

Human Trafficking: A Global Problem with Solutions that Begin at Home

By Allison H. Lowe

Abstract

Human trafficking has become a global problem that can no longer be ignored. It has always existed, as evidenced by slavery throughout history, but often times, people did not see it as a problem. After drug trafficking, human trafficking is now tied with the illegal arms industry as the most profitable component of organized crime. It is also the fastest growing. Human trafficking encompasses enforced labor, enforced sex work, and even organ harvesting. This paper examines human trafficking at various levels. First, it reviews the history of the issue, and current legislation. Next, the paper outlines the types of problems facing advocates, specifically social workers, and finally, it offers ideas regarding what needs to be done to eradicate this problem.

Introduction

Human trafficking is an international problem that requires immediate attention from the field of social work. The 2000 UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime provided the first international agreement defining trafficking:

trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (Trafficking Protocol, Article 3a). (quoted in Phinney, 2001, ¶ 2)

Despite the prevalence of human trafficking, most of the general public is unaware that it even exists; even those who do hear of this problem distance themselves from it by thinking that it happens in a faraway country. In reality, human trafficking exists in every country in the world. Here is one story.

V, a ten-year-old girl from Africa, was brought to Chicago by a family friend who promised V's mother she would go to school and have a better life in the United States. For the next four years, V was forced to cook,

clean, and take care of three small children. She slept next to the washing machine and was only allowed to eat when the family was done with their meals. V was not allowed to go to school, leave the home, or talk to anyone. She did not have access to her identification documents, which were kept by her 'employer.' She was told if she went outside, the police would 'catch her' and beat her. V was verbally, physically and sexually abused in this home. V tried to run away but was kidnapped twice by men who raped her and prostituted her out to other men. (Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights [Heartland Alliance], n.d., p. 1).

V's story is just one example of the millions of people who are forced into modern-day slavery.

Human trafficking affects all of us by changing migration patterns, spreading diseases, increasing substance abuse and increasing the profits earned by organized crime. It affects many different systems from health-care to criminal justice to the business market. It seeps into every corner of our world so that no one can truly say they are untouched or unaffected by human trafficking: the charcoal in U.S. grocery stores may have been harvested by slaves in Brazil, the money exchanged at a bar or strip club may have been earned by a young girl who sexually serviced 25-30 men against her will the night before, an illegal substance moving into the U.S. may have originally been transported from Burma into China by an indigenous child forced to serve as a drug mule, or the patients treated in hospitals may have sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or psychological trauma they received from being a victim of human trafficking.

We in the social work community have an even greater responsibility to educate ourselves about this problem and to reach out to victims; it is our job, our livelihood, and our passion to help the disadvantaged and mistreated. Human trafficking takes away people's basic human rights, which goes against everything for which social workers stand. However, because human trafficking is only now garnering attention among social workers, there is very little literature on this issue. Most of the literature deals with describing the problem and the legislation.

Further work is needed on the development of appropriate means of treating victims of this particular form of trauma. Education is the key to beginning the

fight against human trafficking, and to be effective, social workers need to have access to information, literature, and research about this growing problem.

Description of the Problem

“The U.S. government estimates that 600,000 to 800,00 persons are trafficked across international borders annually; however such estimates of global human trafficking are questionable” (United States Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2006, p. 2). Phinney (2001) writes that

relatively little is known about traffickers’ routes, networks, and associations with organized crime . . . [and] international and domestic laws are lacking or insufficient; where laws do exist, sentencing guidelines do not provide a deterrent. (Conceptual Framework, ¶ 6)

Permeable borders and advanced communication technologies have also aided the industry. Experts claim many reasons for the spread and growth of trafficking, including, easy profits made from exploitation, growing poverty in many areas of the world, discrimination against women, restrictive migration laws, a lack of information about trafficking, and insufficient penalties against traffickers. Some claim that trafficking is exacerbated by governments in countries that allow “‘zones of tolerance,’ tourist areas, ports, areas along international trucking routes, . . . and gambling establishments” (Torrey, 2003, p. ix).

The distinction between human trafficking and human smuggling is important, because the two are often taken to mean the same thing. Fassmann, Kohlbacher, Reeger, and Sievers (2005) state that “Human smuggling means assisting in an illegal border crossing and in illegal entry and, therefore, always has a transnational element” (p. 48). The smugglers’ involvement ends once the person has been smuggled into another country. Victims of trafficking, on the other hand, are controlled at every point in the process from countries of origin, through countries of transit, and into countries of destination, which raises questions of human rights. Julia O’Connell Davidson (2005) argues that “the greater the individual’s dependence on middle agents and employers who are effectively unaccountable and unregulated, the more that these third parties enjoy the godlike power to choose between harming or helping” (p. 76), which blurs the distinction between smuggling and trafficking. The situation may be further complicated if a person willingly agrees to travel to another country for work that is promised by a third

party. However, this situation becomes trafficking if the third party fails to live up to their promises or if force, fraud, or coercion are used to lure and/or enslave people.

There are many views and opinions as to how we should define and fight trafficking, but the two most outspoken groups disagree about prostitution and trafficking. The abolitionists, such as the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), equate prostitution with both trafficking and violence against women. Saunders (2005) indicates that the nonabolitionists, such as the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), “oppose abuses of sex workers under the rubric of forced prostitution while in general supporting sex work as a form of labor” (p. 347). In some countries, prostitution is a legal labor choice, but in many places there is little or no way to distinguish between those who choose to go into sex work and those who have been forced into it by trafficking. Some believe that legalization of sex work would help reduce trafficking; however, there has been only a small amount of research in this area to date.

Like any type of market, human trafficking is driven by supply and demand. It is a booming economy populated with disposable products, which makes it different from the primarily racial, systemic slavery of centuries past. One argument is that the demand for sex work drives human trafficking. Phinney’s (2001) summary of the limited research on this topic indicates,

that men’s reasons for buying sex include a desire for sex without commitment or emotional involvement; the perception that they can ask a prostitute to ‘do anything,’ including acts they would hesitate to request from a regular partner; the belief, particularly among men without (or separated from) regular partners, that sex is necessary to their well-being—a basic need; and the feeling of power experienced in sexual encounters with prostitutes. (Conceptual Framework, Para 3)

People who support this argument, like the CATW, say that the best solution is to arrest people, commonly referred to as “johns,” who patronize sex workers.

Those opposing CATW’s position believe that “demand for sex work is not a predominant driving factor for trafficking; instead, it is driven by poverty, race, and gender inequalities” (Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center, Network of Sex Projects & Prostitutes of New York, 2005, ¶1). Opponents also believe that defining sex work by its demand leads to an “anti-sex work, anti-male and homophobic mindset which, under the guise of protecting sex workers, is another way of under-

mining sex workers' autonomy and causing more harm to them" (§ 2). Groups who believe in this argument, such as the GAATW, believe in acceptance of sex work as a legal labor choice and argue for more regulation in this industry, as in other industries, to stop violence and trafficking.

Trafficking is not limited to sex work; therefore, we must also consider the demand of any employer looking for cheap labor and the supply of men, women, and children for this form, which has been abundant. "In areas where poverty has already limited people's choices, discrimination against women in education, employment and wages can leave them with very few options for supporting themselves and their families" (Phinney, 2001, Conceptual Framework, § 4). Legal migration may not be possible for many, and they may fall prey to traffickers' false promises. People who have fled areas of violence and corruption and people who have been sold to pay off a debt are also susceptible to traffickers who promise a better life. Suppliers, who are driven by the vast profits gained by selling humans, often target the most vulnerable members of society, which enables them to control their victims through violence, denying health care, denying education, denying contraceptives, psychological abuse, taking away documentation, and threatening family members. The problem with human trafficking is exacerbated because humans can be sold repeatedly, creating greater profits for the suppliers.

Legislation against Human Trafficking

The first major step in human trafficking legislation was the 1949 UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1949). This law strictly equated trafficking with prostitution and assumed all victims were either women or children, while neglecting the forced labor trade. General consensus is that the 1949 Convention was not successful because of weak enforcement methods. It was adopted by only 69 countries and was not re-ratified by subsequent UN Conventions (Phinney, 2001, Legal Context, § 1).

The 2000 UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children is currently the most widely accepted statute worldwide and is used as a ruler for international laws against trafficking. Also known as the Palermo Convention, this protocol "specifies criminalization, stronger border controls, and increased security and control of documents as preventive mechanisms" (Phinney, 2001, Legal Context, § 1). It calls for more international cooperation and for the first time, focuses on the victims

of trafficking by addressing their needs for assistance and protection. By May 2001, the protocol had been signed by 85 countries and only needs 35 more signatures to become an instrument of international law.

In the United States, Section 1584 of Volume 18 of the U.S. Code makes it a crime to force a person to work against his will, and Section 1581 makes it illegal to force a person to work through debt servitude (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, n.d., §§ 3, 5). Some child victims may be covered by child abuse and neglect laws as every state in the U.S. requires "law enforcement officers, health care workers, social workers, mental health professionals, and school personnel" to report suspected cases of parental or caregiver abuse and/or neglect. In addition, some states require "commercial film or photograph processors" to report suspected cases of abuse, violence, and/or neglect (Hughes, 2003, Who Should Report Suspected Cases of Trafficking § 1).

The first piece of modern, comprehensive federal legislation concerning human trafficking is the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000. The goals of the TVPA are to prevent trafficking overseas, protect victims, and prosecute traffickers. The TVPA concerns "severe forms of trafficking in persons," which is defined as follows:

- (a) sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person is induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- (b) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery. (U.S. Department of State, 2007, p. 18)

The TVPA classifies what constitutes trafficking and sets criteria for the minimum standards for a country to be considered as combating trafficking. A government is considered to have made serious and sustained efforts to combat trafficking if it investigates and prosecutes and if it contributes data regarding investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences of trafficking cases to the U.S. Department of State. A government must also protect the victims of trafficking and ensure that they will not be jailed and/or penalized themselves. They must institute public awareness and education programs, cooperate with other governments in investigations and prosecutions of traffickers, and extradite persons charged with acts of severe forms of trafficking. Monitoring of immi-

gration and emigration patterns is also considered imperative. Finally, a government must achieve noticeable progress in fighting trafficking from previous years. All governments' efforts are monitored in the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. The report ranks every country in the world according to its risk of being a country of origin, transport, or destination for victims of trafficking and also ranks it according to its efforts to fight trafficking.

Prevention efforts in the U.S. involve conducting educational and public awareness programs. In 2004, the Department of Health and Human Services organized *Rescue & Restore Victims of Human Trafficking*, a public awareness campaign to educate intermediaries, such as law enforcement, social service providers, and faith-based organization workers who may come into contact with victims of human trafficking (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families [U.S. DHHS, ACF], n.d.a).

The TVPA was reauthorized in 2003 and again in 2005 as a means of renewing the United States' commitment to combat trafficking. The 2003 reauthorization introduced one important new point: victims of trafficking may bring federal civil suits against traffickers for actual and punitive damages (U.S. DHHS, ACF, Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2003). It also includes sex trafficking and forced labor as offenses under the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organization statute.

In order to protect victims of trafficking, the U.S. is providing social service programs for the victims that include making housing, education, health care, childcare, transportation, and job training readily available, which makes it more victim-centered than any previous legislation. The law established the T visa, which allows victims to become temporary residents of the U.S. A quota of 5,000 victims of trafficking per year may receive permanent residence status after 3 years from issuance of the temporary visas (U.S. DHHS, ACF, n.d.b, p. 1). Trafficking victims become eligible for federal or state benefits and services once they become certified by the Department of Health and Human Services. After they are certified, they may apply for the same benefits available to refugees, such as refugee cash, medical assistance, and social services. Victims under the age of 18 do not need to obtain certification; they are automatically issued letters of eligibility by the department.

To ensure prosecution of traffickers, the TVPA has created new law enforcement tools, such as lengthening sentences for traffickers, specialized training for law enforcement officers to recognize victims of trafficking, sending more law enforcement officials undercover, and conducting research to execute well-planned raids. The

training of law enforcement officials is beneficial for the victims, because in the past they were simply arrested as illegal immigrants or prostitutes and deported to their countries of origin. Traffickers may be sentenced to life in prison if the crime results in death or includes kidnapping, sexual abuse, an attempt to kill, or if the victim is under the age of 14. The minimum sentence for a trafficker is 20 years in prison, and it is always considered a trafficking crime if the victim is under the age of eighteen in the sex trade whether or not force, fraud, or coercion were used.

Ambassador Mark P. Lagon (2007), Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons, stated that President Bush has allotted more than \$448 million since fiscal year 2001 to combat trafficking, and that this money is used both to implement numerous programs in the U.S. and sent to other countries to assist in funding programs of their own or to investigate international cases of trafficking. In fiscal year 2006, 28% of funding was committed to domestic programs within the U.S., while the other 72% funded international programs. The majority of domestic funding went to organizations such as the Salvation Army, Safe Horizon, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and programs in Texas along the U.S. Mexico border. The countries with the highest number of projects (excluding the U.S.) were India, Russia, and Mexico; however, there is at least some funding going to almost every country or region in the world (U.S. Department of State, Under Secretary for Democracy & Global Affairs, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2007). The U.S. government collaborates with many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to institute the programs that aid the victims of trafficking. The local nongovernmental organizations, law enforcement offices, social service agencies, and religious institutions are often the first to come into contact with victims of trafficking and traffickers; therefore, they are integral in implementing the policies and goals of the TVPA.

Problems with Current Legislation

With all of the benefits described so far of the TVPA and the international laws against trafficking, there is still much to be accomplished in order to fight the trafficking in persons. Much of the U.S. public is only recently becoming aware of this problem. Some who are aware usually consider it an international problem that does not occur within our borders; however, we cannot ignore that it does happen here at home. The TVPA does not monitor the trafficking of victims within the U.S., so we have no idea how big a problem it is within our national borders. The majority of the programs financed by the TVPA are international. Many states, including Illinois with House

Bill 1469, have passed or are working to pass legislation that penalizes traffickers, which is an important beginning. However, there should be equal focus on domestic trafficking within national borders and not just across international borders.

Most of the victims identified by the U.S. government within our borders are citizens of other nations; however, U.S. citizens may also be subjected to trafficking. Victimization can occur in many ways; for instance, both citizens and non-citizens (with or without legal documentation) are trafficked into the U.S. from other countries. Victims may be trafficked from one location to another within the US, often multiple times. In fact, trafficking may not involve travel as some people are enslaved within their own hometown. There is consensus in the field that human trafficking is less about the movement of a person than the exploitation of a person through the use of force, fraud, or coercion.

The GAO states that “the quality of existing country level data varies due to limited availability, reliability, and comparability” and that there is a “considerable discrepancy between the numbers of observed and estimated victims of trafficking” (2006, p. 2). The different definitions of trafficking among countries and the relationships between countries may also make it more difficult to fight trafficking. In some countries, prostitution is legal and therefore, laws against trafficking may be different from prostitution laws in more conservative countries. Every year the U.S. Department of State ranks countries with regard to human trafficking (GAO, 2006, p. 1), but the GAO warns that economic, political, or social ties to other countries may influence our government’s ranking process (p. 33).

Immigration laws in the U.S. can have an effect on trafficking since smuggling and trafficking are often confused. After the September 11th attacks, work-site inspections by U.S. immigration officials fell because they were focusing on larger national security cases (Watson & Rodriguez, 2006, p. 9), causing a cutback in illegal immigration cases. However, immigration, both legal and illegal, has now become a primary focus because of the recent proposals for revised immigration laws. More focus on the illegal immigration industry is likely to have a negative effect on victims of trafficking, since most are seen first as illegal immigrants.

Peter Laufer, in his book *Wetback Nation* (2004), argues that the current situation with the Mexican/U.S. border is offering ample opportunities for human trafficking: drug smugglers are now moving into human trafficking since people-smuggling usually results in a less severe jail sentence; rival *coyoteros* (smugglers) kidnap and sell families who are trying to cross into the U.S., and some employers in the U.S. are actively recruit-

ing people in Mexico, hiring them illegally, and then treating them inhumanely. Each case of illegal immigration does not necessarily constitute human trafficking, but some cases do begin or end as human trafficking and we must investigate each case on its own merits without identifying the immigrant as a criminal. The debate on illegal immigration and the United States’s view of illegal immigrants affects and changes how we see victims of human trafficking.

Action Needed

The United States, as well as the world, needs to focus on obtaining more reliable data on victims of trafficking. Because the TVPA is such a new policy, its success has yet to be determined. The TVPA does fund research projects every year; however, the methods for uncovering data and studying instances of human trafficking are not yet fully formed or understood. There is little comprehensive data about human trafficking or about the success of the TVPA and more is needed. Of course, this is extremely difficult since most victims are considered “the invisibles.” The very nature of human trafficking is that marginalized populations are targeted and are therefore overlooked to begin with, much less after they have been trafficked. They are either prevented from seeking help by their traffickers or are too frightened to report them. We as fellow humans should reach out to these marginalized populations and refuse to overlook them. If the general public, the police forces, and national governments are educated, the world will be more aware of this issue and will recognize victims more easily. Research, education, and prevention are the keys to combating this problem.

As social workers, we are some of the first to come into contact with the victims, especially those of us who work with immigrants, refugees, and disadvantaged populations within and outside our own country. The social work community should train the people in our field to learn how to identify victims and help them. Social workers should be taught to listen closely to stories about how immigrants and refugees came to this country and how they were treated here. We should ask questions about the migration patterns of our clients if they have moved from place to place frequently with no apparent reason. We should look for clues of people who have little or no control over their own schedule, are isolated culturally or physically, or show signs of abuse. We should identify symptoms of complex post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that often accompanies a crisis such as sexual abuse or violence, and we should find ways to get victims medical treatment, psychological treatment, and financial and legal support.

There are many ways to educate the general public about this issue and to reach out to potential victims. I accompanied a delegation of social work graduate and law students to a student-to-student conference in Guayaquil, Ecuador, which was cosponsored by the American Bar Association Human Trafficking Project and the *Proyecto Contra la Trata de Personas Ecuador*. It was an opportunity to exchange ideas with Ecuadorian university students about what our countries are doing to fight trafficking. In Ecuador, the *Instituto Nacional de la Niñez y la Familia* (INNFA) has partnered with other NGOs and private organizations to create an advertising campaign to promote awareness of human trafficking. The commercials shown on national television feature such celebrities as Ricky Martin and aim to educate children to stay away from *coyoteros*, inform the public about the dangers of human trafficking, and provide information on how to identify victims of trafficking. The INNFA has also been integral in instituting a national hotline, much like 911 or 411, where people may call in specifically to report traffickers or notify that they may have identified a victim.

Some organizations in the United States are already utilizing the ideas communicated at the conference in Ecuador. In Illinois, the Rescue and Restore Campaign organizes an Outreach Day each year. At the second annual Outreach Day on May 5, 2007, hundreds of volunteers across the state hung thousands of posters displaying the phone number for the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, also known as the U.S. Victim Hotline, (1-888-373-7888). As a volunteer on this day, I was not surprised to find that most of the people I talked to had no idea that trafficking existed. The Illinois Rescue and Restore Campaign hopes to eventually expand Outreach Day to include public service announcements on television and to include more states. Public awareness was raised on that day, but more advertising of the hotline number is needed, so that suspected cases can be reported and victims can reach out for help.

Another way to fight human trafficking is to reach out and educate young people. One example of such an initiative was the Ecuadorian conference I attended in which high school students representative of those most likely to fall victim due to underprivileged backgrounds, were invited to learn about trafficking and discuss how they felt about it. The students I observed appeared deeply moved by what they heard and spoke out about it vehemently. Many of them left the conference eager to spread the word and help put a stop to trafficking. As an intern with the Illinois Rescue and Restore Campaign, I have also had the opportunity to speak at a local high school to more than 600 students about human trafficking. High school students are a target audience in

discussions of trafficking, not only because they are the future policy-makers and social workers of our country, but also because runaways and street children are highly susceptible to being ensnared by traffickers and pimps. More opportunities for education about human trafficking should be available throughout all parts of the world and in the United States, especially targeting groups that are disadvantaged or at risk and are more likely to become victims.

More discussion about the spread of HIV/AIDS and its tie to trafficking must also happen. Most of the world's trafficking industry occurs in Asia, where discussions of sex and promiscuity are still considered taboo and are only now receiving some attention. Many of the victims of trafficking in this area, and throughout the world, are prevented from protecting themselves against STDs as they are denied the use of condoms. As difficult as discussions of rape and sexual abuse are, especially when it happens to children and minors, we must talk about ways to increase safe-sex practices. The current conservative climate in the U.S. also makes it difficult to educate our children about the use of condoms, but it is an imperative point when discussing human trafficking for sex work.

The TVPA establishes adequate guidelines for finding legal support and basic services for victims of trafficking; however, more attention should be given to finding therapeutic treatments for the psychological trauma and abuse victims suffer. Many experts agree that victims of human trafficking require much longer treatment than victims of similar crimes, such as domestic abuse or childhood sexual abuse. While the atrocity of these crimes should not be downplayed and existing treatments should be used as a starting point, social workers and therapists should be aware of the ways human trafficking is similar and different from these crimes. Victims of human trafficking are brainwashed to be distrustful of authorities, to sometimes become attached to their captors, and to feel shame and self-blame. When faced with freedom and free choice, many victims become frightened and overwhelmed after so many years of psychological abuse. Social workers should be aware of these possibilities in order to treat their clients more fully if they do come across a victim.

Finally, more information and support is needed for all victims of trafficking, not just victims of sex work. Sex work is most often what the public hears about in the popular media because of its shock value and it is easily sensationalized. Since traffickers often prey on the most vulnerable members of society and since those members are most often women and children, unfortunately most victims of trafficking are women and children in the sex industry. However, we must not forget the men who are

forced into sex work; the people who are forced into labor; the children who are forced to beg on the streets far from home; the children who are forced to become soldiers in guerrilla warfare; and the prisoners who sometimes live and sometimes die after they are forced to give up an organ.

Conclusion

V, the victim mentioned previously, was eventually rescued. She managed to escape her third captor when she ran away to a nearby convenience store. The employee contacted a Chicago social service provider, who referred her case to a local program serving victims of human trafficking. The social workers at this agency helped V obtain public benefits, including placement in federal foster care, therapy and counseling, and are helping her apply for a T visa (Heartland Alliance, n.d., p. 1). V's rescue story is encouraging, but there are millions in the world who are still enslaved. Only about 1,000 victims have been identified by the U.S. government since 2000. Just because so few victims have been identified and found does not mean that millions more do not exist.

Great strides have been made in the fight against human trafficking, but complacency must not accompany the progress. Our global society must continue to make gains in the fight by researching the problem, educating the public, empowering the victims, and punishing the

criminals. We must realize that trafficking affects all of us, even if peripherally, by changing migration patterns, increasing the spread of STDs, such as HIV/AIDS, increasing substance abuse, increasing the revenue earned by members of organized crime, and also by taking the time of our law enforcement and by clogging our court systems. Continued profit in this industry will have a ripple effect on our society at large and will change the face of our world. This change will not be for the better if we continue to profit in the selling of our own kind.

Kevin Bales, the President of Free the Slaves and an expert on human trafficking issues, says that

If there is one basic truth that virtually every human being can agree on, it is that slavery must end. What good is our economic and political power, if we can't use it to free slaves? If we can't choose to stop slavery, how can we say that we are free? (2004, p. 262)

Social workers can be at the forefront of this fight, from education and prevention to outreach, protection, and treatment of victims. Every life has value and each person deserves the basic human right of freedom of choice. The more people are aware of this issue, the better equipped they are to reach out to victims and to eradicate this problem.

Allison Lowe is currently in her 2nd year in the MSW program at Loyola. She is interning with the Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking Campaign at the Illinois Department of Human Services. She also works at the Carole Robertson Center for Learning and plans to continue working in human trafficking advocacy and outreach following graduation.

References

- Bales, K. (2004). *Disposable people: New slavery in the global economy*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Davidson, J. O'C. (2005). *Children in the global sex trade*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Fassman, H., Kollbacher, J, Reeger, U., & Sievers, W. (2005). *International migration and its regulation: State of the art report Cluster A1*. (International Migration, Integration, & Social Cohesion Rep. No. WP-2). Retrieved June 23, 2007 from http://www.imiscoe.org/publications/workingpapers/documents/international_migration.pdf
- Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights. (n.d.). "V" Africa. *Heartland Alliance Counter-Trafficking Program training efforts* [Handout]. Chicago: Author.
- Hughes, D. M. (2003). *Hiding in plain sight: A practical guide to identifying victims of trafficking in the U.S.* Retrieved November 24, 2006 from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/resources/plain_sight.html
- Lagon, M. P. (2007, June 12). *Release of the Seventh Annual Trafficking in Persons Report* [Briefing]. Retrieved June 30, 2007, from <http://217.160.247.250:8000/cgi-bin/nph-proxy2.cgi/010110A/http/www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/rm/07/86306.htm>

Human Trafficking: A Global Problem with Solutions that Begin at Home

- Laufer, P. (2004). *Wetback nation: The case for opening the Mexican-American border*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.
- Phinney, A. (2001). Trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation in the Americas: An introduction to trafficking in the Americas. Retrieved November 24, 2006, from the Organization of American States Web site: <http://www.oas.org/cim/english/proj.traf.alisonpa-per.htm>
- Saunders, P. (2005). Traffic violations: Determining the meaning of violence in sexual trafficking versus sex work. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20, 343-360.
- Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center, Network of Sex Work Projects, & Prostitutes of New York. (2005, March 1). What is “demand” in the context of trafficking in persons? Retrieved November 24, 2006 from the Sex Workers Project Web site: <http://www.sexworkersproject.org>
- Torrey, M. (2003). Preface. In M. Torrey (Gen. Ed.) & S. Dublin (Stud. Rep. Ed.), *Demand dynamics: The forces of demand in global sex trafficking: conference report, conference held October 17 and 18, 2003, Chicago, Illinois, USA* (pp. vii-ix). Retrieved April 17, 2006, from http://www.law.depaul.edu/institutes_centers/ihrli_downloads/demand_dynamics.pdf
- Trafficking Victims Protection Act, Div. A of Pub. L. No. 106-386 § 108, as amended (2000).
- United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (1949) *Convention for the suppression of the traffic in persons and of the exploitation of the prostitution of others*. Retrieved November 24, 2006, from <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/33.htm>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (n.d.a). *Federal government efforts to combat human trafficking*. Retrieved June 27, 2007, from the Campaign to Rescue & Restore Victims of human Trafficking. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (n.d.b). *Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 Fact Sheet*. Retrieved November 24, 2006 from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/about/TVPA_2000.pdf
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement. (2003, December 22). *Statement by Tommy G. Thompson* [Press release]. Retrieved June 28, 2007, from http://72.14.205.104/search?q=cache:yUSovJ5sWpgJ:www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/state-ment_by_tommythompson_031222.htm+reautho-rization+2003+trafficking+%22Health+and+Human+Services%22+%22punitive+damages%22&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. (n.d.). *Involuntary servitude, forced labor, and sex trafficking statutes enforced*. Retrieved November 24, 2006 from <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/1581fin.htm>
- U. S. Department of State. (2007). “Trafficking in Persons” defined. *Trafficking in Persons Report: June 2007* (p. 18). Washington DC: Author.
- U.S. Department of State, Undersecretary for Democracy & Global Affairs, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking of Persons. (2006). *Trafficking Victims Protection Act—Minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons*. Retrieved November 24, 2006, from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/46770.htm>
- U.S. Department of State, Undersecretary for Democracy & Global Affairs, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking of Persons. (2007). *U.S. government anti-trafficking in persons obligated project funding (fiscal year 2006)* [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/fs/07/83371.htm>
- U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). (2006). *Human trafficking: Better data, strategy, and reporting needed to enhance U.S. antitrafficking efforts abroad*. Retrieved November 24, 2006 from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06825.pdf>
- Watson, J., & Rodriguez, O. R. (2006, April 16). Many Mexicans secure jobs before crossing border. *The Chicago Tribune*, p. 9.