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HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES A FACT SHEET FOR SCHOOLS

What Is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is a serious federal crime with penalties of up to imprisonment for life. Federal law defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as: “(A) **sex trafficking** in which a **commercial sex act** is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such 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.C. §7102(8)] In short, human trafficking is modern-day slavery.

What Is the Extent of Human Trafficking in the United States?

Contrary to a common assumption, human trafficking is not just a problem in other countries. Cases of human trafficking have been reported in all 50 states, Washington D.C., and some U.S. territories. Victims of human trafficking can be children or adults, U.S. citizens or foreign nationals, male or female.

According to U.S. government estimates, thousands of men, women, and children are trafficked to the United States for the purposes of sexual and labor exploitation. An unknown number of U.S. citizens and legal residents are trafficked within the country primarily for sexual servitude and, to a lesser extent, forced labor.

Resources and Publications

One of the best ways to help combat human trafficking is to raise awareness and learn more about how to identify victims. Information on human trafficking can be found on the following Web sites:

- U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
<http://www.state.gov/g/tip>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Campaign to Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/index.html>
- U.S. Department of Justice
http://www.usdoj.gov/whatwedo/whatwedo_ctip.html
<http://www.ovc.gov/help/tip.htm>
<http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/trafficking.html>
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, Investigative Programs, Crimes Against Children
<http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/crimesmain.htm>
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
<http://www.ncmec.org>

- Polaris Project
<http://www.polarisproject.org>

NOTE: This fact sheet contains resources, including Web sites, created by a variety of outside organizations. The resources are provided for the user's convenience, and inclusion does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any views, products or services offered or expressed in them. All Web sites were accessed on June 26, 2007.

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How Does Human Trafficking Affect Our Schools?

Trafficking can involve school-age children-particularly those not living with their parents-who are vulnerable to coerced labor exploitation, domestic servitude, or commercial sexual exploitation (i.e., prostitution).

Sex traffickers target children because of their vulnerability and gullibility, as well as the market demand for young victims. The average age of entry into prostitution is 12 to 14 years old and traffickers (also called "pimps") are known to recruit at schools and after-school programs. Recruitment can take multiple forms, including: 1) kidnapping; 2) solicitation by other women or girls recruiting on behalf of the sex trafficker; and 3) the "loverboy" approach of appearing genuinely interested in a romantic relationship while gradually coercing the victim into prostitution.

How Do I Identify a Victim of Human Trafficking? *

A victim:

- Has unexplained absences from school for a period of time, and is therefore a truant
- Demonstrates an inability to attend school on a regular basis
- Chronically runs away from home
- Makes references to frequent travel to other cities
- Exhibits bruises or other physical trauma, withdrawn behavior, depression, or fear
- Lacks control over her or his schedule or identification documents
- Is hungry-malnourished or inappropriately dressed (based on weather conditions or surroundings)
- Shows signs of drug addiction
- Additional signs that may indicate sex-related trafficking include:
 - Demonstrates a sudden change in attire, behavior, or material possessions (e.g., has expensive items)
 - Makes references to sexual situations that are beyond age-specific norms
 - Has a "boyfriend" who is noticeably older (10+ years)
 - Makes references to terminology of the commercial sex industry that are beyond age-specific norms; engages in promiscuous behavior and may be labeled "fast" by peers

Fact Sheet

Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
Washington, DC
August 8, 2005

THE FACTS ABOUT CHILD SOLDIERS

"I still dream about the boy from my village who I killed. I see him in my dreams, and he is talking to me, saying I killed him for nothing, and I am crying." — Mary, a 16-year-old demobilized child soldier forced to join an armed rebel group in Central Africa

A Global Problem

Child soldiering is a unique and severe manifestation of trafficking in persons that involves the recruitment of children through force, fraud, or coercion to be exploited for their labor or to be abused as sex slaves in conflict areas. Government forces, paramilitary organizations, and rebel groups all recruit and utilize child soldiers. UNICEF estimates that more than 300,000 children under 18 are currently being exploited in over 30 armed conflicts worldwide. While the majority of child soldiers are between the ages of 15 and 18, some are as young as 7 or 8 years of age.*

Many children are abducted to be used as combatants. Others are made to serve as porters, cooks, guards, servants, messengers, or spies. Many young girls are forced to marry or perform sexual services for male combatants. Male and female child soldiers are often sexually abused, and are at high risk of unwanted pregnancies and contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Some children have been forced to commit atrocities against their families and communities. Child soldiers are often killed or wounded, with survivors often suffering multiple traumas and psychological scarring. Their personal development is often irreparably damaged. Returning child soldiers are often rejected by their home communities.

Child soldiers are a global phenomenon. The problem is most critical in Africa and Asia, but armed groups in the Americas, Eurasia, and the Middle East also use children. All nations must work together with international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to take urgent action to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate child soldiers.

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<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/fs/2005/50940.htm>

THE FACTS ABOUT CHILDREN TRAFFICKED FOR USE AS CAMEL JOCKEYS

The Problem

Each year, children as young as 2 are trafficked from countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sudan for use as jockeys in the Persian Gulf States' camel racing industry. Child camel jockeys are often sexually and physically abused; most are physically and mentally stunted, as they are deliberately starved to prevent weight gain.

Child jockeys face substantial risks. Each year, many are seriously injured and several are stampeded to death by camels. Almost all child jockeys live in camps encircled with barbed wire near the racetracks. Because the children are isolated from their families and find themselves in an unfamiliar culture, they are dependent upon their captors for survival.

The U.S. Government estimates there are thousands of trafficking victims being exploited for use as camel jockeys throughout the region. Trafficking in persons is a form of modern day slavery, involving victims who are forced, defrauded, or coerced into labor or sexual exploitation.

Most of the children trafficked for servitude as camel jockeys are extremely young. Many are unable to identify their parents or home communities in South Asia or Sudan, particularly after prolonged servitude in the Middle East. Unlike other forms of trafficking that usually involve adults or older children, child camel jockey trafficking presents enormous challenges to source country governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) seeking to return rescued children to their parents and original communities.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week April 10-16, 2005 ★ SILVER ANNIVERSARY ★

Justice Isn't Served Until Crime Victims Are



<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ncvrw/2005/pg51.html>

Human Trafficking

Trafficking in persons is a heinous crime and human rights abuse. The most vulnerable members of the global community, those who have limited access to social services and protections, are targeted by traffickers for exploitation. Steps have been taken, however, to locate victims, reinstate their inherent rights, provide them with protection and services, and prosecute offenders.

No country is immune from human trafficking. Victims are forced into prostitution or to work in quarries and sweatshops, on farms, as domestics, as child soldiers, and in many forms of involuntary servitude. Traffickers often target children and young women. They routinely trick victims with promises of employment, educational opportunities, marriage, and a better life. (U.S. Department of State. 2004. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State.)

Human trafficking is the third most profitable criminal activity, following only drug and arms trafficking. An estimated 9.5 billion is generated in annual revenue from all trafficking activities, with at least \$4 billion attributed to the worldwide brothel industry. (Ibid.)

Human Trafficking: Available Statistics

Due to the "hidden" nature of trafficking activities, gathering statistics on the magnitude of the problem is a complex and difficult task. The following statistics are the most accurate available, given these complexities, but may represent an underestimation of trafficking on a global and national scale.

Each year, an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 men, women, and children are trafficked across international borders (some international and non-governmental organizations place the number far higher), and the trade is growing. (U.S. Department of State. 2004. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State.)

Of the 600,000-800,000 people trafficked across international borders each year, 70 percent are female and 50 percent are children. The majority of these victims are forced into the commercial sex trade. (Ibid.)

Each year, an estimated 14,500 to 17,500 foreign nationals are trafficked into the United

States. The number of U.S. citizens trafficked within the country each year is even higher, with an estimated 200,000 American children at risk for trafficking into the sex industry. (U.S. Department of Justice. 2004. *Report to Congress from Attorney General John Ashcroft on U.S. Government Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Fiscal Year 2003*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

The largest number of people trafficked into the United States come from East Asia and the Pacific (5,000 to 7,000 victims). The next highest numbers come from Latin America and from Europe and Eurasia, with between 3,500 and 5,500 victims from each. (U.S. Departments of Justice, Health & Human Services, State, Labor, Homeland Security, Agriculture, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. 2004. *Assessment of U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

The U.S. Response to Trafficking

The United States government has taken steps to address trafficking both nationally and globally. The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), and its reauthorization in 2003 (TVPRA), provides extensive protections and services for victims of trafficking found in the United States regardless of nationality. This statute defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as:

- Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- 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. (106 P.L. 386: 114 Stat. 1470, Sec. 103 (8))

Victims of trafficking are eligible for benefits through several government channels. In addition, non- governmental, community, and faith-based organizations around the country continue to provide a wide range of social services for both U.S.- and foreign-born trafficking victims. American citizens who are victims of domestic trafficking are eligible for social services such as Medicaid, food stamps, and housing subsidies. Foreign-born victims can access similar services as they move through the “certification” process, which gives such victims legal immigrant status under the TVPA.

Foreign victims receive services from grantee organizations who receive funds from OVC and Health and Human Services. The services funded by these offices not only provide victims with the essentials for day to day living, but also the training and educational opportunities that will allow them to become self-sufficient in this country.