



Theme: Can we eliminate human trafficking?

*"We're very realistic about this. We're not going to eliminate trafficking. We're not going to change this whole culture of girls feeling unworthy. But we're going to change **this** group of girls. It's going to happen. One girl at a time"*

Caroline Nguyen Ticarro-Parker, Founder and Executive Director, Catalyst Foundation



Overview

Every year, human traffickers generate billions of dollars in profits by victimizing millions of people around the world. Human trafficking has long been considered one of the fastest growing global criminal industries (slightly behind illegal drugs and weapons). According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the majority of trafficking involves sexual exploitation, most of the victims are female, and half are children.

Where people are 'for sale'

Enslaved farmworkers have been found harvesting tomatoes in Florida and picking strawberries in California. Young girls have been forced into prostitution in Toledo, Tokyo, Atlanta, Jerusalem, and other cities and towns across the globe. Women have been enslaved as domestic workers in homes in Maryland and New York. And human trafficking victims have been found working in restaurants, hotels, nail salons, and shops in small towns and booming cities. Wherever you live, chances are some form of human trafficking has taken place there. In homes, workplaces and stores, many victims of human trafficking are invisible although they are right in front of us.

The bottom line

Although many factors make children and adults vulnerable to trafficking, it doesn't only exist because people are vulnerable. Like the sale of drugs, weapons and every other 'product', the sale of human beings is based on supply and demand.

When individuals are willing to buy commercial sex (print, videos, fake massage parlors, brothels, internet pornography sites, strip clubs and street prostitution) they create a market and make it profitable for traffickers to sexually exploit children and adults. Many sex buyers may be unaware, ill-informed, or in direct denial of the abusive realities of sex trafficking situations as they exist within the broader sex trade. Popular media, including certain books, movies,



television shows and music, sometimes glamorize and romanticize the commercial sex industry without acknowledging the presence of sex trafficking. This glamorization then fuels the demand for paid sexual services.

When consumers are willing to buy goods and services from industries that rely on forced labor, they create a profit incentive for labor traffickers to maximize revenue with minimal production costs.

According to Dr. Louise Shelley of George Mason University, a leading expert on the relationship among terrorism, organized crime and corruption as well as human trafficking, *“Current world conditions have created increased demand and supply. Migration flows are enormous, and this illicit trade is hidden within the massive movement of people. The supply exists because globalization has caused increasing economic and demographic disparities between the developing and developed world, along with the feminization of poverty and the marginalization of many rural communities.”* (Human Trafficking – A Global Perspective, pp 3-4)

A thriving business

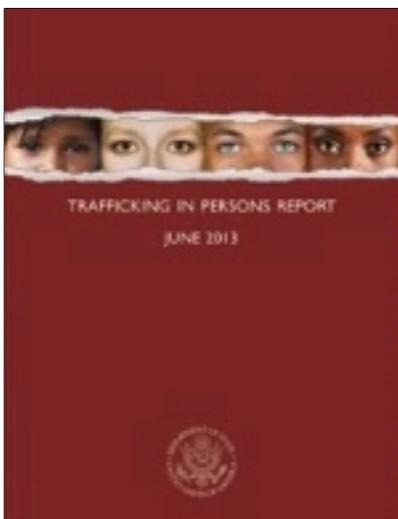
Trafficking thrives in environments where traffickers can earn substantial profits and where they encounter a fairly low risk of getting caught. Surprisingly, that environment is found everywhere in the world. A low-risk environment is sustained when a community is unaware of the issues and when government and community institutions are not trained to respond. Wherever laws are not effective, either because agencies do not investigate or prosecute infractions, and wherever safety nets for victims do not exist, there is little to deter human trafficking operations.

Complicating matters, there is no single ‘profile’ of a trafficker. Essentially, human traffickers can be anyone who is willing to exploit another human being for profit. Most trafficking is carried out by people whose nationality is the same as that of their victim. A disproportionate number of women are involved in human trafficking as perpetrators. Female offenders have a prominent role in human trafficking, particularly where former victims become traffickers as a means of escaping their own victimization.

Possibilities

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, there is a need to take a more holistic and partnership approach to tackling the problem, mobilizing the support of NGOs, governments and the community at large.

Since 2001, the U.S. State Department has produced an annual ‘Trafficking in Persons Report’ (TIP). It represents a global look at the nature and scope of trafficking and the range of government actions to address it. The U.S. Government uses the TIP Report to engage foreign governments in dialogues to advance anti-trafficking reforms, to combat trafficking, and to target resources on prevention, protection and prosecution programs. Worldwide, the report is used by international organizations, foreign governments, and nongovernmental organizations alike as a tool to examine where resources are most needed.





“Social scientists estimate that 27 million men, women, and children are trafficking victims at any given time. Only 40,000 victims were identified in the last year (2012). That means we’re bringing to light only a mere fraction of those who are exploited in modern slavery. That number, and the millions who remain unidentified, are the numbers that deserve our focus.” - Luis CdeBaca, UN Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons

The 2013 Trafficking in Persons Report focuses on the importance of effective victim identification, and on approaches and policies that have succeeded in bringing victims to the attention of those who can help. Trafficked persons are often reluctant to disclose their experiences for fear of law enforcement, the traffickers’ retaliation, and general distrust of others. Most trafficked persons don’t seek help because they have no idea that protections are available. The *Report* outlines specific steps officials should take—from legislators and judges to police officers and border guards—to make sure victims do not stay hidden.

Another strategy

So much of the effort to ‘combat trafficking’ is focused on affecting the supply side of the equation, but there are also concerted efforts being made globally to decrease the demand. Changing the way women are perceived in the world plays a role in altering the market incentives that bring traffickers immense profits.

The organizations and individuals who work for gender equality are partners in this walk to freedom. There is a growing progressive men’s movement (see ‘Source Materials’ below for a partial list) dedicated to addressing the redefinition of masculinity, the eradication of ‘othering’, and the rape culture that victimizes both women and men. There is a growing awareness that our ability to achieve gender equality (and to end much of the suffering inequality brings) will depend upon men holding up their half of the sky.



“With education, collective giving, advocacy, and compassion we are making a difference at the grassroots level, empowering, inspiring and motivating as individuals lend their hearts, hands, and minds to change the world for women and make it a more just and equitable place.”

– Marsha Wallace, Co-founder, Dining for Women

“...one person’s passion to make a difference can become an opportunity for the average person to impact global change.”

- Caroline Nguyen Ticarro-Parker, Founder and Executive Director, Catalyst Foundation



Source Materials

- **Polaris Project** - <http://www.polarisproject.org>
- **Global Freedom Center** - <http://globalfreedomcenter.org/GFC/humantraffickingstories>
- **5 Things to know about Human Trafficking** – Amanda Kloer – CNN Freedom Project 3/15/2011
<http://thecnnfreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/15/5-things-to-know-about-human-trafficking/>
- **Facts about Human Trafficking** - <http://www.dosomething.org/tipsandtools/11-facts-about-human-trafficking>
- **Human Sex Trafficking**. Amanda Walker-Rodriguez and Rodney Hill
http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/law-enforcement-bulletin/march_2011/human_sex_trafficking
- **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime** – FAQs on Human Trafficking and Global Trafficking Report
<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/faqs.html>
http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Global_Report_on_TIP.pdf
- **US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report 2013** - <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/>
- **National Underground Railroad Freedom Center** - <http://freedomcenter.org/>
- **Human Trafficking in Historical Perspective** – T. Mills Kelly – Global Studies Review – George Mason University – August 30, 2012 <http://www.globality-gmu.net/archives/3271>
- **Human Trafficking – A Global Perspective**. Louise Shelley – Cambridge University Press 2010
- **UNODC's Global Report on Trafficking in Persons** - http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Global_Report_on_TIP.pdf

A selection of men's organizations working to reduce the demand -

- **Men Can Stop Rape** - <http://www.mencanstoprape.org>
- **The Good Men Project** - <http://goodmenproject.com>
- **The ManKind Project** - <http://mankindproject.org>
- **Men Stopping Violence** - <http://www.menstoppingviolence.org>
- **A Call to Men** - <http://www.acalltomen.com>
- **Men's Work** - <http://mensworkinc.com>
- **The White Ribbon Campaign** - <http://www.whiteribbon.ca>

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