

Thematic Overview: Development Assistance

Measuring Aid to Address Forced Labour, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Child Labour

Editor's Note: This is a summary of the Delta 8.7 research report Official Development Assistance and SDG Target 8.7: Measuring Aid to Address Forced Labour, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Child Labour and is presented in a form different from the other Thematic Overviews.

In 2015, 193 countries agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals commits states to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour. As we work to understand the progress being made towards achieving Target 8.7, we need to understand how much Official Development Assistance (ODA) countries are spending (committing) on these issues, where they are committing these resources, and on what forms of Target 8.7 exploitation.

To begin to answer these questions, the analysis, developed as a product of Delta 8.7—a project of the [Centre for Policy Research at United Nations University](#) that aims to contribute to Alliance 8.7 by helping states “measure the change” towards Target 8.7—finds that between 2000 and 2013, ODA spending on Target 8.7 exploitation increased dramatically. But more research is needed to understand the impact of this spending.

Key research findings include:

ODA commitments addressing the forms of exploitation covered by Target 8.7 increased markedly between 2000 and 2013, but with significant geographic and thematic variations.

Thirty donor countries committed more than USD 4 billion in ODA funding to address modern slavery, forced labour, human trafficking and child labour (‘Target 8.7 exploitation’) between 2000 and 2013. From around USD 150 million in 2001, by 2013 total annual ODA commitments had reached USD 433.7 million.

The donor committing the largest sum of ODA towards Target 8.7 exploitation was the US: it spent around 60 per cent of the global total. US expenditure was, in aggregate, almost 10 times as much as the next donor (Canada). Norway, Australia, Sweden and the UK were next in the list of ODA commitments towards these issues, ranked by commitment size.

Expenditure on Target 8.7 exploitation does not seem to increase as a country chooses to spend more on ODA in general.

ODA spending on Target 8.7 exploitation was increasingly dispersed.



A handful of countries received the bulk of ODA commitments relevant to Target 8.7, based on average yearly commitments: Afghanistan (USD 23.5 million), India (USD 19.3 million), [Colombia](#) (USD 19 million) and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (USD 14.5 million). Most countries that received ODA commitments received less than USD 1 million in any given year, and once project administration costs are accounted for, the sums involved are notably small.

Our research finds that commitments were targeted differently by different donors. The bulk of ODA commitments were received *either* from the US *or* from all other countries. Only a few of the top ODA recipients received similar amounts from US and non-US sources, namely DRC, Indonesia, Nepal, Cambodia.

Some, but not all, of those countries that received the highest amounts in Target 8.7 ODA commitments typically feature high in lists of estimated incidence of 8.7 exploitation. Over time, ODA commitments were increasingly dispersed to a wider range of countries. In 2000, bilateral ODA dispersed to projects in 29 recipient countries. Beginning in 2006, over 100 countries received this kind of development.

Some types of Target 8.7 exploitation received more ODA than others.

While in 2000 ODA commitments to projects aimed at eradicating child labour vastly outpaced commitments dealing with other forms of exploitation, by the last few years of the sample, the largest pool of ODA commitments targeted human trafficking. Funding directed at child labour had declined somewhat, and ODA spending addressing other aspects of Target 8.7 was much lower in absolute terms throughout the period studied.

Given the rise of ‘modern slavery’ as a target area for donors and funds (notably the UK) since 2013, further research is required to determine what impact this increased attention has had on overall ODA spending patterns.

More coordination may be required, especially around ODA commitment strategies, to maximize the impact of Target 8.7 ODA.

The study identifies how much ODA was committed, by whom, on what, where. It does not tell us anything about the impact or effectiveness of that assistance – or, indeed, any other kinds of development assistance or giving.

Nevertheless, the mismatch between the list and rank-ordering of recipients of ODA spending on Target 8.7 exploitation and typical estimates of the highest absolute or per capita incidence of Target 8.7 exploitation raises important questions for donors and policy-makers. Is ODA being well-targeted?

Donors and policy-makers may wish to consider whether they are directing ODA spending on these issues to the places where that expenditure could have greatest impact, and whether



stronger donor coordination around shared needs assessments or priority recipient country assistance strategies is needed to achieve the best results.

Finally, the research also points to significant volatility in ODA commitments, which may have a negative impact on the willingness of recipient countries and implementing partners to commit to plan sustained work in this area.

Recommendation to maximize the impact of Target 8.7 ODA

Donors may wish to consider how to develop:

- A more comprehensive and precise ODA project purpose codes, giving more complete coverage of Target 8.7 exploitation, and aligned with operational definitions emerging through cooperation amongst UN and other partners;
- A database on non-ODA spending, including non-DAC-able assistance, domestic public expenditure and private and charitable giving, to allow the analysis provided here to be extended to the full spectrum of funding flows aimed at Target 8.7 exploitation.

Delta 8.7 thanks Kelly Gleason and James Cockayne for their work drafting this text, and Halina Sapeha, Anthony Dursi, Lauren Damme and Luis Fujiwara for their comments on earlier drafts.

This article has been prepared by Kelly Gleason and James Cockayne as a contribution to Delta 8.7. As provided for in the Terms and Conditions of Use of Delta 8.7, the opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of UNU or its partners.

