

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of York</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 35B, Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Slavery: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evil</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Three films by David Hickman identify and examine contemporary forms of modern slavery in Haiti, Pakistan and India, where the plight of the victims has gone unrecognised by governments and international agencies. The case for impact is made in relation to the international exposure of the films (broadcast by Al Jazeera in more than 100 countries), responses from the general public, their uptake among educators and students studying slavery and human rights and, most importantly, the impact on some of the victims of slavery who appear in the films, as well as for organisations that represent or campaign for them.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>David Hickman, senior lecturer in the department of Theatre, Film and Television since 2009, researched and produced all three films during the spring and summer of 2011. They were presented by journalist Rageh Omaar, and broadcast on the Al Jazeera network in the series, <i>Slavery: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evil</i>, in October and November 2011.</p> <p>The project began with the hypothesis that slavery is more widespread today than when it was progressively outlawed by states in Europe and North America in the nineteenth century. Early anti-slavery legislation in the 1800s focused on the trade itself, and tended to prohibit the forced movement of people across international borders. Anti-slavery protocols today do much the same thing – the word ‘slavery’ has largely been replaced in government and agency policy statements on the subject by ‘trafficking’.</p> <p>The three films, effectively investigative participant/observer field research, explore and present the experiences and testimonies of people who do not meet modern legal definitions of ‘trafficked peoples’. Beginning with the common definition of slavery as the enforced ownership of one person by another, the research set out to widen this definition to cover specific and complex cultural mechanisms that draw people into forms of unfree labour and subsequently trap them. The research also sought to problematise the international regulatory emphasis on trafficking by arguing that some of the most persistent and widespread forms of slavery do not involve trafficked people and that there is evidence that these people have to some extent been rendered invisible to key authorities such as the US State Department, the International Labour Organisation and other branches of the UN.</p> <p><i>Haiti</i> investigated stories from current and past child slaves, or ‘restaveks’ – a system claimed as a means of educating poor children from rural districts who would leave their families for a period to provide domestic labour for wealthier urban families in return for free education. The restavek system is outlawed in Haiti and does not officially exist. This research not only confirmed that child slaves are still drawn from the rural hinterland, but also discovered they are streaming, not into middle class homes, but into the post-earthquake slums and tent cities of Port au Prince. They receive no education and no pay, and many experience lives of routine violence and abuse.</p> <p><i>Pakistan</i> examined the case of bonded labourers in the brick kiln factories of rural Punjab. Bonded labourers are enslaved by debts incurred partly by cultural imperatives such as marriage dowries, and are trapped by unfair and often unwritten contracts in which interest on their debts accrue faster than they can work to pay off their debt. The research here also revealed new evidence of other forms of exploitation ‘piggy-backing’ on bonded slavery, including organ trafficking.</p> <p><i>India</i> researched the experiences of women who had been trafficked to Haryana state from other parts of India, where they have experienced violence, rape and forced marriage. The phenomenon of bride trafficking is not recognised by the Indian government and thus the research contributes to exposing the practice.</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

**3. References to the research** (indicative maximum of six references)

**Slavery: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evil** was a series of seven half-hour films and one hour-long studio discussion, broadcast worldwide on Al Jazeera in October and November 2011.

**Slavery: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evil. Bonded Slavery (Pakistan)**

[Broadcast 24.10.11 at 22.30; 25.10.11 at 09.30; 26.10.11 at 03.30; 27.10.11 at 16.30; 27.10.11 at 05.30. All times GMT.]

Available online here:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/slaverya21stcenturyevil/2011/10/20111010144417942321.html>

**Slavery: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evil. Bride Trafficking (India)**

[Broadcast 14.11.11 at 22.30; 15.11.11 at 09.30; 16.11.11 at 03.30; 17.11.11 at 16.30]

Available online here:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/slaverya21stcenturyevil/2011/10/2011101013102368710.html>

**Slavery: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evil. Child Slavery (Haiti)**

[Broadcast 31.10.11 at 22.30; 01.11.11 at 09.30; 02.11.11 at 03.30; 03.11.11 at 16.30]

Available online here:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/slaverya21stcenturyevil/2011/10/20111010152040468529.html>

All three films were directed by David Hickman and all three are listed as a single output in REF2

The quality of the films is evidenced by their nomination for an **International Documentary Association (IDA) Award** by the International Documentary Association in 2012 in the 'Best Limited Series' category, alongside films by, among others, Martin Scorsese and Werner Herzog. The awards are "the world's most prestigious awards for nonfiction filmmaking" [IDA press release, 22 October 2012]. Hickman was subsequently invited to give two keynote presentations of this research: 'Slavery versus Trafficking', at the 'Sixth Art of Management and Organization Conference, University of York, 5 September 2012, and 'Free and Unfree Labour: Slavery in Pakistan' inaugural event for the Centre for Advanced Studies, University of Nottingham. He was also invited to give a public lecture, 'Slavery on film: exposure or exploitation', at the University of York's Festival of Ideas on 23 June 2013.

The film on bonded slaves in Pakistan was critic's choice in *The Sunday Times*, 23 October, p48 (ISSN: 0956-1382) [.pdf of review available]. Rageh Omaar was interviewed about the series by The Guardian on 6 November 2011: <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2011/nov/06/rageh-omaar-interview-slavery-evil>

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

References to corroborating sources are listed as '[1]'.

The series was broadcast on Al Jazeera's International Network which has one of the largest footprints in satellite broadcasting reaching over 100 countries with an estimated audience of between 40 and 50 million viewers.

The series was commissioned with the express intention of informing public debate on slavery and trafficking, and addressing questions and information directly to policy-makers and activists in the field. The series culminated with an hour-long debate, moderated by Rageh Omaar, in which invited guests included Luis C deBaca, ambassador-at-Large at the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, US State Department; Joy Ezeilo, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons; Kevin Bales, President, Free the Slaves (a Washington-based international NGO); David Batstone, President, Not for Sale (a California-based international NGO).

## Impact case study (REF3b)

In the wider public and academic domain the films have had a more immediate impact. Focus pieces like that of Petra Lent McCarron on the *Media Voices for Children* blog demonstrate the way in which the *Haiti* film, in conjunction with media scrutiny, can help gain the issues greater exposure and push them up the political agenda [1]. An informal network of bloggers and interested parties has frequently reposted the Al Jazeera video feed and posted personal reflections (e.g. the anonymous blog *Feeling a bit oppressed lately?* [2])

Several NGOs, including the Alliance Against Modern Slavery [3] and the Dalit Freedom Network [4] offer the films as primary material to help raise awareness.

The films are already used widely as a teaching resource. Students at Oakland Early College, Michigan, (ages 15-19) use the films to compare modern slavery to the 18<sup>th</sup> century trans-Atlantic slave trade. Courses run by the American University in Rome have used and responded to the films as key texts [5].

The *India* documentary on trafficked brides prompted students of the Women's Studies programme at DePauw University to engage more directly with the activist press, publishing their responses on Project Censor's Media Freedom International blog [6]

TOPSY social media analytics give an indication of the widespread public attention given to the three films. TOPSY analytics captured 261 Twitter posts linking to the Haiti film on the Al Jazeera page or YouTube channel; the Pakistan film was featured in 305 posts, while the *India* film has been linked to in posts 1649 times. As at 28.11.12 there had been 279,701 discrete views on the Al Jazeera 'Slavery' website, 329,132 YouTube views in total, 56,241 subscriber views on 'Slavery' podcast, 8,191 listeners with audio and 30,332 'likes' on Facebook.

Al Jazeera created a 'Slavery' website which has gathered numerous comments and opinion on the series and the individual films. These can be found by navigating through the episodes from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/slavery21stcenturyevil/2011/10/2011101012574599955.html> [7]

#### Impact on the interviewees of the films

Shortly after the broadcast of the Pakistan episode, the film's field producer, Fazeelat Aslam, made a follow-up film called *Yo Haqeen*, in Urdu and for broadcast on the AAJ network in Pakistan. It focused on Sayeda Fatima, who was featured strongly in the AJE film and who runs the Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF). A trailer of Fazeelat Aslam's film can be found here: <http://shelby.tv/video/youtube/kAJaMqzhs7w/ho-yaqeen-episode-4-syeda-fatima-trailer-2> [8]

In an email dated 24 May 2013, Ms Aslam provided information about the impact of the film on the BLLF: 'Since the Al Jazeera and Ho Yaqeen piece, but certainly much can be attributed to the Al Jazeera piece exclusively, many workers have become inspired.... Because of the prominent reputable names in the piece, many people see how much power Fatima yields, how important BLLF is and how it is recognized as well as how much the issue is recognized. Workers have no formed unions and have far more power than ever before.' [9]

In an email dated 2 July 2013, Syeda Fatima, General Secretary of the local NGO Bonded Labour Liberation Front, confirmed that 'Ashraf' and his large family, bonded labourers who were featured prominently in the *Pakistan* film, have been freed from the debt that had trapped them for decades. [9]

The Indian episode helped Shafiq Kahn, founder of the organisation Empower People, as reported in E-mail dated 19 August 2012:

'...definitely your documentary help me in spreading the cause, some parliamentarians raised this issue in parliament and other media institutions are now regularly working publishing about bride trafficking. This year I was awarded as amazing Indian by times group (media institution). these are results of aljazeera's documentary,' [9]

## Impact case study (REF3b)

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Corroborating sources referenced in section four above. Sources demonstrate the impact of the research on the public

[1] <http://mediavoicesforchildren.org/?p=10573>

[2] <http://feelingoppressed.wordpress.com/2012/11/27/unmasking-indias-secret-trade-bridal-slaves/>

[3] [http://allianceagainstmodernslavery.org/documentaries\\_movies\\_podcasts\\_and\\_videos](http://allianceagainstmodernslavery.org/documentaries_movies_podcasts_and_videos)

[4] <http://www.dfn.org.uk/news/media/197-bridal-slavery-in-india>

<http://www.dfn.org.uk/component/content/article/42-information/slavery/182-bride-trafficking>

[5] <http://socialactive.wordpress.com/2013/04/02/slavery-the-21st-century-evil-federica-de-giorgi/>

[6] <http://www.projectcensored.org/bridal-slaves-indias-bride-buying-country/>

[7]

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/slavery21stcenturyevil/2011/10/2011101012574599955.html>

[8] <http://shelby.tv/video/youtube/kAJaMqzhs7w/ho-yaqeen-episode-4-syeda-fatima-trailer-2>

[9] E-mails from:

*Field producer for Al Jazeera films*

*General Secretary of the Bonded Labour Liberation Front*

Fazeelat Aslam, Syeda Fatima and Shafiq Kahn (available on request)

[10] The following websites evidence the wider impact and awareness-raising of the research

<http://www.cbc.ca/strombo/news/disappear-from-social-media-today-to-raise-awareness-about-modern-day-slave>

<http://thegrumpysociologist.blogspot.co.uk/2011/10/aljazeeras-slavery-21st-century-evil.html>

<http://amrc.org.hk/sites/default/files/ALU-Issue-81.pdf#page=3> House journal of a Hong Kong-based NGO called the Asia Monitor Resource Centre. The editorial links to the Pakistan film and quotes from Ashraf, one of the interviewees in the film (Page 3).