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Freedom's Journey: Understanding Human Trafficking

USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work

The practice of human trafficking has enabled modern-day slavery to thrive in every region of the globe. Combatting the spread of human trafficking requires first recognizing the scope of the problem. To help facilitate the conversation around ending human trafficking, the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work created the following guide that offers an in-depth look at the areas where trafficking is most prevalent, the forms of exploitation that exist, and the root causes of this epidemic.

A Note from MSW@USC Professor Annalisa Enrile

Annalisa Enrile is a clinical associate professor at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, where she has led efforts to study and chronicle human rights violations including sex trafficking and exploitative migrant labor. In addition to her published works on violence against women, Enrile will be releasing a book in 2017 on human trafficking. To learn more about Enrile's efforts to fight trafficking through education and activism, read her full biography.

The statistics of human trafficking are staggering — numbers most people would not be able to imagine as being tied to actual human beings. More than 20 million human trafficking victims exist in the world. And while numbers and definitions are important, they don't tell the whole story. Experts can debate the nuances of what is considered "trafficking and modern-day slavery," but there is a much greater imperative to raise awareness that this evil exists and compel people to make a change.

In the late 1990s, when it became clear that trafficking and modern-day slavery was not being abated by any measures put in place by individual countries, the international community moved toward a more concerted effort to create a global response. An intergovernmental ad hoc committee was formed in 1998, under the auspices of the United Nations, to draft legislation that would directly address and combat transnational crime. By 2000, the committee drafted what would become known as the Palermo Protocol, which not only defined trafficking, but also outlined a pathway to freedom known as the three P's — Prevention, Protection and Prosecution. Ten years later, a fourth P — Partnership — was added to bring different and diverse populations to the decision-making table. More cooperation als allows changemakers to leverage limited resources, which are often the largest barriers to servicing victims of trafficking. The Palermo Protocol is not a legislative cure-all, but it has influenced legislation around the world, especially in the area of prosecution.

Trafficking and modern-day slavery is not static. There is no methodology or prescriptive plan of action that works in all situations. Therefore, advocates and activists have to take a cue from the protocol but be flexible in combating the problem. An effective approach should not only be broad and open, but consistent, multidisciplinary, and best-practice-driven.

The first step is recognizing the scope and depth of the problem. This is the only way that we will understand the sheer expanse that our practice needs to cover. It is important to map the edges of this phenomenon because advocates and activists are most effective at the edges — fighting to control expansion and seeing the full scope in order to stop it altogether.

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What is human trafficking?

A form of modern-day slavery, human trafficking is defined by the U.S. Department of State as "the act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion." Although many victims of human trafficking are coerced into traveling across borders, movement is not a requirement to be considered a victim of human trafficking. In fact, human trafficking victims are frequently exploited in their hometowns and countries or born into a state of servitude. And coercion need not be through physical harm. Criminals often rely on a variety of tactics to lure victims into human trafficking rings, including:

- Kidnapping, illegal adoption and forced marriage.
- False job advertisements or employment prospects, debt bondage and wage theft.
- Violence, physical threats, intimidation and isolation.
- Psychological manipulation, seduction, dependency and false offers of protection.

The U.N.'s International Labour Organization estimates that, in 2012, nearly 21 million people worldwide were victims of various forms of trafficking and forced labor. Although the Asia-Pacific region has the highest number of victims, central and southeastern Europe, as well as a number of former Soviet republics, has the highest concentration of victims.

Mapping Human Trafficking

Number of Victims of Human Trafficking Worldwide

- Asia-Pacific region: 11.7 million (56%)
- Africa: 3.7 million (18%)
- Latin America: 1.8 million (9%)
- Central and southeastern Europe (non-EU), and the CIS[1]. 1.6 million (7%)
- The U.S., EU and Developed Economies: 1.5 million (7%)
- Middle East: 600,000 (3%)

Source: International Labour Organization; http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/policy-areas/statistics/lang--en/index.htm

Number of Victims per Thousand Inhabitants

- Central and southeastern Europe (non-EU) and the Commonwealth of independent States: 4.2
- Africa: 4
- Middle East: 3.4
- Asia Pacific: 3.3
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 3.1
- The U.S., EU and Developed Economies: 1.5

Source: International Labour Organization; http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@declaration/documents/publication/wcms_182004.pdf

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[1]Commonwealth of Independent States↑

What are the different forms of human trafficking?

Ninety-three percent of human trafficking victims are exploited through two avenues: forced labor and sex trafficking. A 2016 report from the U.S. Advisory Council of Human Trafficking offers a breakdown of the primary categories of exploitation.

Sex Trafficking

This form of trafficking occurs when an adult engages in a commercial sex act as the result of force, threats, fraud or coercion. Regardless of whether an adult has consented to the sex act, a person can be found guilty of sex trafficking if they have recruited, transported, solicited or patronized a human trafficking victim.

Child Sex Trafficking

Unlike with adult victims of sex trafficking, a person who has recruited, transported, solicited or patronized a minor for the purposes of sex can be found guilty of sex trafficking without proving force, fraud or coercion.

Cybersex Trafficking

As the internet becomes more accessible across globe, the livestreaming of sexual abuse, often of children, has also become more prevalent. Traffickers are able to exploit their victims from any location, and predators have access to victims from any device with an internet connection.

Forced Labor

This type of trafficking occurs when a person uses threats, abuse, fraud or coercion to force someone to provide labor. Again, a person can be found guilty of labor trafficking if they have recruited, transported, harbored or used a trafficking victim for work, regardless of whether a person previously consented to the work.

Bonded Labor or Debt Bondage

Employers who use a bond or debt to force workers into labor are, by law, engaging in trafficking. Migrant laborers, for example, are often at risk of debt bondage because they are employed through temporary work programs and can lose their legal status if an employer chooses to fire them. In some cases, employers impose illegal costs and debts on these workers, knowing that they are unlikely to report violations due to fear of losing their job and legal status.

Domestic Servitude

Working in a private residence leaves many domestic workers uniquely vulnerable to human trafficking. Not only are these workers isolated, but authorities have a greater difficulty providing oversight in private homes, allowing many domestic workers to be forced to work in slave-like conditions.

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Forced Child Labor

Slave-like working conditions are not limited to adult workers. Throughout the world, many children are similarly forced into labor and debt bondage or sold as slaves.

Forced Labor and Sex Trafficking

Types of Human Trafficking Victims Worldwide

40 percent of trafficking victims are in forced labor, 53 percent are in sex trafficking, 7 percent are in other forms of trafficking. Of victims in forced labor, 35 percent are female, 65 percent are male. Of victims of sex trafficking, 97 percent are female, 3 percent are male.

Based on 2011 estimates.
Source: 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report;
https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258876.pdf

Although the scale of the problems are much more limited in comparison to sex trafficking and forced labor, other forms of trafficking include organ removal for the black market, illegal adoption, child marriage and the use of child soldiers.

Spotlight: Child Soldiers

According to Child Soldiers International, it is not known how many children are actively serving in militaries throughout the world, but the organization estimates that the number could be as high as 100,000 child soldiers. Similar to other forms of trafficking, victims under the age of 18 are recruited through force, fraud and coercion to serve either as combatants or in support roles such as guards and medics. The organization estimates that between 10 percent and 30 percent of child soldiers are young girls. However, both boys and girls who serve as soldiers in these militaries are subject to sex trafficking violations and are often sexually abused.

Mapping Child Soldiers in 2016

- Foreign governments identified in 2016 as having governmental armed forces or government-supported armed groups that use children under the age of 18 in militaries. Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Iraq
- Myanmar
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan
- Syria
- Yemen

Source: 2016 Child Prevention Act List; http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2016/258691.htm

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Who is vulnerable to human trafficking?

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime identifies a number of factors that leave specific populations more vulnerable to becoming victims of human trafficking. In most instances, it is not one single factor that drives human trafficking, but a combination of interrelated factors that enable traffickers to take advantage of their victims.

Demographics

Throughout the world, women and children are at greater risk of being forced into sex trafficking or labor than adult men. The unequal treatment of women worldwide places them in a uniquely vulnerable position to become victims. In many countries, women have limited, if any, access to employment, higher education and political representation, and are often subjugated by gender and societal norms. Limited opportunities to afford a stable life through employment can push women into the black markets, where they are easily exploited by criminals. Similarly, children are not in a position of authority to protect themselves, often yielding to the demands of their elders. Not only are they in a physically vulnerable position, but many young victims also lack the legal understanding of labor laws and human trafficking laws to protect themselves from these violations or notify authorities.

Although women are still at much higher risk of becoming victims of human trafficking, the demographic breakdown of human trafficking victims is changing. In 2011, 49 percent of all victims were adult women, as opposed to 74 percent in 2004. In contrast, the share of men and children who are human trafficking victims is increasing. Adult men accounted for approximately 18 percent of victims in 2011, up 5 percentage points from 2004. Meanwhile, girls rose 11 percentage points to 21 percent, while boys rose 9 percentage points to 12 percent.

Social Factors

Marginalized groups that experience social exclusion based on factors such as race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, country of origin and legal status are also more likely to be exploited by human traffickers. Exclusion can be perpetuated by institutional biases, legal systems that do not offer necessary protections to these groups, and cultural norms or traditions that place certain groups in a position of power over other groups. These social factors often overlap with other vulnerability factors. Social exclusion, for example, can lead to discrimination in housing, education and employment that propels victims to seek available opportunities for work from traffickers.

Economic Conditions

Impoverished communities are easily preyed upon by human traffickers, who seem to offer victims the opportunity to improve their economic status. Many of these victims lack basic necessities such as housing and food in their communities and see offers for work as an opportunity to escape their unstable situations. Lack of opportunity for education can also exacerbate the vulnerability of struggling communities. Many people living in poverty either do not have schooling available or lack the financial means to obtain an education. This not only limits the job opportunities available to them to improve their living conditions, but also leaves them unable to advocate for themselves in work and contract negotiations.

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Crises

Armed conflict, political instability and natural disasters create a perfect storm of limited oversight and deplorable living conditions that enable human traffickers to easily exploit potential victims. Populations subject to these factors experience a breakdown of government function, lack protection from authorities, and often see their resources for basic necessities depleted. This can create desperate conditions that force mass movement within their countries or across borders.

For example, due to the civil war in Syria, the people still living in the country and the vast refugee population that has moved to neighboring countries have become victims of a long list of trafficking violations. According to the State Department, both pro-government forces and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist group have been documented forcibly recruiting, training and deploying child soldiers. The Syrian regime has used children as informants in anticipation of attacks, while ISIL has been reported to use children as executioners and suicide bombers. Women and young girls have also been abducted by ISIL and forced into marriage and domestic servitude. Unfortunately, many who have fled the country have not avoided exploitation. Young girls who have fled to neighboring countries have been forced into marriages, in which they are subsequently used for prostitution, while other refugees have been funneled into forced labor in agriculture.

Natural disasters also cause a breakdown of government function and oversight that can leave populations ripe for human trafficking violations. In the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, which hit the already struggling communities of Haiti in 2016, Save the Children, an international group that advocates for children across the globe, warned that many children separated from their parents and living in orphanages in the country would be vulnerable to traffickers who exploit international adoption. Haitian children could be forced into long-term domestic servitude because their parents are unable to provide for them. This echoed fears expressed by Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive, who, following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, noted that traffickers were entering the country disguised as relief organizations to remove children for illicit purposes such as illegal adoption.

Where are people being trafficked to?

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), more than 60 percent of trafficking victims are moved across borders. However, most victims remain within the same subregion as their home country, often moving to neighboring countries. And more than a third are trafficked within their country of origin.

Movement of Trafficking Victims

- Cross-Border Within Same Subregion: 37%
- Domestic (Within National Borders): 34%
- Transregional: 26%
- From Nearby Subregion: 3%

Flows by geographical reach between 2010 and 2012
Source: Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014 - UNODC

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UNODC reports that trafficking victims tend to flow from poor areas to wealthier areas, relative to the community in which they reside. Although transregional trafficking accounts for only about a quarter of human trafficking, affluent countries in the Middle East, Western Europe and North America have been identified as destinations for trafficking across regions. Nearly 40 percent of trafficking victims identified in North America and Western Europe, for example, arrived from outside their subregions. In contrast, in areas such as Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia, victims from outside their subregions accounted for just 3 percent of the total pool of human trafficking victims.

Transregional Trafficking Routes to Wealthier Regions

- East Asians; South Asians; Western and Central Europeans TO North America, Central America and the Caribbean
- South Americans; Sub-Saharan Africans; East Asians TO Western and Central Europe
- Sub-Saharan Africans; Eastern and Central Europeans; East Asians; South Asians TO Middle East.

Source: Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014 - UNODC

Wealthier countries also benefit disproportionately from human trafficking. Globally, the various agents who engage in human trafficking earn approximately $150.2 billion per year in illegal profits. Approximately two-thirds of those profits are earned from sex trafficking, while just over $50 billion is earned from forced labor. Although the Asia-Pacific region earns the most in annual profits from forced labor, the United States, the European Union and other countries with developed economies earn the most in annual profit per victim.

The Payoff of Trafficking

Estimated Annual Profits of Forced Labor (U.S. dollars)

By Region:
The Asia-Pacific region: 51.8 billion, The United States, the European Union and Developed Economies: 46.9 billion, Central and southeastern European countries, and the Commonwealth of Independent States: 18 billion, Africa: 13.1 billion, Latin America: 12 billion, Middle East: 8.5 billion

Per Victim:
The United States, the European Union and Developed Economies: 34,800, Central and southeastern European countries, and the Commonwealth of Independent States: 12,90, Middle East: 10,000, Latin America: 7,500, The Asia-Pacific region: 5,000, Africa: 3,900

Source: Profits and Poverty - The Economics of Forced Labour

How is the U.S. impacted by human trafficking?

The National Human Trafficking Hotline, created by the nonprofit group Polaris Project, offers a resource that people can call to report human trafficking abuses or suspected abuses. The hotline has documented about 30,000 cases of human trafficking in the United States since 2007, with the number of cases steadily growing each year.

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Human Trafficking Cases Reported to the Trafficking Hotline

3,279 in 2012, 4,884 in 2013, 5,042 in 2014, 5,544 in 2015, 7,572 in 2016

Source: National Human Trafficking Hotline

In 2016, the number of sex trafficking cases reported to the hotline dwarfed the number of labor trafficking cases, although there were a number of cases categorized as both forms. In the United States, top industries for labor trafficking were domestic work and agriculture, while hotels and commercial front brothels were top venues for sex trafficking. Human trafficking cases were reported in every state in the United States.

Mapping Domestic Trafficking

Human Trafficking Cases Reported to the Hotline in 2016

- **1-20:** Alaska, Idaho, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming
- **21-50:** Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Hawaii, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah
- **51-100:** Connecticut, District of Columbia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Wisconsin
- **101-200:** Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington
- **201-500:** Georgia, Michigan, New York, Ohio
- **501-1000:** Florida, Texas
- **1001+:** California

Source: National Human Trafficking Hotline

The White House reported that the Obama Administration saw record prosecutions of human trafficking perpetrators over the past eight years. Under Barack Obama's administration, federal agents have initiated 6,000 human trafficking cases and obtained 4,000 convictions. In fiscal year 2016 alone, the FBI investigated 1,894 cases of international and domestic trafficking, the Department of Homeland Security initiated 1,025 human trafficking cases and the Department of Justice initiated 241 human trafficking prosecutions, convicting 439 defendants throughout the year.

What are countries doing to protect human trafficking victims?

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 is the core piece of U.S. legislation designed to end human trafficking through the prosecution of criminals by establishing clear penalties, the protection of human trafficking victims through the creation of a victims' bill of rights, and the prevention of future crimes through education and awareness programs. Additionally, the TVPA and subsequent reauthorizations of the bill have helped to end the practice of trafficking and ensure the safety of victims by:

- Enabling victims of human trafficking to be paid restitution.

- Creating the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, which collects data and publishes a report each year recording progress made throughout the world.
- Creating the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, which helps to implement the TVPA.
- Establishing a T visa, which grants victims and their families temporary residency within the U.S. with the opportunity to become a legal permanent resident after three years.

The 2016 Trafficking in Persons report offers a clear understanding of the global progress countries have made toward ending these offenses. The extent of the problem is growing, and the nature of human trafficking allows cases to go uncounted and victims to remain hidden. But the number of prosecutions and convictions for these crimes is also increasing. In 2015, there were more than three times as many prosecutions, more than double the number of convictions and more than double the number of victims identified as there were in 2008.

Prosecuting Human Traffickers Across the Globe

- **2008:** 5,212 prosecutions; 2,983 convictions; 30,961 victims identified
- **2009:**5,606 prosecutions; 4,166 convictions; 49,105 victims identified
- **2010:** 6,017 prosecutions; 3,619 convictions; 33,113 victims identified
- **2011:** 7,909 prosecutions; 3,969 convictions; 42,291 victims identified
- **2012:** 7,705 prosecutions; 4,746 convictions; 46,570 victims identified
- **2013:** 9,460 prosecutions; 5,776 convictions; 44,758 victims identified
- **2014:** 10,051 prosecutions; 4,443 convictions; 44,462 victims identified
- **2015:** 18,930 prosecutions; 6,609 convictions; 77,823 victims identified.

Source: 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report

Not all governments are not taking the necessary measures to combat this global problem. The 2016 Trafficking in Persons report categorizes countries into tiers based on their sustained efforts to end trafficking and appropriately punish offenders. In 2016, 27 countries failed to meet the TVPA's minimum requirements, including countries such as Russia, North Korea, Syria, Haiti and Venezuela.

Countries Failing to Combat Trafficking According to TVPA Standards

Algeria, Belarus, Belize, Burundi, Central African Republic, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Papua New Guinea, Russia, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Zimbabwe

Source: 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report

What can we learn from survivors?

Survivors of human trafficking have a unique role to play to help prevent exploitation and inform laws to combat these crimes. The Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST), based in Los Angeles, is one organization working to empower survivors to share their stories and advocate for better policies to address the needs of victims. Angela Guanzon shared her journey from victim to advocate.

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Coming to America was like "winning the lottery," Angela Guanzon said. In her home country of the Philippines, many workers are hired for short-term contracts that end before the six-month mark so companies can avoid requirements to hire them as regular employees. She says the seemingly never-ending cycle of job searching was also complicated by widespread age discrimination in the labor market against workers older than 30. With an ailing father whose medical expenses were costly, Guanzon jumped at the chance to earn money for her family when she heard about a job opportunity to become a caregiver in the United States.

But Guanzon's dream opportunity quickly became a nightmare. Upon arriving at her new place of work in California in 2005, Guanzon's trafficker claimed she was owed $12,000 and that Guanzon would be required to work for 10 years. The woman also stole her passport, a tactic many traffickers use to maintain leverage over victims.

"When she told me that, it didn't register in my mind that the numbers didn't make sense," Guanzon said. "I was so overwhelmed that I didn't even think about it. All I could think was that I had to earn money so that I could send money to my family in the Philippines."

For two-and-a-half years, Guanzon worked as a caregiver for elderly patients, forced to sleep in hallways and eat table scraps, while enduring a grueling schedule that began at 4 a.m. and ended at 10:30 p.m.

At night, she was expected to wake up every two hours to check on her eight patients. Guanzon was rarely given a day off and earned a paltry salary of just $600 a month, $300 of which her trafficker garnished as repayment. And while she was spared physical abuse, her and her fellow caregivers were verbally and emotionally abused, frequently subjected to intimidation tactics and threats.

"She would threaten that if we were to talk to anybody about our situation, especially white people, and they discovered that we were undocumented, they would call the police and then the police would call immigration and we would end up in jail," Guanzon said. "She would warn that if we told the police that we lived in the facility and worked there, she would deny us and tell the police that she didn't know us."

It was her exhausting work schedule that eventually caught the attention of a neighbor. As Guanzon was taking one of her patients for a morning walk around the block, the pair stopped in front of a neighbor's house, like they typically did, to smell the flowers in his garden. Having seen her many times before, the owner of the house asked about when she had a day off, to which she would always provide the same response — yesterday.

According to Guanzon, the neighbor finally said, "You know, everytime I ask you if you had a day off, you say you did yesterday. But I saw you there yesterday. I know that something is wrong and something is going on there."

Nervous, Guanzon dismissed his concerns and thanked him for his time. But her neighbor refused to give up. When they crossed paths again on a later walk, the man slipped her a piece of paper with his number on it and told her to call him if she needed help. Eventually, she worked up the courage to call him on her prepaid phone, but her nerves took over again and she quickly ended the call, apologizing that she misdialed him. That was all he needed.

It wasn't long after that Guanzon received a text message from a woman claiming to be from the FBI who encouraged her to reach out for help. But she was still nervous about whether she could trust this new connection.

"I kept wondering whether it was true or whether it was just my trafficker testing me … . If you are a victim, trust is very hard to give to somebody else," she said. "And then I realized, I'm in a bad situation already. I don't know if I can wait 10 years working here. I might end up killing myself."

Taking a leap of faith, she contacted the FBI agent, who wanted to set up a meeting. By chance, Guanzon was given a day off the following weekend and arranged to meet the agent at a nearby parking lot.

"I remember walking there, and it felt like walking in a tunnel," she said. "I didn't know if I was going to see the light and if it was true. My heart was pounding."

Guanzon's risk paid off when she saw the FBI agent, who introduced herself, as well as an immigration agent. She spent the meeting recounting her experience being trafficked and living and working at the facility. Unfortunately, without documentation to show proof that she was being exploited, the agents said they would be unable to build a case against her trafficker.

"They told me that if I wanted to go back to the Phillipines, they could send me and that's it. But if I was willing to help build a case against her, we could also help others," she said. "I kept thinking maybe I'm here to stop her."

Wearing a wire, Guanzon successfully convinced her trafficker to discuss the terms of her working situation, her salary and her passport. But the FBI wanted to build a stronger case and needed Guanzon to encourage a fellow caregiver, Jason, to get involved. It took him about two weeks to think it over, but Jason eventually agreed to participate in a staged runaway to see whether their trafficker would call the cops and report him. She did, claiming that he stole money from her. A week later, Guanzon also ran away. She was connected to services at the Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST) and lived in their shelter while the FBI built a case against her trafficker. In 2008, her trafficker was sentenced to five years in prison.

With newfound freedom, Guanzon went to school to become a certified nurse's assistant and was able to move out of the shelter. But she wasn't quite ready to leave her family at CAST behind. She decided to attend a meeting of the group's Survivor Advisory Caucus, a leadership development program that encourages survivors to share their stories and advocate on behalf of victims.

"It was very, very empowering when I saw what they do, especially coming from my country where we would have had no voice," Guanzon said.

"I wanted to give back to the community and to help other victims, because sometimes they lose hope. People changed my life, so I wanted to help change others' lives too."

Working with the lawyers at CAST, Guanzon began providing input into potential laws and policies that could help prevent victimization. She helped to develop SB 477, state legislation that required greater oversight of foreign labor contractors. She also testified before the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, providing insight into how to better prevent trafficking.

"I was sitting in front of members of Congress and thinking, 'OK, these are very powerful people and I'm just me.' I went from being a victim and survivor, and now they are listening to me," Guanzon recalled. "Now, when I talk in a room full of people, they listen to me, and it's not only because they want to hear my story, it's because they want to know how to help other people."

But while Guanzon is happy to be making a difference with policymakers, she believes that everybody has a role to play to ensure that victims are protected from exploitation. She says people need to be more aware of their surroundings and educated about the signs of trafficking.

"Especially with labor trafficking, it can be very hard to spot, because you think people are happy and fine where they are working," Guanzon said.

"Victims of human trafficking are always in a situation where they don't have a choice and, many times, don't know how to get out. For those victims that are still out there, I hope and wish that we can help them find their way out and get help."

How can I help combat human trafficking?

To help eliminate in human trafficking, it is important for every individual to get educated, pay attention, raise awareness and take action.

Get Educated

Stay abreast of the latest news on human trafficking by visiting Human Trafficking Search, a global database that includes studies, journal articles, academic research and multimedia sources that provide context and analysis to better understand the global impact of human trafficking.

The U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons provides a frequently updated hub of information on human trafficking and publishes an annual Trafficking in Persons Report, which offers a review of efforts to end trafficking both domestically and abroad. To educate workers at risk of exploitation, the State Department has created a "Know Your Rights" brochure, which helps temporary workers better understand their rights and protections in the United States.

Advocates interested in pursuing careers working with the anti-trafficking community may also consider formal education to better understand the scope of this global epidemic and the ways they can help to combat trafficking. A recently published piece in Social Work Today highlights the critical role that social workers play in identifying victims, connecting survivors with the necessary social services, and filling in the knowledge gap for agencies or other social service providers that encounter human trafficking victims.

Pay Attention

Everybody can learn how to spot the signs of human trafficking. The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime has compiled a comprehensive list of human trafficking indicators that can help people better identify exploitation hidden in their own communities. Those interested in learning how they are connected to modern-day slavery can use the interactive tool from Slaveryfootprint.org.

Similarly, the Responsible Sourcing Tool allows businesses to assess whether human trafficking is involved in their supply chains.

Raise Awareness

Individuals who are interested in learning how to become better advocates can download the "End Trafficking Toolkit," created by the U.S. Fund for UNICEF's End Trafficking project. The toolkit provides advocates with a list of opportunities at local, national and global levels to join the movement to end trafficking. Advocates who would like to volunteer in their communities can also use the Global Modern Slavery Directory to locate organizations in their areas that offer volunteer opportunities.

Take Action

The National Human Trafficking Hotline provides a comprehensive set of resources and services for those interested in assisting victims and for victims themselves, which includes:

- A National Human Trafficking Referral Directory that allows advocates and victims to search for and connect with social service providers in their areas.
- An extensive resource library that includes online educational trainings and tools for service providers, health care professionals, educators and law enforcement on how to spot signs of human trafficking, engage potential victims and provide assistance.
- A 24-hour hotline where citizens can report tips about potential human trafficking crimes and victims can seek out social and legal services.

If you suspect that you have spotted a victim or are a victim yourself, call for help: 1-888-373-7888.

Interested in advocating for and assisting human trafficking victims as a social worker? USC now allows you to earn a top-ranked MSW without relocating. Learn more about MSW@USC

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