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Prevention & Public Education: Reducing Demand for Human Trafficking

“Having heard all of this you may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know.”

William Wilberforce, English abolitionist (1759-1833)

This report examines the state of human trafficking in California, in part, by looking to the past to determine how the crime has changed. These pages also provide a look at the current landscape of human trafficking – especially the impact of gangs and technology – and explore how legislators, law enforcement, technology companies, academics, and the general public can improve efforts to hold traffickers accountable and assist victims.

To create a future without human trafficking in California and across the world requires targeted efforts to address the demand for exploitive labor and coerced sexual services. Addressing the root causes of this crime is a critical challenge and there is a need for greater focus on prevention. As various public and private partners collaborate to adopt new approaches to identify and follow human trafficking online for purposes of investigation and prosecution, there may be opportunities to use technology and social media to attack this crime at its source and prevent it from occurring in the first place. There are currently efforts underway to study and develop innovative technologies to prevent and disrupt human trafficking online.

In the last five years, a number of campaigns have effectively increased awareness among Californians that human trafficking exists here in the 21st century. Though there are gaps in this understanding and further work to raise awareness, a foundation has been laid upon which public outreach can build. This chapter highlights a few of the efforts underway to impact the demand for human trafficking and notes the need for more work to develop innovative prevention efforts.

Harnessing Technology to Disrupt Online Human Trafficking

The logistics of the commercial sex trade, from the advertisement of services to the arrangement of meetings, has moved from street corners and alleys to online and mobile spaces. As noted in Chapter 4, law enforcement needs to adopt as nimble an approach to the use

of technology as traffickers. However, it is not the sole obligation of law enforcement to combat trafficking and, in this area in particular, there is a need for partnership that includes community members, businesses, regulators, technology companies, and others.

As Chapter 4 discussed, nonprofit foundations, technology companies, and academic institutions have started to join forces in the search for ways to leverage technology to assist law enforcement. The following are a few efforts underway to study and develop innovative technologies to prevent and disrupt human trafficking online.

DNA Foundation's Technology Task Force

In 2010, the Demi and Ashton (DNA) Foundation established a Technology Task Force of more than 20 top technology companies, including Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Yahoo!, Twitter, Blekko, Salesforce, BlueCava, Connotate, Digital Reasoning, Irdeto, Conversion Voodoo, Palantir, Mocana, Square, and Symantec.

The Technology Task Force members have collaborated to create anti-trafficking programs, including a deterrence program to help dissuade past and future offenders of online child sexual exploitation. If an individual searches online for child pornography and enters key phrases, a preventive message appears on the screen.

In 2012, the Technology Task Force also created a "sound practices guide" with resources for new technology companies to help prevent, identify, remove, and report sexual exploitation on their networks. In addition, the Task Force is currently funding research to assist companies with identifying online indicators of human trafficking.¹

Microsoft Research and Microsoft Digital Crimes Unit

In June 2012, the Microsoft Research and Microsoft Digital Crimes Unit awarded six grants to research teams that aim to study the use of technology in commercial child sex trafficking.² Among other topics, these grants were awarded to teams who will research how "johns" search for victims online; how technology has changed the recruiting, buying, and selling process in trafficking; and the clandestine language used in web advertising to facilitate child sex trafficking. This research will serve as the foundation for future development of technology to help thwart the activities of child traffickers and those who do business with them.³

USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism – "Human Trafficking Online"

As discussed in Chapter 4, USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism hosted a summit in 2011 to explore how technology can be used to combat human trafficking. A research report out of the USC Center on Communication Leadership & Policy, *Human Trafficking Online: The Role of Social Networking Sites and Online Classifieds*, included several recommendations relevant to prevention, including: "Media and technology companies

can use their distribution channels and services to increase awareness of trafficking online”; and, “Companies can make the terms of their service prominently visible on their sites and empower conscientious consumers to police the sites they visit daily.”⁴

Public Education to End Human Trafficking

While there is greater public awareness of human trafficking now than in 2007, there remain gaps in understanding. Some Californians see human trafficking through a limited lens, as a crime involving international sex trafficking alone – and not one that encompasses members of their communities, from a teenage girl forced into prostitution to a worker in the local nail salon. Yet, the data from California’s regional task forces (presented in Chapter 3) suggest that 72% of identified victims are American. Without fully understanding the nature and proximity of the crime, Californians are not in a position to take steps to join the fight to end human trafficking.

As members of the Work Group noted, there is a need for a comprehensive media campaign on human trafficking that is clear, informative, and provides action items to get members of the general public engaged and involved.

Consumer Awareness

One simple way that individuals can fight human trafficking is through their purchasing power. As noted in the 2007 report, consumers play a critical role in holding corporations accountable and spurring them to action. Consumers use sets of criteria when they make purchasing decisions, from the price and quality of a product to whether it was produced locally or in the United States. If consumers see a lack of forced labor as a key factor in the decision to purchase a product, and move information to track which companies benefitted from such labor, companies would have a significant incentive to ensure and demonstrate humane supply chains to their customers and investors.

There are a number of new smart phone applications designed to help consumers understand their relationship to human trafficking and take steps to make a difference:

- ❖ **Slavery Footprint (smart phone app):** Call + Response, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending modern slavery, partnered with the U.S. State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to develop a smart phone application to inform people about the forced labor behind the products of their everyday lives. Launched in 2012, users can visit the website or download the free Slavery Footprint app to take a brief survey and calculate how many slaves they “own” based on their lifestyle. Users of the app send a message to a company to learn about its position on forced labor and let stores know about their interest in slavery-free products by using the Slavery Footprint “check-in” feature on Facebook. While the app currently uses information based on raw materials and not brands, later versions will allow consumers to enter specific brands. (<http://slaveryfootprint.org/>)

- ❖ **Made In A Free World (platform to “use the free market to free people”):** Launched by Slavery Footprint in September 2012, Made In A Free World (MIAFW) is a platform designed to help companies respond to consumer demand to eradicate forced labor in their supply chains. MIAFW provides brands with a blueprint to investigate their suppliers to identify high-risk areas for trafficking. (<http://madeinafreeworld.com/>)
- ❖ **Free2Work (smart phone app):** Created by Not For Sale and supported by the International Labor Rights Forum, Free2Work is a smart phone app that enables a consumer to scan a product’s barcode to see whether the company has effective policies to address the use of forced or child labor in its supply chain. Free2Work grades companies on a scale of A to F based on their efforts to prevent and address forced and child labor. (<http://free2work.org/>)

In addition to smart phone apps that provide consumers with information to make conscientious decisions about the products they purchase, there are also online resources to help individuals to identify and assist victims of human trafficking. The nonprofit Truckers Against Trafficking developed a website, mobile app, and hotline to help members of the trucking and travel plaza industries to identify and report instances of human trafficking. The organization aims to educate members of the trucking industry about sex trafficking through posters in truck stop and rest areas, as well as the distribution of wallet cards (available in English, Spanish, and French Canadian). Truckers Against Trafficking also produced a training DVD for truck stop and travel plaza employees and truck drivers. (<http://truckersagainstafficking.org/>)

These efforts to raise awareness – of how to make conscientious purchasing decisions and to identify the crime and assist victims – are critical first steps in the fight against human trafficking. But, as long as the crime happens, more needs to be done.

California Transparency in Supply Chains Act of 2010

In 2009, a U.S. Department of Labor report identified 122 goods from nearly five dozen countries that were believed to be produced by forced labor or child labor.⁵

The report, which was required by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Acts of 2005 and 2008, listed the goods and the 58 countries where they were produced – starting with carpets from Afghanistan and ending with cotton from Uzbekistan. The report also listed 11 goods believed to be produced by child labor in Mexico, including pornography, along with everyday items like coffee and onions.

Through the unintentional purchase of goods and products with forced labor in their supply chains, California consumers and businesses inadvertently promote the crime of human trafficking. To help consumers make informed and conscientious purchasing decisions, the Legislature passed the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act of 2010.

Enacted on January 1, 2012, the law requires any retailer or manufacturer with annual worldwide revenues of more than \$100 million to disclose its efforts to eradicate slavery and human trafficking from its supply chains for tangible goods offered for sale in California.⁶

By adopting codes of conduct for their suppliers and sub-contractors, retailers and manufacturers use economic leverage to influence labor practices within their supply chain. Companies are also able to demonstrate responsible supply chains to consumers who, empowered with information, are more likely to choose goods and products from supply chains untainted by human trafficking.

Eliminating Forced Labor from Contractors with the State of California

California has laws in place to prohibit state contractors from engaging in human trafficking. California Public Contract Code, section 6108, requires state contractors to certify that they comply with California labor laws and that goods they provide were not produced by sweatshop, or other forms of forced labor.

However, the State of California might consider expanding its law to more fully address the use of forced labor by state contractors. In September 2012, President Obama issued an Executive Order to strengthen the federal government's policy with regard to human trafficking. The order expressly prohibits federal contractors, contractor employees, subcontractors, and subcontractor employees from engaging in any of the following types of trafficking-related activities:

- ❖ The use of misleading or fraudulent recruitment practices during the recruitment of employees;
- ❖ Charging employees recruitment fees; and,
- ❖ Destroying, concealing, confiscating, or otherwise denying access by an employee to the employee's identity documents, such as passports or drivers' licenses.⁷

Truckers Against Trafficking

"Thank God what saved me was that truck driver that called in and said, 'Hey, this is whoever at the TA truck stop, and we have some girls out here that look pretty young.'"

- A young woman who, at 14 or 15, was snatched off the street in Toledo by a pimp and forced into prostitution. She was rescued by a driver at a truck stop in Detroit who called 911 after she knocked on his door.

The young woman shared her story in a video created to educate truck drivers, and employees of truck stops and travel plazas, about domestic sex trafficking. The head of the non-profit that produced the video, Truckers Against Trafficking, told an NPR reporter that the man who made the phone call to rescue that girl is like so many truckers: "...really wanting to do the right thing, ready to go and just needing to know who to talk to about this."⁸

Expanding California law to include similar provisions will ensure that businesses that exploit workers are not rewarded and will set an important precedent as a zero-tolerance policy for industry and business owners in California to follow with regard to forced labor in their supply chains.

Conclusion

The work of cutting off demand for human trafficking is complex and requires a range of partners working together around a shared rejection of products and services obtained by force, fraud, or coercion. While technology and social media is being leveraged in innovative ways to provide consumers with information and a way to connect with companies, for example, there remains a need to explore new methods of raising awareness about the nature and proximity of human trafficking. With greater understanding of the crime, and a clear tool or means to make a difference, consumers and businesses alike will be more likely to take steps to diminish the demand for forced labor.

Recommendations

1. **Promote Clean Supply Chains:** California retailers and manufacturers of all sizes should consider creating policies to disclose their efforts to limit human trafficking in their supply chains, even if they fall beneath the \$100 million corporate revenue threshold contained in the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act. This will provide consumers with the opportunity to use their purchasing decisions as a tool to eradicate human trafficking.
2. **Strengthen Restrictions on State Contractors:** Consistent with recently enacted federal contracting requirements, it is recommended that the Legislature consider prohibiting state and local government contractors from engaging in suspicious employment practices that are hallmarks of trafficking, including the use of misleading or fraudulent practices during the recruitment of employees. Examples of these practices include making material misrepresentations about key terms of employment or living conditions, charging employees recruitment fees, and destroying or otherwise limiting an employee's access to his or her identity documents, such as passports or driver's licenses.
3. **Increase Public Awareness:** To raise awareness of this crime, public and private anti-trafficking partners can mount a coordinated, comprehensive public awareness campaign to improve awareness of human trafficking amongst the general public.

End Notes:

- ¹ "Tech Task Force," Demi and Ashton Foundation, accessed October 26, 2012, <http://demiandashton.org/tech-task-force>.
- ² Samantha Doerr, "Microsoft Names Research Grant Recipients in Fight Against Child Sex Trafficking," June 13, 2012, http://blogs.technet.com/b/microsoft_on_the_issues/archive/2012/06/13/microsoft-names-research-grant-recipients-in-fight-against-child-sex-trafficking.aspx.
- ³ "Shedding Light on the Role of Technology in Child Sex Trafficking," Microsoft News Center, July 18, 2012, <http://microsoft.com/en-us/news/features/2012/jul12/07-18childsextraffickingresearch.aspx>.
- ⁴ Mark Latonero, "Human Trafficking Online: The Role of Social Networking Sites and Online Classifieds," (USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism, Center on Communication Leadership & Policy, September 2011), accessed October 26, 2012, https://technologyandtrafficking.usc.edu/files/2011/09/HumanTrafficking_FINAL.pdf.
- ⁵ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking, "The Department of Labor's List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor; Report Required by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Acts of 2005 and 2008," (2009), available online at: <http://dol.gov/ilab/programs/ocft/PDF/2009TVPRA.pdf>
- ⁶ California Civil Code, § 1714.43. (2012).
- ⁷ Exec. Order No. 13,627, 77 Fed. Reg. 60,029 (October 2, 2012).
- ⁸ "With a Phone Call, Truckers Can Fight Sex Trafficking," National Public Radio (NPR), October 19, 2012, <http://npr.org/2012/10/19/163010142/with-a-phone-call-truckers-can-fight-sex-trafficking>