour led to the production of a comprehensive feature of the Karamoja girls’ trafficking vis a vis the Somalia-Al Shabaab link on 1st of December 2019.

“Make a Child Smile” a Uganda based NGO agreed on a shared framework for the Karamoja intervention, alongside the DCI in Kenya. The framework paper, which was developed by CHTEA was shared with the Karamoja Members of Parliament who in turn used it to bring up the matter at the floor of Parliament. The ensuing debate necessitated the creation of a Parliamentary Task Force on Karamoja whose work was completed towards the end of December and the subsequent report would be presented to Parliament in early 2020.

During the year, CHTEA had a chance to support 4 Graduate (Master’s degree) students who were researching on projects related to human trafficking. The students were properly guided and exposed to case studies which befitted their lines of study. This was in fulfilment of their master’s degree programmes.
The Kilifi and Isiolo counter human trafficking networks were also set up during the year and have continued to play a pivotal role in both awareness and support to specific cases within their respective regions. These were besides the continued strengthening of the Singida, Tanzania platform (“Jukwaa”).