



**a path
appears**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sex Trafficking

IN THE USA



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Using This Guide

Community Cinema is a rare public forum: a space for people to gather who are connected by a love of stories and a belief in their power to change the world. This discussion guide is designed as a tool to facilitate dialogue and deepen understanding of the complex issues in *A Path Appears*. It is also an invitation to not only sit back and enjoy the film, but to step up and take action.

This guide is not meant to be a comprehensive primer on a given topic. Rather, it provides important context and raises thought-provoking questions to encourage viewers to think more deeply. The guide provides suggestions for topics to explore in conversations in community and classroom settings, and online. It also offers information about organizations working on the ground to make a difference and provides further resources for deeper learning and opportunities to get involved. For information about the program, visit communitycinema.org

NOTE TO READERS, FACILITATORS, AND EDUCATORS

This discussion guide gives a brief synopsis of the entire *A Path Appears* series, and then provides background information and resources on sex trafficking in the United States. It also draws on stories and information from the corresponding book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, including discussion questions and ways to take action that connect both resources.

Trigger Warning

This episode of *A Path Appears* focuses on sex trafficking and its impact on children and adults—a sensitive yet pertinent topic that may not be suitable for all audiences. Facilitators and educators are strongly encouraged to review all of the readings, materials, and links and preview the film module to be sure the topic and lesson are appropriate for their curriculum and students. At the facilitator’s or educator’s discretion a trigger warning or other preparation/discussion may be advisable, as well as identifying viewers who might be personally or adversely affected by this material. Additional resources for the film and book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity* are included at the end of this discussion guide, including organizations and hotlines to which to refer those who need help or support.

About the Guide Writer



**ALLISON
MILEWSKI**

Allison Milewski is an educator and curriculum designer with over ten years’ experience in arts and media education. She has developed art integration programs, professional development workshops, and arts and media curricula for organizations such as ITVS, Tribeca Film Institute, Latino Public Broadcasting, the Brooklyn Historical Society, and Urban Arts Partnership and managed arts-based enrichment programs for over 20 New York City public schools. Allison’s professional experience also includes over 15 years of program management and administration with domestic and international NGOs such as PCI-Media Impact, the Center for Reproductive Rights, and the Union Square Awards for Grassroots Activism.

About the Filmmakers



MARO CHERMAYEFF

**Executive Producer and Director,
Show of Force**

Maro Chermayeff is an award-winning filmmaker, producer, director, author and former television executive at A&E/AETN. She is Founder and Chair of the MFA program in Social Documentary at the School of Visual Arts in New York City and partner in the production company Show of Force. Some of her extensive credits include: *Kehinde Wiley: An Economy of Grace* (PBS, 2014), the landmark four-hour PBS documentary series *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (PBS, 2012), 6-hour series *Circus* (PBS, 2010), the Emmy-award winning *Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present* (HBO, 2012) *Mann v. Ford* (HBO, 2011), *Parasomnia* (France 2, 2010), the Emmy Award-winning 10-hour series *Carrier* (PBS/Nat Geo International, 2008), the 6-hour series *Frontier House* (PBS, 2002), *American Masters: Juilliard* (PBS, 2003), *The Kindness of Strangers* (HBO, 1999), *Role Reversal* (A&E 2002), *Trauma, Life in the ER* (TLC, 2001) the *Vanity Fair* web series *Eminent Domains* (2014), and over 15 specials for Charlie Rose. Represented by WME, Chermayeff is a principal of Show of Force, the production entity for the Half the Sky Movement. She is an Executive Producer of Half the Sky Movement's Facebook Game and 3 Mobile Games with Games for Change.



JAMIE GORDON

Executive Producer

Jamie Gordon co-founded Fugitive Films in 2005 after running the Development Department of GreeneStreet Films in New York City for six years as well as working on multiple award-winning Hollywood feature films. Most recently, Gordon executive produced *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity For Women Worldwide*. Her company produced *Coach* starring Hugh Dancy and the comedy *Wedding Daze* starring Jason Biggs and Isla Fisher. Among other projects, she is developing a film based on the National Book Award finalist *River Town* by Peter Hessler and a film adaptation of Brooke Berman's off-Broadway hit "Smashing." Previously, Gordon was the Head of Development for GreeneStreet Films, working on *In the Bedroom*, and co-producing *Swimfan* and *Pinero*. She worked as a story editor for producer Wendy Finerman where she worked on *Forrest Gump*. She graduated with a B.A. in history from Princeton University.



MIRA CHANG

Co-Executive Producer

Mira Chang is a producer, director and director of photography of nonfiction content for domestic and international television and several feature length documentaries. Her work can be seen regularly on ABC, National Geographic, A&E and Discovery. Her projects include *Sold* and *Jesus Camp*, nominated for a 2007 Oscar for Best Documentary. Recent projects include A&E's *Runaway Squad* and *Garó Unleashed* for the Sundance Channel. Chang was also series-producer of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*.



JEFF DUPRE

**Executive Producer,
Show of Force**

Jeff Dupre has been producing and directing documentary films for over 15 years. Together with Show of Force partner Maro Chermayeff, Dupre is director, creator and executive producer of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (PBS, 2012), *Circus*, a six-part documentary series that also premiered on PBS. He conceived and is producer and co-director of *Marina Abramovic The Artist is Present*. He is a producer of *Carrier* and Michael Kantor's *Broadway: The American Musical*. Dupre's directorial debut, *Out of the Past*, won the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival, among other awards.



JOSHUA BENNETT

Series Producer

With over 10 years experience producing film and television, Joshua Bennett has produced shoots in over 35 countries and on all seven continents, including the PBS series *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (2012). He has also produced programming for PBS, HBO, MTV, Discovery, A&E and The Sundance Channel, as well as music videos commercials, independent shorts, experimental works, corporate, new media and viral media campaigns. Bennett teaches documentary producing at New York City's School of Visual Arts' master's program for social documentary film.

About the Film Series



From the creative team that brought you the groundbreaking *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, *A Path Appears* investigates young women in America forced into a life of prostitution and the innovative programs that have evolved to achieve remarkable results in empowering their lives. Sex trafficking and prostitution. Domestic slavery. Teen pregnancy. The devastation of poverty. These troubling situations are happening not just halfway across the world, but also in our own backyards — in Chicago and Nashville and Boston.

In the second part, the series continues around the globe tracking children in Haiti, living in abject poverty after years of political corruption during times of violent protest and captures the transformation of Kenya's most notorious slum through expanded education for girls. The series uncovers the roots behind the incredible adversity faced every day by millions of women, while also presenting glimpses of hope and change.

With Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times reporters Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn and a number of celebrity activists as guides — including Malin Akerman, Jennifer Garner, Mia Farrow, Ashley Judd, Eva Longoria, and Alfre Woodard, each with painful stories from their own pasts — *A Path Appears* journeys across the country and around the globe to drive home shocking stories of gender inequality and vulnerability.

Q&A with Producer Maro Chermayeff

1. What spurred you to make *A Path Appears*? How is *A Path Appears* different from *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*?

A Path Appears is inspired by and based on Nick Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's newest book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*. This four-hour series and book is a natural follow-up to our groundbreaking transmedia project *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. Kristof and WuDunn started formulating their concept for their new book as we were nearing our PBS broadcast premiere of *Half the Sky* in fall 2012. They recognized the enormous response from the readers and audience, people asking, "What can we do to truly make a difference?" They both wanted to address the subject matter and answer questions, using stories and storytelling to provide examples of organizations and methodology that had truly made a difference in philanthropic impact and outcomes.

Additionally, they were both interested in expanding the geographic footprint of their work — most particularly to include stories from our own backyard, the United States, as well as from Latin America and the Caribbean, parts of the world they'd worked far less in. The subject of what works and what doesn't in global giving, and the ripple effect of poverty and the vulnerability of women, in challenging and oppressive circumstances, remained very interesting to all of us as filmmakers — so we decided to continue our work together. An interesting new approach was that the book and the television series were developed in tandem — meaning many of the stories were found by the production team and folded into the book, as well as Nick and Sheryl telling more stories in the book than we were able to include in only three nights of primetime television.

2. What went into selecting the issue areas and locations for this new series? In particular, why did you decide to feature the stories taking place in the United States?

At the end of Kristof and WuDunn's [first] book, they had a final chapter called "What You Can Do: Four Steps You Can Take in the Next Ten Minutes." That call to action launched a huge response, and people began to think of Sheryl and Nick, and also of the Project Production Team (who run the *Half the Sky* Movement project and website), as a hub, a resource to help find ways to get involved. Our readers and viewers spoke, and we listened! Thousands of people talked about the many issues facing women and girls that were important to them. In selecting our issues we relied on the following criteria:

1. That the issue was impacting a large number of people around the globe and was falling doubly hard on women and girls
2. That we could connect the issue to an NGO [nongovernmental organization] and individuals we felt were effectively addressing and implementing opportunities for change
3. That the issue was relevant and emotionally accessible to our audience
4. That it was an issue and an organization or individual we could present in a fresh way, and was potentially underreported

Our team got together and over the course of many months talked about the issues we wanted to address, as well as the locations of interest and how to narrow our focus to places where the issue could be best amplified, and most importantly where we could meet and tell the stories of inspiring individuals and organizations tackling these issues in their own communities and countries. We particularly wanted to expand our geographic regions because Nick and Sheryl's initial reporting in *Half the Sky* was focused on the developing world and the Global South, and we all knew that these issues were also prevalent right here at home. We wanted to add to the dialogue and to break down the illusion that some Americans seem to have: that extreme poverty, sex trafficking, or gender-based violence are not happening here to the same extent, when in fact these are very much happening here at home. We also wanted *A Path Appears* to shine a light on solutions — what was happening around the world and here in the United States. with early childhood intervention, education, effective local police and government work — so that people understood and could explore and learn more about some of these effective interventions. The reality is that these kinds of effective solutions are vastly underfunded and undersupported — when in fact if you invest in the front end, in the safety, security, and education of young people, they have far more opportunity to thrive and avoid the ripple effects of poverty and neglect, and you save enormous amounts of money on the back end in the form of prisons, drug treatment facilities, emotional and psychiatric treatment. Not to mention that they live better and more enriched lives, without oppression, fear, and abuse.

3. How did you go about choosing your subjects, and selecting which stories to tell in the final episodes of the series?

As a production team, we vet hundreds of stories, to find the ones we feel meet the criteria we have to merit inclusion in our content. The criteria include: compelling work; location; safety of our crew in telling that story in that location; inclusion of diverse, compelling, and relatable subjects who wish to be filmed and wish to be part of the project. We are always mindful that the stories we are telling are tough, but our intention is always as storytellers to be immediate and in the moment, and to add positively to the dialogue. Our goal is

to introduce our audience to individuals and issues they may not know about, and to take them to new places they may never go, in the interest of raising awareness and fostering positive solutions and change.

4. You probably had to make some tough decisions around how to portray the stories of several minors in the film, both here in the United States as well as in Kenya, Haiti, and Colombia. Please discuss what went into your choices in telling each of their stories.

As filmmakers (Show of Force) and journalists (Kristof and WuDunn) we are all highly conscious of the serious and important ongoing dialogue of how to best tell stories about individuals facing enormous challenges and brutal circumstances. Show of Force has been part of those conversations around how best to portray these stories while recognizing the effect this has on each person who agrees to share their own truth. Nick has been a leader and influencer in keeping their stories alive in the minds of the people. We have spoken with some of the leading experts including Human Rights Watch, the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, and numerous other leading NGOs and educators in this subject matter all around the world. There is no single "right way" to portray an adult or a minor; every story is a case-by-case decision, with the top priorities being safety, security, long-term well-being, and the fair and equitable treatment of all.

This series is about tough issues and harsh realities facing women and girls around the world and here in the United States. It is important that people understand that these harsh realities — sex trafficking, gender-based violence, slave labor, and lack of access to education, to resources, and to opportunity — even to hope — are affecting children.

For all of the stories we tell, we work hand-in-hand with highly experienced NGOs and government officials — and all of our subjects, who are participating voluntarily and with full knowledge of their role in the project — to make our decisions. We also understand that this is a complex issue with differing viewpoints: Should minors be shown or not be shown in the context of these difficult stories and situations? Many people feel the bravery and courage it takes to come forward, both as the minor and also as the guardian or parent of the minor, is courage that deserves to be honored. Sometimes, when people on camera are blurred — it is not seen as a protection of that person, but rather a continued silencing or shaming of that person. It may continue to suggest that they are a perpetrator rather than a victim with a right to speak, a right to be seen, and a right to fight for justice.

As extremely experienced and professional filmmakers, we properly and legally release all of our subjects, of course, but more important than the paperwork is our word and [our] wish for all of our subjects to be treated as they wish to be treated — and [our desire] to help them tell their stories honestly, fairly, and openly if that is what they so desire. In some cases we do blur individuals, because of specific circumstances in which we feel it may be in their best interest or [safer] not to be seen. It is always a thoughtful and intricate decision-making process, with the respect and dignity of our subjects in mind. But on the whole, we know the subjects we spoke to and we filmed and show on camera want to tell their stories, and want to be seen and heard. We are honored to give them that opportunity.

5. Portraying the stories of survivors of trauma and abuse can be challenging terrain to navigate as well. How did you and your team approach working with survivors to tell their stories?

Between *Half the Sky* and *A Path Appears*, the production team at Show of Force, in our collaboration with Kristof and WuDunn, has spent more than five years completely immersed in the complex issues facing women and girls around the globe. We take our role as storytellers very seriously and form long-lasting bonds with all of the subjects and the agents of change we feature in our films. This is also true of the actor-advocates we have brought with us on the project. Our relationship begins long before and remains long after the camera stops rolling. Through our conversations with our subjects prior to filming, and with the record that our previous body of work demonstrates, we are able to develop trust and demonstrate the quality and integrity [with] which they will be profiled. Trust is developed with subjects the same way friendships are developed between any people — through conversation, through shared experiences, through serious dialogue, and through moments of joy and laughter — and tears — where our shared goals and hopes all lie.

All the survivors — both adults and minors — we work with in our films are individuals who find the process of participating in the project empowering and rewarding, and [this] helps them to move forward and shed the shame and guilt that have weighed on them as victims. They all take their participation very seriously and all shared with us their desire to let their own story and experience help others to avoid similar fates or pitfalls. They wish to use their traumatic experiences and their survival as a beacon.

6. Was it difficult to convince the subjects to share their stories on camera? Was there a common factor that drew all of the subjects to agree to share their stories publicly through *A Path Appears*?

What is difficult is to find the right subjects, not only for this film, but for any documentary film with this nature of sensitive storytelling.

As a team, we need to look for more than one kind of story or experience, so that various facets of the story can be told, and we also need to find subjects who are emotionally prepared to share their story in this kind of way. Months of conversations and discussions take place to secure participation and work with our subjects. However, we have found that our participants on the whole are empowered by the possibility of sharing their story. Their first instinct is to want to share what happened to them, in hopes of helping others in the same situation. They appreciate being heard, and one of the most devastating experiences for them as subject is when they are not taken seriously or believed; they know in our filmmaking team that they have experienced and sympathetic "listeners" who know what they are talking about and what they have been through. We most certainly have not been through the same kind of trauma they have, but we know and care and trust our subjects, and hope and believe that they feel that.

7. What was your process for selecting the local experts on the ground in each story? And the celebrity activists?

We went into finding the stories for *A Path Appears* as we do with most films — very rigorously, with a certain focus in mind both in terms of subject matter and geography. In conjunction with Kristof and WuDunn, our team does extensive research on the people and organizations that are making an impact, and whose models are proven, scalable, and replicable. Once a good potential story was identified, we began extensive conversations with the local NGOs and activists, understanding their work and the types of stories that we would be able to capture if we were to film with them. Every potential story goes through multiple rounds of phone conversations with the subjects, vetting with other experts in the field, followed by in-person meetings, and on-the-ground scouting to determine both the strength of the work and of the stories that we will be able to capture.

The actor-advocates who travel with us are chosen based on both their own interest in and commitment to social justice and human rights issues, and their desire to raise the visibility of the work we are profiling. All of them have issues and causes to which they have already devoted a great deal of their time, although frequently we invite them on trips that are not directly related to their prior work so they can bring fresh eyes to the subject. There are always many logistical and scheduling details that have to be worked out with such busy and high-profile celebrities, but we've found that the actor-advocates who inevitably do travel with us are the ones who are immediately enthusiastic and positive about the invitation. In building our roster, we always have an eye toward diversity, not only diversity of race and age, but also diversity in terms of their prior knowledge about the subjects, and the life experiences that they bring. The nine celebrities who traveled with us for *A Path Appears* were an amazing group of dedicated individuals, and we feel each one was a unique and valuable addition to the series.

8. What message do you hope viewers will take from *A Path Appears*?

I hope that people will leave the series having been transported by incredible storytelling and filmmaking, understanding that there are real issues out in the world that deserve and require our attention and that importantly, there are solutions to the issues of sex trafficking, teen pregnancy, child labor, gender-based violence, poverty, and the overall cycle of vulnerability and exploitation that keeps so many people trapped in these situations. We wanted people to become aware, but to embrace and engage, understanding that they can have an impact and be part of sustainable change. We also want to shine a light on amazing people in our world doing incredible work to help others in peril. The film deals with incredibly difficult subject matter, and the stories are heartbreaking, but the overall message is intended to be a positive and hopeful one. We do know that early intervention, local leadership, and holistic programs that instill hope and empower the recipients work and have a lasting, generational effect. Our viewers have the opportunity every day [to] get involved and contribute toward these solutions. We hope they will seize on that message and become a part of this movement for change.

9. What have you learned from the experience of making *A Path Appears*?

Both *Half the Sky* and *A Path Appears* have been completely life-changing journeys. Before this work, before having the distinct honor of knowing Nick Kristof and having him as my good friend, I did not know very much about these issues at all. I was educated and capable, and of course [I] understood that, as Nick would say, "I had won the lottery of life," but I did not understand the web of pathologies that conspire to keep women and girls in the world from fulfilling their potential and living happy and valued lives. It was so important, as a citizen of our planet, to engage in these and other issues and get involved! As we often found, in the worst circumstances and the most daunting places, we met the most amazing people. Out of hardship comes a resilience that is frankly humbling. Everyone at my company Show of Force and specifically the dedicated producers of these two series — Jamie Gordon, Jeff Dupre, Josh Bennett, Mira Chang, Rachel Koteen, and Jessica Chermayeff — as well as the incredible postproduction team and editors Howard Sharp and Donna Shepherd, we discuss regularly how this has brought us together and brought meaning and value to our work. I have never before had so many young people contact my company asking to work on a project — or [express] how impressed they are by the stories we have been able to share with our audience. This is also true because these are not just television series, far from it. These are among the most successful social media campaigns in the world; we have a following of millions around the globe and have created extensive educational content,

and games. We all learned what a "movement" is ... what it can be, and how we can be part of it. This is the project that makes me proud to tell my daughter about what we do all day.

10. What's it like to work with Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn? What was it like to produce the film alongside the development of the book?

Nick and Sheryl are our colleagues, our teachers, and our friends. They are not always right, they don't always know everything — because they're human beings, covering a lot of territory and with a lot of responsibility. But they are always investigators and humanitarians. I admire them daily for being so tenacious, and I truly believe they have brought this kind of content forward and into the public eye (at times like [a] drumbeat) and forced people to look, listen, and "do." They also had the bright idea of letting the audience know that doing good for others will make you happier at the end of the day. We feel that way now as well.

Working in tandem on *A Path Appears*, as opposed to creating our content based on an existing book, had some tricky elements to it. One interesting element for us as filmmakers is that sometimes we found stories, and sometimes Nick and Sheryl found them — and we shared and discussed how that worked. Many more stories are in the book, and also some are more suited for text and not camera; it was interesting as a team to sort out that difference. It was extremely fun for us (gave us some bragging rights!) that we found many subjects and stories and essentially pitched them to Nick and Sheryl — and many of those are in the series and also in the book. It was fascinating to see how Nick and Sheryl would tell those stories in the context of the book, and then watch how they play[ed] out in the series. Of course for television we want and need the stories to be unfolding; the drama and stakes have to be seen and experienced — not told "after-the-fact," which in writing can be infused with drama. In the case of film ... if you don't see it ... essentially you don't know it happened.

11. Please share a few memories or experiences that stand out to you from your time in production.

Following are moments that will stay with me forever:

1. We as a team were integrally and directly involved in finding a young girl, missing for over three months: [S]uddenly, without preparation, Nick found her on a trafficking site, in the presence of her shocked and frightened mother and father. She was rescued within 12 hours by the Boston Police. We felt very lucky, but also angry. But it gave us an immediate understanding that with focus and attention to detail, young girls can be found, and pulled out of the life — and very fast.
2. Going into a Kenyan prison to talk to the man who had repeatedly been raping his granddaughter Flavian. It was dark, cold, and raining — and Nick and our producer in the field, Jessica Chermayeff, and myself had been following the story all day. In the end, we had to be fair and talk to everyone, and have everyone surrounding the story know and understand the rights release [in order] to film their stories. It was hard, it felt dangerous, but we felt we were on the right side of a horrible situation, and we were dedicated to helping this young girl. Today she is in school, and in recovery with extensive support from the NGO we worked so closely with, Shining Hope for Communities. Every day, they actually change lives for the better.
3. Driving around Nashville with Shana, and seeing the women on the street; understanding how they got there, and seeing an American city in an entirely new light. Shana is a powerful and incredibly honest person — I may never have met someone like her if I had not gone so deeply into a film trying to reveal the realities of sex trafficking in this country. I would have driven by, unaware ... I would have seen only one side of Nashville ... and there is another side. She opened my eyes, and she made me see the power of possibility.
4. The slums of Kibera in the mud rain. It is one of my favorite places on earth: the mud, the smell, the children, the world within a world — and the reality that millions and millions of people live like this in slums all over the world. Go there. You will never turn on your tap and drink a glass of water again without a reality check, and it may make you stand up and do something. Seriously!
5. The first shock of seeing an 11-year-old girl in Cartagena holding her week-old baby. She looked terrified. And I was scared for her. She didn't know she had to hold his head. He looked a little nervous too, but like all babies, he really looked right into the eyes of his mother and felt love. It was hard to understand how they could go forward together, but there they were, and there was only [moving] forward.
6. Haiti: It takes an hour and a half to get there on American Airlines ... put that in your pipe and smoke it. Insane. And we all play a part in that insanity. So chip in.
7. The girls from [the] Kibera School for Girls: Love love love them all. Kennedy and Jessica Odede — nothing but respect and love and their school is miraculous and hopeful. Little Ida, the most adorable smile on earth; "juicy sentences" being formed in the classroom; Eunice's poetry on the power of a dream. Take the time to learn more about this incredible school and how you can support their important work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sex Trafficking in the USA

“The women who come into the program share a common story... they all carry those universal issues of sexual violence on their backs.”

— Reverend Becca Stevens, Founder of Thistle Farms

Individuals Featured in This Episode

- **Nicholas Kristof** — Journalist; Co-author, *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*
- **Sheryl WuDunn** — Journalist; Co-author, *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*
- **Malin Akerman** — Actor/Advocate
- **Blake Lively** — Actor/Advocate
- **Ashley Judd** — Actor/Advocate
- **Reverend Becca Stevens** — Episcopal priest; Founder, Magdalene House and Thistle Farms in Nashville, Tennessee
- **Tom Dart** — Sheriff, Cook County Sheriff's Office in Illinois
- **Audrey Morrissey** — Associate director, My Life My Choice in Boston, Massachusetts
- **Latiana Appleberry** — Mentor, My Life My Choice in Boston, Massachusetts
- **Shana Goodwin** — Sex Trafficking Survivor

Sex trafficking is believed to be the most common form of modern-day slavery, with the United States as a significant destination, origin, and transit country for victims and perpetrators (Caliber, 2006). Although there is widespread concern that incidents of sex trafficking in the United States are on the rise, the scope of the problem is not fully understood and data about sex trafficking (especially about minors) are notoriously difficult to document. There are no comprehensive studies on the illegal commercial sex industry in the United States, and the data that exist come from sources, such as arrests, that only reflect victims who have been found.

According to a 2010 U.S. Attorney General's report, traffickers target children and adults who are disadvantaged and financially and emotionally vulnerable and who may “lack access to social safety nets” (Office of Legal Policy, 2010). Adolescent girls, particularly those abused, neglected, or exposed to family violence and addiction, are especially vulnerable to recruitment by pimps. Victims may be attracted by the promise of economic or personal support and a better future, only to be forced into work under cruel, dangerous, and degrading conditions. Because perpetrators of sex trafficking often take extreme measures to make sure their crimes are clandestine, it is a challenge to measure the full scope of victimization.

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AND BOYS TOO

Sexual exploitation is often understood as an issue primarily affecting women and girls, but evidence suggests that it cuts across genders and ages. According to a 2008 John Jay College of Criminal Justice study, “The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in New York City, Volume One” as high as 50 percent of commercially sexually exploited children were boys. This report agrees with a 2013 study by ECPAT-USA that also suggests that boys make up almost half of the victims of sexual exploitation.

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SEX TRAFFICKING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

"At least on the street we were visible. But when our children are in hotel rooms, no one knows she's in there but the pimp who put her there."

– Audrey Morrissey, Associate Director of My Life My Choice

Polaris reports that "The internet has been identified as the number one platform that pimps, traffickers and johns currently use for buying and selling women and children for sex in the United States" (2014). With the use of the internet, pimps have even more of an advantage: social media and websites have made it easier to be anonymous online. Prostitutes and trafficked individuals can be kept in a single location, and arrangements between the pimps and johns can occur via text and online messaging, which makes the process more difficult to see and to track. Victims of trafficking are made even more vulnerable because they may have little access to the outside world and fewer opportunities to seek help or to escape.

SAFE HARBOR FOR CHILD SURVIVORS

As a response to growing concerns about the domestic sex trafficking of minors, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) was enacted in 2000 to end federal punishment for victims of trafficking. In addition to protection from prosecution, the TVPA seeks to provide victims of trafficking with access to social services, medical care, and safe housing (Polaris, 2013b). The TVPA also includes special protection for children with the understanding that children "can never consent to prostitution. It is always exploitation" (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2005).

Despite the TVPA, a majority of child sex trafficking victims come into contact with state justice systems, and most states have not adopted the protections the act calls for. In response, states have begun adopting "Safe Harbor" laws intended to more effectively protect minors who have been trafficked or experienced sexual exploitation. Safe Harbor laws have been fully implemented in twelve states and partially implemented in six.

Safe Harbor laws continue to be advocated for, but evidence indicates they have also had mixed success. Lauren Jekowsky of the Human Trafficking Center (HTC) at the University of Denver in Colorado examined arrest records in the nine states that passed Safe Harbor laws prior to 2012. She reported in 2014 that only Illinois, New York, and Tennessee were providing some legal immunity from prostitution charges for children under 18 years old but still reported arrests of minors. These arrests indicate "an inconsistency between the law as it is written and its implementation by law enforcement" (HTC, 2014).

In January 2014, the federal government released the *Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States 2013-2017* with the goal of further improving protections for survivors. This five-year plan was developed through a collaboration of 15 federal agencies and involved input from community organizations to "create a victim services network that is comprehensive, trauma-informed, and responsive to the needs of all victims" (Administration for Children and Families, 2014).

A pimp is a man (or occasionally a woman) who controls the actions and lives off the proceeds of one or more prostitutes. Pimps are commonly believed to offer protection for prostitutes or act as their managers, but the reality is far more brutal. Pimps usually take most or all of the money a prostitute earns and “typically establish nightly monetary quotas that women and children are forced to earn in order to avoid violent repercussions. As we learn in the film through Shana’s story, pimps even use tattoos to ‘brand’ those under their control as a visible representation of ownership. The relationship between pimps and minors who are victims of trafficking often comes with extreme violence” (*The New York Times*, 2012b).

Pimp-controlled prostitution is pervasive and believed to be the most common form of prostitution in the United States, but pimps are arrested and prosecuted at a staggeringly low rate when compared to the prostitutes themselves (Violence Against Women, 2002). Before the TVPA was enacted in 2000, pimps faced up to 15 years in prison for promoting prostitution with an adult, but today the maximum sentence has risen to 25 years. Despite increasing efforts on the part of law enforcement to target pimps and traffickers, prostitutes still bear the brunt of the legal, physical, and economic consequences of illegal sex work.

According to Norma Ramos, executive director of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, “One thing we’ve learned from women who have been prostituted is that it is very easy to get into, but very difficult to get out of” (*The New York Times*, 2012a). Pimps use different forms of coercion to recruit and retain their “stable” of prostitutes, including “feigning romantic interest, emphasizing mutual dependency between pimp and employee, discouraging women from ‘having sex for free,’ and promising material comforts” (The Urban Institute, 2014). Many factors prevent women from accessing social services or legal assistance to leave pimp-controlled prostitution. Often, women are intimidated or afraid of what may happen as a result of seeking help. They may fear physical retribution and economic insecurity, and they may also be emotionally attached to their pimp despite (or because of) his or her abuses (Violence Against Women, 2002).

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SEX TRAFFICKING DEFINED

As defined under federal law in the United States, “Victims of human trafficking include children involved in the sex trade, adults age 18 or over who are coerced or deceived into commercial sex acts, and anyone forced into different forms of ‘labor or services,’ such as domestic workers held in a home, or farmworkers[sic] forced to labor against their will” (Polaris, 2014).

COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (CSEC)

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is “sexual activity involving a child in exchange for something of value, or promise thereof, to the child or another person(s). The child is treated as a commercial and sexual object. CSEC is a form of violence against children” (Girls Educational & Mentoring Services [GEMS], 2007).

“In 2001, a young woman by the name of Latasha Cannon was murdered. She was 17 years old and living in a Child Protective Services (CPS) funded group home in Boston. Unbeknownst to any of the adults in her life...she was under the control of a pimp and being exploited through prostitution. After her death, survivors, service providers, and law enforcement came together to say, ‘Was this an isolated incident or the tip of the iceberg?’ They quickly determined that it was the tip of the iceberg. Out of Latasha’s death, My Life My Choice was created.”

– **My Life My Choice (MLMC), Justice Resource Institute**

My Life My Choice (MLMC) was founded in 2002 as an initiative that would address commercial sexual exploitation of adolescent girls through survivor-led services, mentoring programs, and leadership training. As of November 2013, MLMC has “successfully trained over 6,000 youth providers in Massachusetts and nationally, has provided prevention groups to 2,000 girls and mentored over 200 girls in the metro-Boston area” (MLMC, 2014). MLMC also contributed to the drafting of Massachusetts Safe Harbor laws and their curriculum is now used in more than 20 states and in Canada.

AUDREY MORRISSEY

Audrey Morrissey was a struggling 16-year-old mom in Boston when her then boyfriend and father of her child pressured her into prostitution to support her family. Life on the streets was brutal, and Morrissey soon turned to drugs to deal with the abuse and trauma she experienced. Like many young women in her situation, she felt certain that she would be trapped in the life forever.

At the age of 30, after 14 years on the street, Morrissey entered detox for the fifth time. As she explains, “The information they gave me at 30 was the same information they gave me at 20, but I was ready to hear it” (Petra, 2014). As she began to heal, she also began to share her story as part of prevention and survivor-support programs and, in the process, found her calling.

In 2003, Morrissey joined MLMC as assistant director and coordinator of survivor services. Drawing from her personal experience as a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, Morrissey facilitates training programs and prevention groups and serves as a mentor to exploited girls referred to MLMC. She has received national recognition through an award from the Petra Foundation for her groundbreaking work (Petra, 2014).

Sources:

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**FROM SEED TO FLOWER: REVEREND BECCA STEVENS
AND THISTLE FARMS - NASHVILLE**

“The boot camp for prostitution is child rape...Trafficking’s roots are in vulnerability and childhood trauma and it’s all connected.”

– Reverend Becca Stevens, Founder of Thistle Farms

When Reverend Becca Stevens listens to survivors’ stories of sexual exploitation, she understands their feelings of anger, shame, and injustice in a way that many cannot. Beginning when she was 6 years old, Becca was molested by a family friend and member of her church. This trauma shaped her spiritual and professional life and inspired her commitment to providing services and support to survivors of sexual abuse and human trafficking.

In 1997, Stevens and her congregation founded the Magdalene residential program that provides services to prostitution survivors who want to overcome addictions and start new lives. The organization’s goals include standing “in solidarity with women who are recovering from abuse, trafficking, addiction, and life on the streets, and who have paid dearly for a culture that continues to buy and sell women” (Thistle Farms, 2014).

Magdalene provides a rigorous, two-year residential program for 30 survivors at a time, which includes comprehensive health services, counseling, and professional-development training, with opportunities to work at the organization’s partner company Thistle Farms. According to their website, “72% percent [sic] of the women who join Magdalene are clean and sober 2 1/2 years after beginning the program” (Thistle Farms, 2014).

THISTLE FARMS

Thistle Farms was launched as a strategy for providing financial stability to the Magdalene program beyond the usual funding sources available to nonprofits. It was also developed as an opportunity to offer employment and professional development to participants and graduates of the program.

Thistle Farms produces handmade, natural bath and body products whose proceeds benefit the organization and the women it serves. The company employs approximately 40 Magdalene residents and graduates and distributes their products to over two hundred stores across the United States. Thistle Farms has recently expanded their social enterprise to include the Thistle Stop Café, which is also staffed and managed by the Magdalene community. In addition to providing professional training and skill development to program participants, Thistle Farms offers a matched savings account to help graduates secure their economic future beyond the Magdalene program (Thistle Farms, 2014).

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As policy and law-enforcement priorities shift from the criminal punishment of prostitutes to rehabilitation, there has been a corresponding focus on programs that will discourage the demand for illegal commercial sex. One approach that has gained attention in the past decade for targeting consumers is the *john school*.

The term *john* is slang for an individual who solicits commercial sex. The first john school program, known as the First Offender Prostitution Program (FOPP), was developed in San Francisco in 1995 and established the model for later variations. John schools are generally diversion programs that offer offenders the opportunity to attend an education and rehabilitation seminar and pay a fine as an alternative to or a condition of criminal sentencing (Abt Associates Inc., 2008). John schools generally include a seminar that highlights the "health and legal consequences for johns if they were to continue engaging in commercial sex, and the negative impact of prostitution on prostituted women and girls and communities" (Abt Associates Inc., 2012). The fines paid by offenders are generally used to cover the cost of the program and to support rehabilitation services for survivors of trafficking and prostitution.

The degree to which john schools have been successful is difficult to establish; however, a 2008 report on the program in San Francisco suggests that the recidivism rate of johns in that city decreased from 8 percent to 5 percent during its first 12 years (Abt Associates Inc.). According to a 2012 report prepared for the National Institute of Justice, 58 U.S. cities and counties "have implemented john schools in lieu of, or in addition to, criminal penalties" (Abt Associates Inc.). However, the full impact and the relative success of the john schools model is difficult to establish because programs vary from state to state and because collecting data on the target populations is difficult.

END DEMAND ILLINOIS

The End Demand Illinois campaign was founded in 2009 to shift law enforcement's attention from survivors of prostitution to the sex traffickers and people who buy sex. Despite the long-advocated view that individuals in prostitution were in need of resources and support, Illinois prostitution law remained among the harshest in the country, where "any repeat prostitution misdemeanor was eligible to be upgraded to a felony—one of two states allowing such upgrade after a single charge" (*The Chicago Reporter*, 2012). Since summer 2013, Illinois no longer recognizes prostitution as a felony offense. It is now prosecuted as a misdemeanor with an increased focus on providing social service and rehabilitation-support programs when possible.

SHERIFF TOM DART AND THE COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Led by Sheriff Tom Dart, the Cook County Sheriff's Office has also shifted focus to ending the demand for prostitution and offering services to the victim at the time of arrest. The "National Day of Johns Arrests" initiated by Sheriff Dart in 2011 is a key part of their initiative. Since it began, the program has "grown to include 51 law enforcement nationwide partners who have combined for 1,832 johns arrests" (Cook County Sheriff's Office, 2014b).

The Department of Women's Justice Services (DWJS) of the Cook County Sheriff's Office is a member of the End Demand Illinois Steering Committee and has partnered with Polaris and the National Human Trafficking Resource Center's (NHTRC) hotline. The DWJS also offers resources to women involved in commercial sexual exploitation and prostitution. The intervention continues throughout the process, including Prostitution Anonymous support groups for incarcerated women, where they can share their stories, build community, and give and receive the support they need to take the challenging step toward a future away from the streets (Cook County Sheriff's Office, 2014a).

DEFINING THE TERMS

Human trafficking is a complicated issue and the terms associated with it are complex. The Human Trafficking Center's (HTC) Taxonomy Project is working to define certain key terms to aid in research and better understanding of the issues of forced labor, trafficking, and slavery. The following has been adapted from their resources (2013):

Slavery: The condition of being under the control of another person, in which violence or the threat of violence, whether physical or mental, prevents a person from exercising her/his freedom of movement or free will.

Forced labor: All work or service, legitimate or otherwise, which is exacted from any person under violence or the threat of violence, whether physical or mental, which prevents a person from exercising his/her freedom of movement and/or free will.

Human trafficking: The recruitment and/or movement of someone within or across borders, through the abuse of power/position with the intention of forced exploitation, commercial or otherwise.

Debt bondage: A creditor-debtor arrangement by which a person is forced to work off a debt, legitimate or otherwise, in which his/her movement and/or free will is controlled. When external factors, such as custom or force, eliminate the possibility of repayment by the victim and/or succeeding generations the condition becomes Forced Labor.

Sex trafficking: The recruitment and/or movement of someone within or across borders, through the abuse of power/position with the intention of sexual exploitation, commercial or otherwise.

Sex worker: A person who claims agency or choice in performing sexual acts in exchange for monetary and/or nonmonetary compensation.

Prostituted person: A person under the control of another, who has limited agency and/or choice, and is coerced into performing sexual acts in exchange for monetary and/or nonmonetary compensation.

Child soldier: Any person under the age of 18 engaged in any capacity in an armed group or directly taking part in an armed conflict, so designated due to the special level of vulnerability.

Irregular child labor: Excessive work or work that is detrimental to the welfare or education of children.

Migration: Movement of persons within or across international borders.

Regular migration: Movement of persons within or across international borders authorized by the state of origin, transit, and destination (including Legal Immigration and Legal Emigration).

Legal immigration: Movement of persons across international borders as authorized by the destination state.

Legal emigration: Movement of persons across international borders as authorized by the state of origin.

Irregular migration: Movement of persons, typically under duress and/or subject to extreme deprivation, within or across international borders, that is unauthorized by the state of origin, transit, and/or destination.

Illegal immigration: Movement of persons across international borders that is unauthorized by the destination state.

Illegal emigration: Movement of persons across international borders that is unauthorized by the state of origin.

Enganche: A coercive system of labor recruitment based on wage advancement intended to entrap workers in a cycle of indebted subsistence.

Neo-bondage: A short-term/seasonal arrangement in which manipulation of wage advancement or loans to a laborer with severely limited economic opportunities results in the forcible exploitation of labor.

Forced marriage: A union in which one or both spouses has not or cannot give free and full consent for any reason, but not limited to, age, disability, cultural norms, and/or the use of power/position.

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A Path Appears: The Prostitution Debate

In the book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn explain that “there’s a view that the best way to tackle prostitution is to legalize and regulate it” (Kristof and WuDunn, 2014). This policy has been implemented in the United States in parts of Nevada as well as in New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Germany, among other locations.

Advocates of legalized prostitution argue that by decriminalizing sex work, it is easier to ensure that workers are over 18 and that health and safety precautions are in place, including preventative strategies for STDs such as HIV. Criticism of this approach includes concerns that, in areas where prostitution is legalized, there will be a rise in sex tourism and an underground market for underage and trafficked girls and women.

Another approach that is discussed is targeting demand, including prohibitions against purchasing sex and strong penalties for the trafficking of women. This means “women who sell sex are offered social services but not arrested, while men are arrested and fined when they try to buy sex” (Kristof and WuDunn, 2014). It’s a popular policy in Sweden, but critics argue that it only serves to drive prostitution underground.

A further summary of the debate is included below, but for more in-depth information about the issue, as well as the personal stories of the remarkable women, girls, and men who are tackling trafficking in the United States and around the world, check out the book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

AND DECRIMINALIZING PROSTITUTION

Amnesty International announced in February 2014 that it is “consulting on a policy proposing the decriminalization of sex work.” The announcement was met with controversy and resistance from many antitrafficking organizations, trafficking survivors, and media commentators.

Amnesty initiated the process because, in their words, “We have seen evidence to suggest that the criminalization of sex work leads to social marginalization and an increased risk of human rights abuses against sex workers. The evidence also suggests that decriminalization could be the best means to protect the rights of sex workers and ensure that these individuals receive adequate medical care, legal assistance, and police protection.”

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In their announcement they cited other groups that currently support or are calling for the decriminalization of sex work, including "the World Health Organization, UN Women, the Global Commission on HIV and the Law, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Human Rights Watch, the Kenya National Human Rights Commission, the Open Society Foundations, and the South African Commission on Gender Equality" (Amnesty International, 2014). Amnesty International's announcement has also received support from the Global Network of Sex Work Projects, an international advocacy organization founded in 1990 to address human rights and health issues related to consensual, adult sex work.

Amnesty International maintained that it will "continue to call for the prosecution of human traffickers, including trafficking for sex work, the prosecution of adults involved in child prostitution or any form of child abuse, and prosecution for anyone who commits a crime against a sex worker, including rape or any other form of violence" (Amnesty International, 2014).

DECRIMINALIZATION: THE NORDIC MODEL

VS. THE NEW ZEALAND MODEL

THE NORDIC MODEL

The Nordic Model refers to an approach that decriminalizes prostitution while penalizing consumers of commercial sex and individuals who benefit from the prostitution of others. Sweden was the first to establish this model in 1998 when it passed "The Protection of Women" law. The model was later adopted by Norway and Iceland, with the goal of diminishing the demand for commercial sex.

The 2010 impact report by Sweden's Office of the Chancellor of Justice on the country's ban on the purchase of sexual services concluded that "Prostitution in Sweden, unlike in comparable countries, has not in any case increased since the introduction of the ban. The ban on the purchase of sexual services has also counteracted the establishment of organised crime in Sweden." The report also claimed that the ban has helped to combat sex trafficking and that there has been no substantial evidence of negative consequences on the lives and health of sex workers.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) disputes these conclusions, however, and in a 2012 report states that "the law has not improved—indeed, it has worsened—the lives of sex workers" (UNDP, 2012). Among its criticisms of the Nordic model are concerns that this policy has driven the sex trade underground in a way that increases the vulnerability of sex workers, compromises their health, and supports the proliferation of human trafficking. The report also states that sex worker rights organizations have "argued strenuously against the law," in part because they do not see themselves as victims (UNDP, 2012).

Sources:

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THE NEW ZEALAND MODEL

In 2003, New Zealand instituted a model that came closer to the legalization of prostitution when it passed the Prostitution Reform Act (PRA). The goal of the PRA was to decriminalize "prostitution (while not endorsing or morally sanctioning prostitution or its use); create a framework to safeguard the human rights of sex workers and protect them from exploitation; promote the welfare and occupational health and safety of sex workers; contribute to public health; and prohibit the use in prostitution of persons under 18 years of age" (NZMOJ, 2008).

In 2008 the New Zealand Ministry of Justice (NZMOJ) reviewed the impact of the policy and concluded that the outcomes for sex workers and law enforcement were generally positive. There was no marked increase in the commercial sex trade following decriminalization and human rights protections had improved for sex workers. They did acknowledge that "many sex workers are still vulnerable to exploitative employment conditions, and there are still reports of sex workers being forced to take clients against their will" (NZMOJ, 2008). However, they noted that sex workers were more empowered to say "no" and to bring complaints against clients or brothel owners.

Despite these successes, there is ongoing concern about increasing sexual exploitation and trafficking of children as a result of this policy, especially among first-nation communities. ECPAT New Zealand and End Demand, two prominent antitrafficking organizations, oppose the PRA on the grounds that it provides inadequate protections and policing against the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

COMPARING THE TWO MODELS

A joint report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in 2012 concluded that evidence in regions "that have decriminalized sex work (New Zealand and New South Wales) indicates that the approach of defining sex work as legitimate labor empowers sex workers, increases their access to HIV and sexual health services and is associated with very high condom use rates." The report also indicates that there is no demonstrated increase in STI transmissions and that HIV transmission is extremely low (UNDP, 2012).

This conclusion was supported by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network in their 2014 statement in support of New Zealand's model, which they found was "much more respectful of the autonomy, dignity and human rights of sex workers" compared to the Swedish laws (Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, 2014).

What Can Men and Boys Do to Combat Sex Trafficking?

MensWork is a Kentucky-based organization formed in 2008 by a small collective of men who wanted to create more ways for more men and boys to be actively and proactively involved in ending men's violence against women. The following was adapted from their guide:

Educate yourself about human trafficking:

Human trafficking exists throughout the United States. Most people think that human trafficking either does not happen in our country, or is very rare. The first thing that you can do to help combat human trafficking is to educate yourself about how common human trafficking is and the resources that are available in our communities to address, respond to, and prevent human trafficking.

Challenge prostitution: Many men see prostitution as a "victimless crime," but for the vast majority of people involved, that is not the case. Women, men, and transgender people who are prostituted experience higher rates of physical and sexual abuse, up to and including murder, than do people in general. They also suffer rates of emotional trauma that are similar to those of women who have been sexually assaulted or battered by their partners.

Challenge the media: The media frequently glorifies sexual exploitation. Write letters to the editor, write to publishers and producers, and in other ways, help to hold the media accountable for promoting messages of gender disrespect and gender injustice.

Support local agencies that work to address sexual exploitation: There are agencies and coalitions in every community that work to

combat sexual violence, domestic violence, and some of the dynamics that result in both sexual exploitation and trafficking. Everyone can and should work to support these organizations by volunteering and raising awareness of their work.

Celebrate strong women and support confident and educated girls and boys: Women and girls are regularly praised for their appearance and ability to please men. Support girls and boys in the development of personal strength and the ability to advocate for themselves and their self-worth. Recognize the value of women and girls in all areas of public and family life, and celebrate women in leadership roles.

Raise sons and mentor boys to challenge oppression: No boy is destined to be an abuser, a john, a pimp, or a human trafficker. Supporting young men to be accountable to and respectful to themselves and others is one of the most important things men can do to stop human trafficking.

Speak up and speak out! Let folks know your position. Challenge other men or women when they make comments that minimize the harms of sexual exploitation and make jokes about rape and prostitution. When enough men raise their voices to combat sexual exploitation of all kinds, we can help eliminate the demand that drives human trafficking.

Source:

» [MensWork.
mensworkinc.com](http://MensWork.mensworkinc.com)

What Is Needed?

Although trafficking is a worldwide crisis, there is a global movement to challenge the attitudes and institutions that make this abusive behavior possible. Sexual exploitation is believed to be the most widespread form of human trafficking, making up an estimated 79 percent of all recorded human trafficking cases (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2014). Poverty and lack of economic opportunity make women and children especially vulnerable, and gender-based discrimination and cultural and religious traditions that devalue women and girls further contribute to their exploitation.

UNDERSTANDING THE NUMBERS

In their book, *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn highlight the need for more reliable and comprehensive research to better understand the scope of the trafficking issue and the true impact of the many social change initiatives that are addressing it. The Human Trafficking Center (HTC) adds that “the fight against forced labour and human trafficking has been mired in policy based on substandard research, poor methodology, unreliable data, and a lack of transparency. The passion of the anti-human-trafficking community has not been matched with sufficient intellectual rigor” (2013).

For example, several antitrafficking and development resources indicate that approximately one hundred thousand to three hundred thousand children are the victims of commercial sex trafficking in the United States each year and cite a 2001 study by Richard J. Estes and Neil Alan Weiner at the University of Pennsylvania as the source of the statistics (*The Village Voice*, 2011; UNICEF, 2008; Estes and Weiner, 2001). The figures in that study, however, represent “the number of children Estes and Weiner considered ‘at risk’ for sexual exploitation, not the number of children actually involved” (*The Village Voice*, 2011). As the authors themselves emphasized in the report, “The numbers presented in these exhibits do not, therefore, reflect the actual number of cases in the United States but, rather, what we estimate to be the number of children ‘at-risk’ of commercial sexual exploitation” (Estes and Weiner, 2001).

David Finkelhor, professor of sociology at the University of New Hampshire and director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center, criticized the study, alleging that the data were never peer-reviewed (*The Village Voice*, 2011). Despite the controversy, these figures have been repeated, reported, and translated for over a decade, informing a false understanding of the trafficking issue in the United States and shaping the policies and strategies that address it.

With these challenges in mind, organizations such as the HTC advocate for a multifaceted, collaborative approach to combating trafficking that includes prevention, prosecution, and reintegration, built on a strong foundation of research (HTC, 2014).

Sources:

- » Estes, Richard, and Neil Weiner. 2001. “The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.” maggiecmneill.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/estes-weiner-2001.pdf
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- » The Village Voice. 2011. “Real Men Get Their Facts Straight: Ashton and Demi and Sex Trafficking.” villagevoice.com/2011-06-29/news/real-men-get-their-facts-straight-sex-trafficking-ashton-kutcher-demi-moore/5

SCHOOLS AS SANCTUARIES

Schools are uniquely positioned to offer support and education about trafficking to vulnerable youth. Awareness campaigns and outreach services that provide information and resources related to trafficking can offer a safety net for girls and boys who may not know where or how to seek help. The Urban Institute also recommends that schools develop partnerships with local service providers and law enforcement who can “provide information to students about what services are available if they or someone they know should need help” (2014).

The Urban Institute concludes that, “Cities and counties should address sex trafficking as a complex problem that requires a system-wide response, and schools, law enforcement, and social service agencies must work collaboratively to combat sex trafficking in their communities. Prevention campaigns must ensure that both boys and girls are educated about the role of force, fraud, coercion, and exploitation in sex trafficking” (The Urban Institute, 2014).

For schools and educators who are interested in addressing these issues, resources and lesson plans are available through Fair Girls (fairgirls.org). Students can also take the teen-friendly Charm Alarm quiz online (charmquiz.com) to better understand the health of their friendships and partnerships and how they can access support if they are in an abusive or dangerous relationship.

Sources:

- » Fair Girls: fairgirls.org
- » Global Freedom Center. “Educating Our Way Out of Human Trafficking.” globalfreedomcenter.org/EducatingOurWayOutOfTrafficking.pdf
- » The Urban Institute. 2014. “Estimating the Size and Structure of the Underground Commercial Sex Economy in Eight Major U.S. Cities.” urban.org/UploadedPDF/413047-Underground-Commercial-Sex-Economy.pdf

Thinking More Deeply

1. What insights did the stories about sex trafficking give you about the sexual exploitation of women and girls in the United States? What information surprised you the most?
2. Why is sexual exploitation an important issue to tackle? What are some of the ripple effects of sex trafficking on families, communities, and societies?
3. How is sexual exploitation connected to the cycle of poverty? What role, if any, could access to education and economic empowerment play in combating this form of gender-based violence?
4. There is a culture of silence surrounding sex trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women and children in the United States and around the world. Survivors often experience social stigma, fear of retribution, and emotional trauma and are reluctant to share their stories. What are some of the ways that the programs highlighted in the film are breaking that culture? What impact did the personal stories in this film have on your understanding of this issue? Was there a story that stood out for you?
5. According to the 2011 report by the Berkeley Media Studies Group, *Case by Case: News coverage of child sexual abuse, 2007–2009*: “Adult survivors of child sexual abuse can be powerful authentic voices for victims and for policies that will institute prevention. Because of their age and maturity, they may be better able to put their experiences in a larger context than would younger victims with similar histories.” What was your reaction to hearing from and seeing survivors who were still minors? What are the benefits and drawbacks of having these young women publicly share their experiences? Do you think the filmmakers should have taken steps to obscure their identities? Why or why not?
6. One of the primary reasons that sex trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children continue to flourish is that there are too few penalties for the perpetrators that keep this economy running. What are some of the barriers to justice that were highlighted in the film? What are some of the consequences for survivors who come forward to seek prosecution? How do these challenges compare with the barriers faced by women who seek justice for other forms of gender-based violence? Discuss some of the strategies mentioned in the film that are crucial for ending this practice.
7. What are some ways that the film highlights the role of mentorship programs? How do survivors’ experiences impact their ability to connect with women and girls who are struggling to leave “the life”?
8. What legal strategy for addressing trafficking and prostitution do you support? Based on the debates presented in the book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity* (and summarized in this guide), what role should legalization and/or decriminalization play?
9. How would you want trafficking to be addressed in your community? What would a program look like that addresses traffickers, pimps, johns, and survivors?

Suggestions for Action

1. **What’s your path?** Join the global movement to educate women and girls and improve the quality of life for all children. Visit our website to find out how to host a screening of *A Path Appears* with your friends, family, community, or organization and facilitate a discussion of the film and the book that inspired it: pbs.org/independentlens/path-appears
2. **Stand up for survivors of sex trafficking here in the United States!** Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS) is the only organization in New York State specifically designed to serve girls and young women who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking. GEMS was founded in 1998 by Rachel Lloyd, a young woman who had been sexually exploited as a teenager. There are many ways you can get involved to help transform public perception and generate awareness about commercial sexual exploitation and the domestic trafficking of girls and young women. Visit their website to find out about some simple things you can do to get started in support of their vision of ending the commercial exploitation and trafficking of children: gems-girls.org/get-involved
3. **Get connected!** The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) is a national, toll-free hotline, available to answer calls from anywhere in the United States, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. It is operated by Polaris, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) working to combat human trafficking. Callers can report tips and receive information on human trafficking by calling the hotline at 1-888-373-7888.
 - Online tips can be submitted at: polarisproject.org/what-we-do/national-human-trafficking-hotline/report-a-tip.
 - More information about Polaris can be found at polarisproject.org.For additional discussion questions and ideas for facilitated activities that may be adapted for a variety of audiences and age groups, visit pbs.org/independentlens/path-appears/resources to download the *A Path Appears* salon guide and lesson plans.

Resources

To purchase a DVD of the film *A Path Appears*, visit shoppbs.org.

To purchase the book, *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*, visit apathappears.org.

Note: The following resource descriptions are adapted from language provided on the organizations' websites.

pbs.org/independentlens/path-appears — Hosted by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), this is the online source for discussion guides, lesson plans, and a salon guide for the film.

jri.org/services/behavioral-health-and-trauma-services/community-based-behavioral-health-services/my-life-my-choice — My Life My Choice (MLMC) is a survivor-led, groundbreaking, nationally recognized initiative designed to stem the tide of commercial sexual exploitation of adolescent girls.

thistlefarms.org — Magdalene is a residential program for survivors of prostitution and sexual exploitation that provides health services, counseling, and professional-development training. Thistle Farms is a social enterprise run by the staff and residents of Magdalene House. Purchases of Thistle Farms products directly benefit the Magdalene programs and residents.

enddemandillinois.org — End Demand Illinois is an initiative to shift law enforcement's attention to sex traffickers and people who buy sex, while providing a network of support for survivors of the sex trade.

futureswithoutviolence.org — Futures Without Violence provides programs, policies, and campaigns for individuals and organizations working to end violence against women and children around the world.

gems-girls.org — Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS) was founded in 1999 by Rachel Lloyd, a survivor of commercial sex exploitation, and is the only organization in New York State specifically designed to serve girls and young women who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking.

polarisproject.org — Polaris is a leading organization in the global fight against human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

ecpat.net — ECPAT International is a global network of organizations and individuals working together for the elimination of child prostitution, child pornography, and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes.

fairgirls.org — Fair Girls is a prevention-education and survivor-advocacy program providing opportunities for girls to become confident, happy, healthy young women.

amnesty.org — Amnesty International is a worldwide movement of people who campaign for internationally recognized human rights for all.

rescue.org — The International Rescue Committee (IRC) responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives.

care-international.org — CARE International is an organization fighting poverty and injustice in more than 70 countries around the world and helping 65 million people each year to find routes out of poverty.

cedpa.org — The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) works through local partnerships to give women tools to improve their lives, families, and communities. CEDPA's programs increase educational opportunities for girls, ensure access to lifesaving reproductive health and HIV/AIDS information and services, and strengthen good governance and women's leadership in their nations.

endviolence.un.org — UNiTE to End Violence Against Women was launched in 2009 by UN Women to engage people from all walks of life to end gender-based violence in all its forms.

now.org — The National Organization for Women (NOW) is the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States and works to bring about equality for all women.

misssey.org/index.html — MISSEY (Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting and Serving Sexually Exploited Youth) provides services to and works for systemic change for commercially sexually exploited youth.

msf.org — Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an international, independent, medical humanitarian organization that delivers emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, health care exclusion, and natural or man-made disasters.

sagesf.org — The SAGE Project (Standing Against Global Exploitation) is a resource for information about commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking for sex and labor of both adults and children.

savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGlpI4E/b.6115947/k.8D6E/Official_Site.htm — Save the Children is an organization that works to save and improve children's lives in 120 countries worldwide.

unfpa.org — The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man, and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity.

girlsinc.org — Girls Inc. provides programs that inspire girls to be strong, smart, and bold through life-changing programs and experiences that help girls navigate gender-related, economic, and social barriers.

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ITVS

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ITVS's **Women and Girls Lead** is a strategic public media initiative to support and sustain a growing international movement to empower women and girls, their communities, and future generations. Women and Girls Lead is supported by CPB and Eileen Fisher, Inc. To learn more, visit womenandgirlslead.org

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SHOW OF FORCE

Founded in 2006 by veteran television producers Maro Chermayeff and Jeff Dupre, Show of Force is known for creating some of the last decade's most ambitious and creative programs, including feature documentaries, event television series and innovative transmedia projects. Included in its projects to date is the groundbreaking *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, a multi-platform project based on the bestselling book by *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. Other recent projects include the Peabody and Emmy Award-winning *Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present* (HBO), *Kehinde Wiley: An Economy of Grace* (PBS) winner of the 2014 Jury Prize for Best Documentary Short at SXSW, the 6-hour series *Circus* (PBS) and the Emmy Award-Winning 10-hour series *Carrier* (PBS).

