WEEK 6: BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

This week, we will reflect on how we can contribute to building resilient communities which discourage County Lines and modern slavery activity.

You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

Isaiah 58:12

Each section of this course includes a short animation telling the story of an individual who has been impacted by County Lines. These films could be upsetting. Choices should be offered so participants can watch them or take a short break instead. Sources of emotional support should be signposted in case they trigger any distress – more details on this is available in the Introduction of the full course pack.

BEN’S STORY

Watch the animation of Ben’s story and discuss:
Where do we find hope in Ben’s story?

THE PASSAGE: ISAIAH 58: 9-12

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,  
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,  
and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,  
then your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your night will become like the noonday.
11 The Lord will guide you always;  
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
and will strengthen your frame.  
You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.  
12 Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins  
and will raise up the age-old foundations;  
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.
WEEK 6: BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

REFLECTION AND PRAYER

Despite a selfish instinct to ‘receive’, we know deep down that it is when we give to others that we receive back a richer sense of belonging and being part of a greater project than our own small concerns. Like the Good Samaritan, we are called especially to go the extra mile to reach out to others in need. Then we become part of God’s goodness and grace being made manifest in a world seeking health and wholeness. We are called to spend ourselves to satisfy the needs of others – especially those who suffer abuse and exploitation.

To be fully human in a world often touched by darkness means to be willing to become an agent of light in difficult places. The challenge is to find ways of living out these priorities, paying attention to others, and taking every opportunity to build friendship, trust and hope together.

PRAYER:

Holy God, as we look around at so much brokenness, inspire each of us to become repairers and restorers of the precious lives you create – both for others and for ourselves. Through Him who gave Himself for us, and ever lives to forgive, heal and restore all who turned to Him, even Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PRACTICAL ACTION:

Look at the practical action sheet for ideas and principles to build resilience in your community.
WEEK 6: PRACTICAL ACTION

Look at the diagram below which tries to describe some of the elements of a fragmented community which creates the conditions in which County Lines drug trafficking can thrive.

Think about some simple practical actions that individuals, families, faith groups and communities can do to build resilience.

If you need some help with ideas, see the background reading sheet for this week.
There are many ways we can contribute to making our communities resilient and effective at discouraging the presence of County Lines activity. The diagram below summarises some of the ways we can achieve this.

1. **Recognise everyone has something to offer**
   Good stable communities recognise that all ages, genders, ethnic groups and sexualities can bring huge benefit to the community. The key is to find opportunities for these different interactions to take place in a way that builds good relationships and rapport.

2. **Discover skills, knowledge and assets available in your community**
   Often communities do not realise the huge range of resources they have and the process of discovering them and sharing them can build a strong sense of community. One useful tool for doing this is called Appreciative Inquiry.
3. **Identify and address local needs and challenges**
   Addressing local needs and issues that people feel strongly about is a good way of building community spirit and making a positive difference to people’s lives.

4. **Involve people in acts of kindness and projects**
   When people are involved in improving their situation, they have a much greater sense of ownership and pride in what they have managed to change. This also reduces people’s vulnerability to negative influences.

5. **Collaborate with local councils and authorities**
   These bodies are essential for providing additional support and services as well as create opportunities for collaboration when facing such challenging issues as modern slavery and County Lines.

6. **Celebrate key successes**
   Any community initiative, however small, needs to be acknowledged and celebrated, as this builds motivation, commitment and pride in community.

7. **Keep on learning**
   Innovation and creativity come from being open to learn from others' experience. This is essential for giving confidence to face new challenges and threats to community life and well-being

**FOR MORE RESOURCES ON BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE:**

**HIDDEN VOICES:**
An interactive resource for helping churches understand and respond to the presence of modern slavery in their communities
[https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/hidden-voices](https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/hidden-voices)

**STORIES ON THE STREET:**
Designed to equip church members to be catalysts for positive change in their communities and build community resilience.