

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND THE PREVENTION OF HIV

East Los Angeles Women's Center
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What is Human Trafficking?

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU *think...*

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS IN OUR *backyard*



FOR MORE INFORMATION contact www.elawc.org



A campaign to end violence against women and HIV

ENDORSED BY
The Los Angeles County
Domestic Violence Council

East Los Angeles College -
Violence Intervention Team

City of Los Angeles AIDS
Coordinator's Office

LEARN MORE: Rape & Battering Hotline 800-585-6231 | AIDS Infoline 800-400-7432 | Office 323-526-5819

Human trafficking is widespread and encompasses a spectrum of experiences, activities and circumstances. The women who participated in the study had varied experiences such as: an international abduction from Mexico and forced into the sex trade by the cartel, a young woman raised in foster care and searching for a way out by working in strip clubs, young girls forced into prostitution by their pimps, and women beaten and tortured by the men who pay for sex. Across these different journeys, however, lies a common theme: each woman or girl was sexually exploited and their human rights were violated.

The Problem

Human/sex trafficking is a crime and form of modern day slavery that exists around the globe, including here in Los Angeles and throughout California.

Trafficking involves controlling a person through force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the victim for forced labor, sexual exploitation, or both . Human/sex trafficking strips victims of their freedom and violates our nation's promise that every person is guaranteed basic human rights (CA DOJ Attorney General, 2014).



Human Trafficking- A Global Issue

Human trafficking is a widespread—and extremely profitable—crime

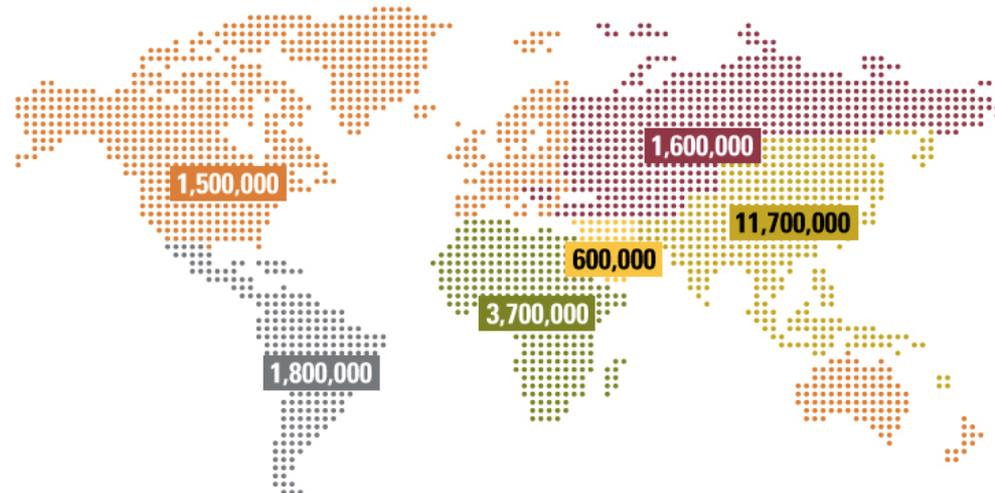
21
MILLION
Estimated number of
people trafficked
around the world

\$32
BILLION
Estimated **profits**
generated by human
trafficking globally

29
Countries that have
not joined the
Palermo Protocol¹ to
fight human
trafficking

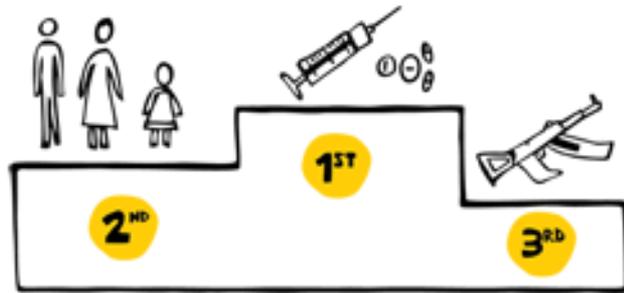
WHERE ARE THE VICTIMS?

Regional distribution of human trafficking



The world's three most illicit industries are:

1. Drug Trafficking
2. Human Trafficking
3. Arms Trafficking



Human trafficking is the second largest source of illegal income worldwide exceeded only by drugs trafficking.

Human Trafficking

“Every time I had a sexual encounter I would lose a part of my soul .”

Survivor of Human Trafficking

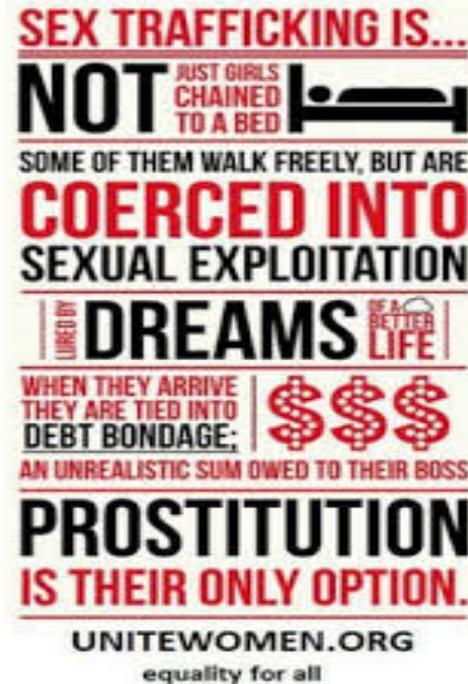
The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC), a 24-hour national confidential, multi-modal hotline and resource center serving the United States reported that the three most common forms of sex trafficking reported are

- pimp-controlled prostitution,
- commercial-front brothels,
- and escort services.

Sex Trafficking & Forced Prostitution

At no point in history have more people been enslaved than women currently are in the sex trade.

Very often women are disconnected from the outside world, “that’s how the trafficker wants it.” “You are isolated, every interaction is with a pimp, a buyer or another prostitute. So there is full immersion in this world, there is no support in a positive way, the interaction is only in support of this lifestyle.”



Culture, Sex Trafficking and HIV Risks

The extent of transnational migration of sex workers from Latin American into Los Angeles is not well known. It is expected, however that low income Latinas who migrate to the U.S. also often find themselves as victims to rings of sex traffickers.

The exploitation of Central American women and child migrants has also been reported, especially in border areas, tourist destinations, ports, and areas hosting migrant workers (IOM, 2010; U.S. State Dept., 2013; Langberg, 2005).

Sex traffickers find it far more profitable to bring women to places where sexual services can be sold and bought openly than to locations where such transactions are legally forbidden. One such example is Mexico where prostitution is tolerated under current Mexican law, albeit with zoning restrictions. Women and children are reportedly trafficked from Mexico's poor interior to urban centers, lured by fraudulent offers of employment or threats of physical violence (U.S. State Dept., 2013).

The Role of Deception, Poverty and Abuse

Outcomes of study

Sexual Assault

Immigrant women lured under the pretense of a job opportunity or in some cases are escaping political turmoil in their home country.

Poverty

Commercial sex work is also perpetuated by “pimps who trick women into sex work” and in many cases it’s the “boyfriends or husbands who force them.”

Some participants stated that it was because of financial and emotional need that they chose to become involved in the commercial sex business.

Foster Care

Violence in the Home

To finance a drug addiction. “the drugs brought the exploitation on,” and “it’s about a desperate quick way to make money.”

FEAR

HIV Risks

Globally, female sex workers are 14 times more likely to be infected with HIV than adult women overall (Wirtz et al., 2014).

Among sex workers, a number of factors work against the use of preventive measures. Social stigma, isolation, legal and issues, gender bias, higher payments for sex without condoms, forced sexual acts, and drug use combine to make sex workers vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV.

The risks associated with women and girls trafficked for the sex trade includes unprotected sex, physical trauma and multiple sex partners often heighten the transmission and spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Interventions: Address the whole person; provide coordinated care.

The interviews and the research literature affirmed that there are successful approaches of preventing HIV and STDs among women who have been trafficked and forced into the sex trade.

But first and foremost, a relationship of trust needs to be established with the women who are approached. It is not enough to deliver a presentation on HIV; communication and connections with the women and girls in these situations need to be consistent and must address issues of poverty, life skills, immigration, sexual violence and helping them create a social support network.

The need to address the complexity of the barriers facing the women leads to the second recommendation: Community based programs providing HIV and STD prevention must be linked to a network of providers that address family planning, safe havens, job training, health care, legal services and interventions in order to help women and girls find true support.



Project Las Muchachas offers a safe circle of support and services to women who are survivors and involved in sex work, many of whom have come to “the life” through human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

English / Spanish | Culturally Responsive | Trauma Informed

- Prevention and outreach
- Bi-monthly *CHARLAS (Circle of Support)*
- HIV and STI prevention education
- Women’s reproductive and health education
- Empowerment, life skills and stress management workshops
- Individual safety planning
- Linkage to legal, health, and rescue services
- 24-hour bilingual crisis intervention and support

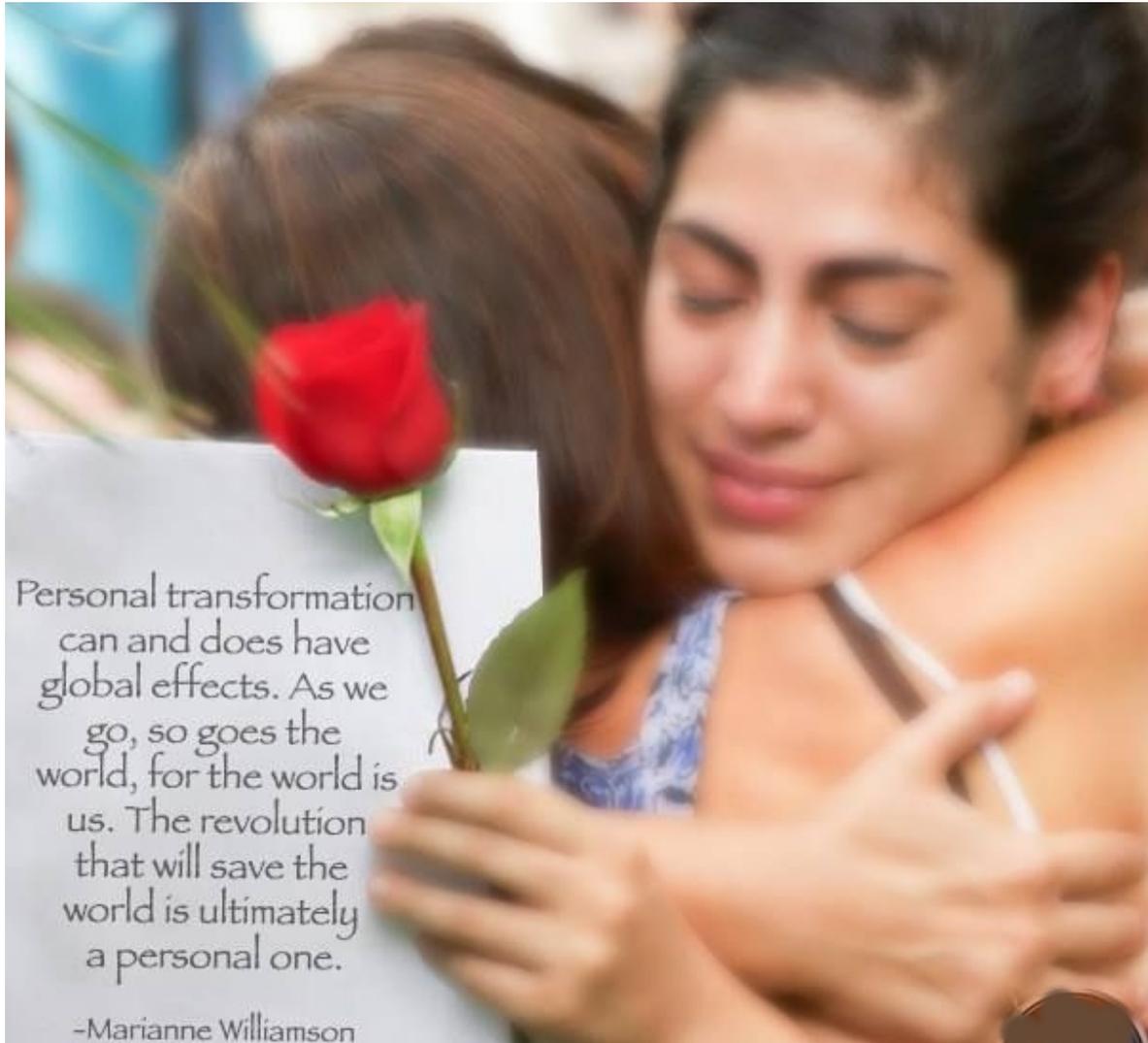
Is there a solution?

Just as the experiences that expose women to this high risk, violent environment are complex, so to is the solution. Building trust with women in these circumstances takes multiple contacts through a variety of outreach strategies during which responders demonstrate consistent, accessible and respectful care.

Coordinated efforts that build relationships can help women find the strength they need to reduce their risk of being infected with HIV and gain power over their own lives.

In order to end human trafficking, we must fight harder. This requires fighting against the subordination of women and girls and most importantly encouraging others to speak the truth about the experience of victims of human trafficking in the world today. This is the challenge we face and we cannot afford to remain silent.





Personal transformation
can and does have
global effects. As we
go, so goes the
world, for the world is
us. The revolution
that will save the
world is ultimately
a personal one.

-Marianne Williamson



Thank you for being here today.

Human Trafficking Study can be accessed at
www.elawc.org

