

Sex Trafficking

Sex Trafficking is a form of human trafficking in which women, men and children are forced to have sexual intercourse or perform sexual acts in return for money. As a team we chose to research sex trafficking because it is not an issue that is discussed in our community. Recently, there have been discoveries of victims in sex trafficking cases in the DC metro area, which includes Prince Georges and Montgomery counties. Sex trafficking occurs globally and is relevant in most third world countries. In fact many victims in the United States are originally from third world countries. Our group explored the cultural, economical, and political perspectives of sex trafficking. Culturally all victims of sex trafficking have a common characteristic. Economically, sex trafficking is the second largest criminal industry worldwide that continues to grow daily. Politically, local, national, and international state officials have been working to create policies and pass laws in order to bring an end to sex trafficking industry.

Local Issue

The problem of sex trafficking is a global epidemic that's become a major problem in the D.C. area. Human trafficking in city areas such as D.C are forcing young women and children into sexual labor. Organizations have been created to bring awareness to this problem, As well as inform police and government agencies to stop this crime. The United States not only faces an influx of international victims but also has its own homegrown problem of interstate sex trafficking of minors. Although research to document the number of children engaged in prostitution in the United States is lacking, an estimated 293,000 American youths are at risk of becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Such acts are committed right in the DC

area, where sex trafficking has been turned into a business to gain money. Even though sex trafficking not only involves women it includes women, men, and young children, the issue in the D.C area is that the majority of this victims are teenage girls, which slave trader tend to go for girls who are weak minded, not put together, who speaks little English, who are vulnerable, and not educated.

Global Relevance

In most 3rd world countries around the world sex trafficking is done as a business to gain money. “It is the fastest-growing business of organized crime and the third-largest criminal enterprise in the world. The majority of sex trafficking is international, with victims taken from such places as South and Southeast Asia, the former Soviet Union, Central and South America, and other less developed areas and moved to more developed ones, including Asia, the Middle East, Western Europe, and North America”(http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/law-enforcement-bulletin/march_2011/human_sex_trafficking). According to Third World Network, there are an estimated 57,000 commercial sex workers in Cambodia (<http://www.twinside.org.sg/>). The issues in 3rd world countries is that many governments are aware of this crime but have not taken any affective action that has put an end to sex trafficking.

For example, Russian men and women from the Russian Far East are trafficked to South Korea, China, Bahrain, etc. The Government of the Russian Federation does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. However, it is making significant efforts to comply with the minimum standards. Despite these significant efforts, the Russian government over the last year: decreased the number of reported trafficking investigations,

prosecutions, and convictions; did not vigorously prosecute, convict, and punish government officials; made no significant efforts to improve efforts to identify and assist victims of trafficking; and did not make adequate efforts to address labor trafficking therefore Russia is placed on tier two watch list (gvnet.com/humantrafficking/Russia.htm). Along with many other countries, sex trafficking is not a big issue globally like it is here in our area. Unless action is taken, the ineffective systems that are present in other countries is the reason why sex trafficking is such a big issue globally.

President Obama gave a speech to rally a renewed global commitment to ending the exploitation of workers and children. He stated organized teams were “dismantling networks of human traffickers and putting the culprits behind bars” (huffingtonpost.com). The White House issued new executive orders strengthening prohibitions against human trafficking in government contracting, making it “apply to all federal contractors and subcontractors”. The new rules require compliance for large overseas contracts and subcontracts. The administration said it was providing more training on human trafficking to federal prosecutors, law enforcement officials, immigration judges and others.

CNN’s Martin Savidge states “Barcelona, Spain is one of the most popular tourist destinations in southern Europe and the largest city in Spain's Catalonia region. The location's beauty and mild weather draw tourists, but traffickers like the region, too: Vacationers can become clients for prostitution and traffickers also use tourist visas to bring people into the country. The human trafficking unit for the region's police agency, Mossos d'Esquadra, stays busy” (Spain’s hot spot for human trafficking, July 5, 2011 CNN new repost). Locally the women or teens that fall into the hands of slave traders are victims who are poor, have nothing

and usually come from a bad home, so they end up in prostituting themselves. Eventually, they end up in the hands of a pimp, the slave trader and are forced into the world of sex trafficking. Other women from foreign countries are brought here by fraud and are forced into this crime. The diversity of a woman, the slave trader has, the more money the trader will make for their business.

As I researched sex trafficking I questioned, what are local, national and international government officials doing in order to stop sex trafficking? I also wondered what cultures are known to participate in sex trafficking and why? The United States Congress, The United Nations and Maryland State Officials are working to end sex trafficking locally and globally. The United Nations adopted the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2000 and launched the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking in 2007. Recently, members within the United States Congress have proposed and passed laws on how to end sex trafficking in America. In 2007, Maryland state officials formed The Maryland Human Trafficking Task force.

The United Nations

In 2000 the United Nations began their effort to fight sex trafficking by adopting the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. This convention was also called the Palermo Convention, in which it featured two Palermo protocols out of three protocols total. The protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The protocol against smuggling of Migrants by land, sea and air were used to construct the current international law ("12 .a protocol," 2000), in which they are currently 117 signatures out of 154

countries that agree with the protocol and apply it. In 2007 the United Nations launched the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking. The global initiative was put in place to educate and inform people of sex trafficking globally and hopefully put a stop to it. The United Nations also implemented new strategies within the Office on Drugs and Crime such as addressing “human trafficking issues through its Global Programme against Trafficking in Persons.” (“UNODC,” 2005) strategies such as this allow nonprofit groups locally to join the initiative by volunteering and donating money and insight.

The United States Congress

Considering all of the sex trafficking factors there is a need to focus on potential solutions to decrease sex trafficking. Currently, there are local, national, international governments, nonprofit organizations, trusts and charities that are attending to efforts to decrease sex trafficking around the globe. Sometimes these efforts are limited. For example, members of legislature may feel strongly about the issue, but due to different political perspectives a majority of members of the house or senate branches may not feel laws to decrease sex trafficking are as important. “The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) enjoyed strong bipartisan support when Congress passed it in 2000 and reauthorized it three times since. However, the latest efforts have been on hold for more than a year.” (Serrie, 2012). Congress has been able to come to an agreement in the past, but due to differences in political parties congressional gridlock does not help to address the issue. The political lens on sex trafficking in the DC metropolitan area is a big deal. In fact the United States President, Barack Obama declared January 2013 National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. According to the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking “The move is aimed at increasing awareness about human trafficking and

modern-day slavery within US borders and abroad.” (2012). In order to have an impact and develop the best outcomes to decrease sex trafficking, a majority of citizens have to have to become aware of sex trafficking. According to President Obama’s proclamation “Our commitment to stopping human trafficking does not end at our borders. As a leader in the global movement to combat this scourge, the United States has renewed sanctions on governments that harbor the worst offenders.”(Obama, 2012)

Maryland State Officials:

The Maryland U.S. attorney’s office began its fight against sex trafficking in 2007 by forming the Maryland human trafficking task force. The task force aims to create a heightened law enforcement and victim service presence in the community. (US Dept. Justice, 2007) The task force adds to law enforcement efforts with roving operations to identify victims, traffickers, deputizing local law enforcement to assist in federal human trafficking investigations, and provide training for law enforcement officers. Also, the task force seeks to decrease human trafficking through outreach to persons who might be victimized by traffickers.

Economics

Sex trafficking generates billions of dollars each year locally and globally. An estimate of \$32 billion was generated annually, which is bigger than Google, Nike, and Starbucks combined income. \$15.5 billion was generated from industrialized countries. The question I came up with was what strategies are used in the development of sex trafficking as a business in local areas such as DC? Are these same strategies effective in 3rd world countries? Human trafficking impedes national and international economic growth. Within the next 10 years, crime experts

expect human trafficking to “surpass drug and arms trafficking in its incidence, cost to human well-being, and profitability to criminals” (Schauer and Wheaton, 2006: 164-165). As people become vulnerable to exploitation and businesses continually seek the lowest-cost labor sources, human trafficking generates profit and creates a market for human exploitation. This paper presents an economic model of human trafficking that encompasses all known economic factors that affect human trafficking both across and within national borders.

The United States Policies

The U.S. government has implemented ways to prevent or stop the human trafficking of women and children. A bill declaring harsher punishment for those involved in trafficking quickly passed through Senate on October 11th, 2000. “The vote, 95 to 0”, showed the urgent need for the bill to be passed. Once signed, the bill would have been a more strict punishment for those prosecuted and foreign victims would receive special visas to stay in America while their exploiters are being punished. The bill also created a section in the State Department that “would deal and coordinate federal efforts to deal with trafficking”. Sex trafficking has also become an increased issue in the D.C. Metropolitan area. A 2012 report from the Gannett Company’s WUSA9 highlighted, girls as young as 12 are exposed to sex trafficking. About “75-80 girls...from the D.C. metropolitan area” have sought help from non-profit organizations. Asia Graves, a college student from northeast D.C. who became a victim of sex trafficking at age 16, has dedicated her life to being a women’s right advocate. She currently works for FAIR Girls, a non-profit organization that helps victims of human trafficking to cope and survive. The local government has made, and continues to make, numerous efforts to prevent and stop human trafficking. President Barack Obama “proclaim[ed] January 2010 as National

Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month” in a speech made regarding the issue. He explains that January should be used as a month Americans recognize the important role that can be played in ending modern-day slavery by engaging in certain programs and activities. Immediately following this month of awareness is February 1st, National Freedom Day.

Foreign Policies

Some foreign countries have been more successful than others in the prevention and stopping of sex trafficking. Bangladesh is an example of a country with high rates of sex trafficking and a government which takes little or no effort in preventing it. As Bimal Kanti Paul (2000) notes, “government of Bangladesh does not publish statistics on the incidence of trafficking”, making it hard to gather information about the topic. The justice system is corrupt in that “police reports are subject to bribery”, making evidence weak, allowing criminals to continue their injustices. The citizens of Bangladesh are aware of the trafficking of women that takes place, and despite their campaigns, the government chooses to ignore them. A producer of a government-owned television station showed a documentary to create awareness in the community and lost his job. When an incident like this happens, it discourages citizens from continuing to raise awareness on trafficking and also discourages victims because they know if they speak, either nothing will be done or more harm will be done to them. South Africa is a generally developed country, but improved government policies on sex trafficking can benefit them greatly. This country has taken the first step in forbidding slavery, but there is currently “no stand-alone law against human trafficking in all its forms” according to TIME Magazine’s E. Benjamin Skinner. With South Africa “[having] more HIV cases than any other nation”, it is important that precautions be made to decrease the rate of child deaths.

Ways to Address the Issue

Some ways to address this issue are by starting organizations in which bring awareness all around the world for people to understand the situation. This can also include more FBI involvement in helping to prevent human trafficking, whenever suspected. For example in Maryland and D.C. there are many organizations that have been stated to bring an awareness of eliminating human trafficking. CASA of Maryland is a community organization that was founded by Central American refugees and North Americans. CASA was created in response to the human needs of the thousands of Central Americans arriving to the D.C. Turnaround Inc. is another program which started its mission to build a community free of violence by working with adults and children affected by intimate partner and sexual violence. They also try to prevent further violence through advocacy and education. Educations starts locally then eventually spread out to other countries. Some advantages of this are that sex trafficking would be heard all around America and this would touch many citizens and many people would start reaching out to these organizations. This would only lead to positive break troughs for these victims all around the world, the only disadvantages are would these same strategies be able to reach victims in 3rd world countries. (2483)