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TraffickACTS.Org: Turning Advocacy to Action to Combat Human Trafficking Through  
the Public

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**Table of Contents**

Abstract	3
Introduction	4
Literature Review: Human Trafficking	5
Background: Definitions	6
Understanding the Victims	9
Slaves Yesterday and Today: Slavery Evolving Over Generations	18
Types of Human Trafficking	19
Human Trafficking International Law and Frameworks	30
Country, Intergovernmental Interventions and Frameworks	33
The Power of Globalization and the Internet	38
Challenges and Emerging Trends to Activism	39
Best Practices for of Intervention	49
Social Media Advocacy	58
Social Media Causes and Campaigns That Changed It All	63
Benefits to Non Profits	68
Challenges for Nonprofits and Social Media Advocacy	70
Social Media Activism And Human Trafficking	71
Future Research and Conclusion	73
Project Description: <a href="http://www.TraffickACTS.org">www.TraffickACTS.org</a>	75
Structure and Content	77
Audience	86
Project Evaluation	87
Discussion	90
Conclusion and Further Research and Recommendations	91
Appendix	93
References	114

### **Abstract**

This paper discusses in depth one of the most controversial topics today in the field of development and social justice: human trafficking. Examining it from an activist perspective, this paper defines human trafficking, reviews the history of slavery as it relates to human trafficking, and examines current and emerging trends in combating this human rights violation. Various best practices are explored in the realm of anti-trafficking campaigns and programs. A primary focus of this paper is providing a model for combating trafficking through the engagement of the general public. Therefore social media advocacy is also defined and analyzed in the role of mobilizing individuals. Based on all of the information provided, an online advocacy platform of [www.TraffickACTS.org](http://www.TraffickACTS.org) has been launched and evaluated as an intervention educating and engaging the public about human trafficking.

*Key Words:* human trafficking, social media advocacy, sex trafficking, forced labor, activism, Facebook, twitter

## Introduction

Human trafficking is one of the most complicated crimes of today's society. It is one that is hidden in the shadows, as well as stands in plain sight. It is one of the fastest growing areas of organized crime and estimated to be the third largest international crime industry after drugs and arms. The human trafficking industry generates an estimated \$32 billion, \$15.5 billion of which is generated in industrialized countries (CNN, 2011; Hodge, 2008; Schauer & Wheaton, 2006). This human rights violation is one that affects every continent on the globe, except for Antarctica (Bales, 2004). Estimates from intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and governments state that anywhere from 4 million to 27 million individuals worldwide are currently enslaved (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012).

Despite major efforts on multiple fronts of advocacy, policy, and enforcement in the last fifteen years, this crime is not only growing but it is continuing to be misunderstood by those same parties as well as the general public. No true number, let alone a concrete range of numbers, has been given in any piece of literature. However there is no mistaking that this is a global crisis (IOM, 2011).

This paper focuses on the issue of human trafficking, breaking it down as much as possible to understand the issue. It reviews terminology, definitions and research in the field. It also reviews the challenges that come with the lack of knowledge of the issue that activists face which in turn pushes us further from addressing the core issues of the crime. The paper also examines the avenue of social media advocacy and how the world is losing borders as it goes online and how this can help connect people to address social justice issues. Finally, the intervention of the website: [www.TraffickACTS.org](http://www.TraffickACTS.org) is

described and analyzed as a possible solution toward a more educated and engaged public to combat human trafficking and slavery.

### **Literature Review: Human Trafficking**

This paper presents a comprehensive review of the current literature on human trafficking. The goal of the research was to understand the type and amount of information available to advocates working to combat human trafficking. Materials used for research included scholarly peer-reviewed journals primarily written and published within the last ten years, academic texts, non-fiction novels that showcased personal stories and experiences, and reports by federal government and United Nations offices. This study was structured to identify the challenges and obstacles to combating human trafficking from an advocacy perspective, to examine the disagreement about human trafficking among scholars and interest groups, to hone in on misperceptions and confusion about human trafficking within the populations of migrants and sex workers, and to determine what steps the public needs to take to properly address contemporary human trafficking and combat it.

The structure of this literature review will be to provide the background of human trafficking including definitions, types of human trafficking, an understanding of the victims, key terms and popular phrases, one of which is “modern day slavery.” The evolution of slavery will be examined from past to present. Following this section, challenges and emerging trends in human trafficking and activism combating it will be identified. As the intervention later introduced a website of engagement, an exploration of today’s advocacy world is discussed through online social media activism and its success.

### **Background: Definitions**

One of the largest misunderstandings of human trafficking is understanding the true severity of it without having consistent and accurate statistics. The U.S. Department of State in its annual report; *The Trafficking In Person's Report*, affirmed that although 440,000 survivors have been identified this year, there are more than 20 million people who have not been (TIP, 2014). The CIA estimates that 700,000 women worldwide are trafficked annually into the sex industry; in 2011 the International Labor Organization reported that 9 million people were subjected to this crime in the last ten years alone (ILO, 2011). The second edition of the Global Slavery Index produced by the Walk Free Foundation estimated 35.8 million people in modern slavery globally with 61% of them living in just five countries alone (Global Slavery Index, 2014). Other estimates from intergovernmental and NGOs state that anywhere from 4 million to 27 million individuals worldwide are currently enslaved (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012). It needs to be understood that although there are many questions and sometimes few answers, especially pertaining to concrete data, there is no mistaking that this is a global crisis (IOM, 2011).

Researchers are quick to admit that these numbers are extremely difficult to quantify due to many factors. Factors include: the serious depth of the crime leaving many misconceptions and misunderstandings; lack of identification of victims and prosecution of traffickers; lack of enforcement; and criticism placed on governments, UN Agencies and NGOs on over inflation or overestimation of numbers to create hysteria (Vance, 2011; Weitzer, 2014). All of these factors will be explored further in this paper. Scholarly literature provides what little information is known but demonstrates that there are large gaps in contemporary research on human trafficking, gaps that lend themselves

to contradictory theories and a general confusion about the information. All of these leave severe challenges for activists combating this serious crime (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012; Vance, 2011; Weitzer, 2014).

One of the largest challenges to combating human trafficking is that there is no single definition of human trafficking. In fact, there is little definitional agreement among governments, NGOs and even entire nations which struggle to prosecute and understand human trafficking. The absence of a definition has, no doubt, resulted in misunderstandings of the issue and friction in the field (Schauer & Wheaton, 2006). For the purpose of this review, I will be using those definitions of terms put forward by the United Nations specifically, and the U.S government's Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA), using similar definitions to much of the literature on this subject.

In 2000, the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crimes in Palermo, Italy, addressed human trafficking as a whole for one of the first times. They define human trafficking as having three key elements:

[1] The act: "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons"; [2] the means: "threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim"; [3] the purpose: "exploitation, which includes exploiting prostitution of another, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery or similar practices and the removal or organs (UNODC, 2000 article 3 as cited in Alvarez and Alessi, 2012).



The United States became involved in 2000 as well, when Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which was the first comprehensive federal law to address trafficking. TVPA is used to define trafficking, prosecute traffickers and provide services and protections to victims in the United States. The TVPA encompasses many of the terms used in the UN definition such as recruitment, harboring, coercion and others. The TVPA also includes statement of understanding that when a victim is under the age of 18, consent is irrelevant. It is also important to understand that the definition includes both United States citizens as well as those from abroad, and it does not require movement across county, state or country lines. Similar to other nations' laws, the TVPA standards are not all inclusive. It does not include illegal adoptions (Alexander, 2014), nor the trading in human organs (Pugliese, 2007), which are included in the UN's definition (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012; Bernat & Zhilina, 2011; Potocky, 2011; Schauer, Wheaton 2006; Wirsing, 2012). Because "one kind of abuse and one kind of victim should not be privileged over others" (Brennan, 2010, p. 141), we must include the most comprehensive definition to conceptualize the issue. Differing definitions not only result in confusion surrounding the issue, but also in neglect of victims in need of protection. The inclusivity and exclusivity of varying definitions leaves many victims without protection (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012; Gallagher, 2010).

One of the most common misconceptions of human trafficking is the difference between the terms "trafficking" and "smuggling." Human smuggling and human trafficking are closely related but should be clearly separated with regard to legal consequences and the purpose of identification of the victim. There are four main elements that distinguish the two illegal situations. The smuggling of a person does not

have a coercive element, the participant hires the smuggler and therefore is willing; there is no subsequent exploitation intended. Smuggling also requires the crossing of borders, while trafficking can simply be internal, and entry into a state is always illegal.

Smuggling, therefore, can be summarized as an act of facilitating illegal migration (Luther, Walker, & Hunt, 2009; Staiger, 2005). This is a very important to note because for many victims of human trafficking who go unidentified, one of the main reasons is because they are assumed to be of smuggling or of illegal immigration, when, in fact, the situation is more complicated. It is important to understand that there are cases of human smuggling turned into trafficking. For example, the victim hires the smuggler and upon arrival is held captive and exploited through debt bondage. (Brennan, 2014; Logan, Walker & Hunt, 2009; Roby, Turley & Cloward 2008; Schauer & Wheaton, 2006;).

### **Understanding the Victims**

The questions of who, where and how are on everyone's mind when they hear the estimated numbers of people in servitude today. And the truth is, there is no specific type of person who is enslaved. Unlike different periods in history, the slave trade no longer is confined to a race, religion, ethnicity or gender (Brysk & Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2012). The one common denominator among victims is vulnerability (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012). Trafficking is a business, and there is always at least one person profiting from it, if not more. Human trafficking has become a more attractive business prospect than other forms of smuggling and trafficking because it does not require technical expertise or a distribution network like other highly profitable enterprises such as narcotics or the smuggling of military arms. Additionally, in many countries, the penalties for the

trafficking of persons are significantly lower than they are for crimes like narcotics (Thachuck, 2007).

Scholars write about vulnerable countries, as well as the types of people who can be vulnerable to trafficking, and factors of vulnerability include being female, a child or both; uneducated or illiterate, low income or homeless, members of the LGBTQ community, disabled, or a substance abuser. This is not to say that being male, young and of other privileges cannot be a vulnerability as well, especially when a person gets involved in trafficking due to of fraudulent contracts or human smuggling turned to trafficking. What makes the victims vulnerable in this situation is because they sometimes come from an unsafe home or a place of poverty or social inequality (Hopper, 2004; Logan, Walker & Hunt, 2009; Wirising 2012; TIP, 2014).

Countries can also be classified as vulnerable, and place their populations at risk for several reasons including devastating poverty, armed conflicts, rapid industrialization, political instability and rapid population growth (Batstone, 2007; Logan, Walker & Hunt, 2009). With a lack of employment and the hope for a better future, people of all ages and genders will migrate. Motivations for migration are increased by unstable governments and corrupt law enforcement organizations that take advantage of these vulnerable populations. In situations like these, officials can be bribed and forged passports and travel documents are easily obtained. Parents in desperate situations need to support their family and may sell their children in the hopes of a promise of an education, an income and a better future for their child. While many parents don't know what they are sending their child into, some do, but they hope it will be a better life than what they can provide. The word *force* in the definition of trafficking is highly debated, as it can be construed to

mean forced physically or forced by poverty or social expectation. The latter force happens particularly to young girls in rural villages in Southeast Asia who go “willingly” when “encouraged” by their families to go to work in cities as domestic workers or prostitutes. The impoverished are more likely to take a loan that their soon slaveholder will manipulate into debt bondage when in desperation, or the migrant worker will take a job in a faraway land hoping for more money and opportunity (Batstone, 2004; Logan, Walker & Hunt, 2009).

Traffickers are known to capitalize on wars, turmoil and natural disasters to target and enslave victims, especially women and children. Wars and natural disasters are pivotal moments for traffickers to take advantage of separated families, especially children. War slavery, which is the enslavement of civilians by the movement or the army, although not as common as other forms of slavery, is a definite catalyst. For example, there are war slaves in Burma, where the Burmese government kidnaps and enslaves the people of different ethnic states. In Sudan, thousands of women and children have been taken during the decades of civil war. Enslaving civilians during war is used a weapon, as it benefits one side by physical labor, soldiers and even sex slaves, but also instills fear in populations to encourage a resistance to rebellion (Bales & Soodalter, 2009; Thachuk, 2007).

While it seems in the press that women and young girls are the main targets of trafficking, scholars have shown that all genders and ages are targeted in trafficking. It is true that females are more at risk for sexual exploitation, but men are used in that sector as well as, exploited for their strength and used in some of the most dangerous sectors of agriculture, fishing, construction and mining. Women make up almost half of the

international migrants and are trafficked for multiple forms of slavery from “nibbled fingered” sweatshops to the “maid trade,” from mail order brides to prostitution (Brisk & Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2012,). It is important to note that women and girls who are already in the sex industry in developing countries could be trafficked, and although these women were trafficked to what seems like the same profession, that is not actually the case. The sex trafficking industry is one in which females have no rights, are constantly beaten, raped, and at times even murdered. This is not the same life as a sex worker (Flowers, 2001; Curry, 2005).

Children, or more realistically, teenagers, are often susceptible to trafficking for the same reason that adults are: migration. In certain situations, parental illness combined with dire economic circumstances places even more pressure on the children to contribute to their family’s income. These pressures can cause the children to search for jobs in areas in which they had previous experience from their home countries, like farming, housework and babysitting. Believing the work will be the same as it was in their home countries, they unknowingly become trapped in phony contracts or debt bondage (Gozdziaak, 2008; Batstone, 2007). This abuse of power and vulnerability is one of the “means” under the Palermo Protocol of the definition of trafficking. Thus poverty alone, without abuse of that “vulnerability in a manner to make a victim’s submission to exploitation the ‘only real; and acceptable option,’ is not enough to support a trafficking case, whether the exploitation is sexual, forced labor, or the removal of organs” (TIP, 2014, p.36; Alvarez & Alessi, 2012).

While researchers can analyze trends, there is no single slave trade route in which slaves are trafficked. Human Trafficking affects the world and no country is safe from its

reach. Although it is hard to rank the countries for importation of slaves, researchers estimate that the top countries include Italy, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan, Greece, India, Thailand and Australia, with the trafficked persons coming from Asia, the former Soviet Union, Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America. But just because people are being trafficked into the country does not mean citizens of that country aren't trafficked out of their country of origin, because this is the case for many countries. (Hodge, 2008). We also see that regional patterns of female factory and domestic labor mirror those of males, and the export of female services follows distinct geographic patterns of East to West and South to North (Brisk & Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2012, p. 76).

The traffickers are not one group or organization, rather, they are believed to be part of large and small crime rings that have the capacity and connections for recruitment, transportation, forced labor and for working with corrupt government and law enforcement (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012; Bernat & Zhilina, 2011). No matter who the traffickers are, their strengths lie in their adaptability and ability to mentally and physically break down their victims. Some victims are contained in houses or factories, sometimes in chains (Logan, Walker & Hunt, 2009). Still, many trafficked persons are often hiding in "plain sight," but have become dependent on their trafficker so they remain silent. After a person is "recruited" into the industry the traffickers must "season," "soften" or break the person. They do this either by psychological or physical abuse. Upon arrival they could be told that doing pornography would help pay their debt, and then the photographs are used as a threat to shame the victim's family back in their home country (Schauer & Wheaton, 2006). Victims are raped, beaten, brainwashed, and

threatened with their family's safety, robbed, starved and held in unsanitary conditions, all of which encourage mental defeat (Brennan, 2010; Logan, Walker & Hunt, 2009; Roby, Turley, Clowford, 2008).

Much of the public wonders why these individuals who are not physically restrained, or even the ones who are, do not try to run away, but the answer is simple: their captors, slaveholders, traffickers, pimps or whoever is holding fear or shame over them: fear of harm to their body, to their family or fear of the outside world. The latter is particularly important if the individual came from a country in which the police and government are corrupt. If the individual is in risk of criminal behavior such as prostitution, they would be afraid of arrest or deportation. Traffickers use isolation as an advantage. Many victims become dependent on the trafficker because they may not speak the language or understand the culture, however they know they are participating in illegal activities and fear deportation, especially if the traffickers confiscated their paperwork. They often believe it is their own fault that they are in this situation. Victims also experience feelings of self-loathing, particularly if there was any sort of sexual abuse, especially if it resulted in any sort of pregnancy or pornographic material. Due to culture norms, the trafficked feel they have a duty to finish paying off a debt, even though it may be impossible due to unjust inflation. Some victims even form a bond with their masters or the children they care for; they fear leaving the children they care for with their parents. The final factor is that many victims are allowed minimal sleep and food, and are therefore living in a constant state of confusion, exhaustion and depression (Bales & Soodlater, 2009). Some last years, some not as many, but eventually all are psychologically traumatized. Some victims even forget the past altogether and know only

their life as a slave. (Brennan, 2010; Hodge, 2008; Logan, Walker & Hunt, 2009; Rand, 2009; Roby, Turley, Clowford, 2008).

When picturing these traffickers or slaveholders, especially considering the way the media portrays them, it is very easy to imagine these people as evil or inhuman, but that will not solve anything, nor will it help us figure out the causes of this destructive business. Like any other commercial market, the slave trade is driven by the dynamics of supply and demand. The profit margins will rise as high as the demand will bear (Bales, 2004; Bales & Soodalter, 2009; Batstone, 2007).

Many scholars and activists will use the term “modern day slavery” when referencing human trafficking (Basu et al., 2014). The term became popular because most people believe slavery is only a part of history books, and that it has just been born again with human trafficking. However, the truth is that slavery is as old as the human race, and although it’s part of history, it is also very much part of the present as it never actually ceased. Although laws allowing it have been receded, slavery exists today across the globe (Bales & Trodd, 2008; Jones, 1999; Zimmerman, 2013). For the purpose of this study, slavery will be defined in relation to human trafficking as it was in the Slavery Convention by the Centre for Human Rights signed in Geneva in 1926 in article 1 as

- (1) The status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.
- (2) The slave trade includes all acts involved in the capture, acquisition or disposal of a person with intent to reduce him to slavery; all acts involved in the acquisition of a slave with a view to selling or exchanging him; all acts



of disposal by sale or exchange of a slave acquired with a view to being sold or exchanged, and, in general, every act of trade or transport in slaves (UNHR, 1926).

The literature goes further to define slavery and breaks it into three forms: chattel, debt bondage and contract slavery. The first is Chattel slavery, which is the form closest to the type of slavery many think of when they think of slavery in the last few centuries, particularly in the United States. Chattel slavery is “when a person is captured, born, or sold into permanent servitude and ownership is often asserted” (Bales & Trodd, 2008, p. 10).

Debt bondage is another form, and is the most common form of slavery that aligns with human trafficking today. In debt bondage slavery, a person pledges themselves as “collateral against a loan of money, but the length and nature of the service is not defined and their labor does not diminish the original debt” (Bales & Trodd, 2008, p. 10). Debt bondage can carry over several years, and it can even carry over generations, leaving children who are expected to work off their parents’ debt. When interviewing victims who became involved with debt bondage, researchers realized that their “loan” should have been paid off years before they were freed. However, the slaveholders kept the inflation rate high, who continued to add to their debt (Brennan, 2007). Examples of this can be found across the globe. The United Nations Inter-Regional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) published a report in 2010 stating that as many as 20,000 Nigerian prostitutes are in Italy alone, many of them entrapped in debt bondage after not being able to pay the debts of being smuggled into Europe (UNICRI, 2010).

Contract slavery is the most rapidly growing form of slavery in which “contracts guarantee employment, perhaps in a workshop or factory, but when the worker is taken to their place of work they find they are enslaved” (Bales & Trodd, 2008, p. 10). In contract slavery, the work is often nothing like what the person may have been promised or hired to do (Hart, 2009; Naim, 2005). Amnesty International studied the trends of migrants moving to the Middle East from Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa who came to the region with promises of a better job in the shape of a well-paying job contract. Upon arrival however a significant number of migrant workers had been subjected to forced labor involving exorbitant recruitment fees, confiscation of documents including ID’s and passports, withholding of salaries and physical, psychological and sexual abuse in the workplace (Amnesty International, 2014). It is also estimated in the Global Slavery Index that 2,178,100 people are in modern day slavery in the Middle East and North Africa, with a significant number being these migrants caught in exploitative labor (Walk Free, 2014, p.56).

The following section describes a brief history of slavery. Including this information reiterates that slavery remains the same as “a social and economic relationship in which a person is controlled through violence or its threat, paid nothing, and economically exploited” (Bales & Trodd, 2008, p. 10). The expansion of the trafficking industry is a symptom of the economic world in which we live, and that traffickers are not evil, simply motivated by money (Bales & Soodalter, 2009; Hoang & Parrenas 2014). We cannot fix evil, but we can work to create a world that promotes human lives over business.

### **Slaves Yesterday and Today: Slavery Evolving Over Generations**

Slavery existed in some of the world's most "developed" regions. Recorded history of slavery can be found being used in the ancient kingdom of Egypt along the Nile, the Indus Valley of India and China's Yangtze River Valley. Slavery was legal and socially accepted from the ancient Babylonian law to the Louisiana Slave code of 1824, these were actual laws that allowed for the temporary enslavement of human beings (Bales & Trodd, 2008; Jones, 2009). After the American Revolution, Congress passed a series of serious laws that banned the international slave trade and the punishment was hanging. Despite these laws, Congress left the institution of slavery in the United States untouched (Jones, 1999). It was a momentous day in 1833 when British Parliament passed the Slavery Abolishment Act in Great Britain and it was the same momentous day in 1865 when the Thirteenth Amendment was passed in the United States. But similar to today's laws and the lack of enforcement, which will be discussed later in this paper, the fact that such laws were created didn't help the cause to stop slavery. Slavery continued to thrive (Andreas & Greenhill, 2010; Bales & Soodalter, 2009; Jones, 2009).

After the Thirteenth Amendment was passed, many former slaves became bound into phony contracts as field workers or sharecroppers. The farmers would hold their pay and inflate their rate of payment, over the rate of pay they actually received, and what were the workers to do? These forms of legal peonage were practiced across the U.S, though primarily in the South, and lasted for decades. It wasn't until 1948 that a federal ban was placed on peonage, but the practice was still used until the 1960s (Bales & Soodalter, 2009; Jones, 2009; Zimmerman, 2013). Peonage or debt bondage is not the only similarity of the past to the present (Bales & Soodalter, 2009; Jones, 2009).

A major difference between slavery of the past and slavery of today is the economic value of a slave. Today slaves have very little economic value; they are bought sometimes extremely cheap, used and abused. Slaves in the past were an investment, so it was important to keep them alive and able to work. In fact, in today's society, the average slave in 1850 would cost around \$40,000 in today's modern currency. Today, however, humans are traded for only a few hundred dollars (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009; Jones, 2009; Zimmerman, 2013). Present day globalization and capitalism have taken away the value of a human life. Human life or fair wages are no longer valued as they should be; only cheap goods and services, and the goal is to get them no matter the cost. Even if that means the cost of a human life or a life enslaved in destitute. The truth is "no industry, corporation, political party or state, country or culture must depend on enslaved people" (Zimmerman, 2013, p. 4).

### **Types of Human Trafficking**

#### ***Sex Trafficking***

When the average person thinks of human trafficking the first thing they may think of is a young girl or immigrant woman working in a brothel in Southeast Asia, or an Eastern European woman working the windows of the Red Light District. This is because sex trafficking receives more press and research than any other type of human trafficking. After all, sex sells. Despite the publicity of sex trafficking, it is still incredibly misunderstood (Kara, 2009). In simple terms, sex trafficking is the "recruitment harboring, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act" (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012; Kara, 2009; TIP, 2014).

Variations on sex slavery occur all over the world. In Switzerland, young girls are brought in on “artist” visas as exotic dancers. They work as striptease dancers to meet their visa requirements, but are often forced into prostitution as well. In Germany, “bar girls” are women who work in the bars or clubs but are also sold by the bartender or bouncer to men for the evening. During the 1980s, Japanese sex tours to Thailand began, where Japanese businessmen would visit Thailand for what is now referred to as sex tourism. Sex tourism continues to be a booming industry today and all over the world. Following the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Thailand during the mid-1990s, wealthy men began to pay considerable sums for young rural girls from Thailand (Bales, 2004; Kara, 2009).

Brothels are located all over the world and can be hidden so that only locals may be aware of them, or they can be out in the open for all to see and visit. Brothels may be large or small establishments holding anywhere from 10 to 300 prostitutes (Kara, 2009). Karaoke clubs in Southeast Asia offer a night of singing and partying, but clients may also purchase a young woman to take home for the evening. The conditions of these brothels vary: some are in horrible conditions with owners and pimps who keep their “products” drugged and beaten, and servicing 10 or more customers per day or night. Some pimps display the victims in what are called fishbowls, with the women behind glass, to be chosen by customers. Not all trafficked women work in such degrading conditions, however. Some live in better conditions or serve men for longer amounts of time, in a service called the Girlfriend Experience (GFE) (Kara, 2009). What helps distinguish slaves or victims of trafficking from sex workers who choose to be in the sex industry is the conditions in which they work, but also their ability to leave the industry

(Hoang & Parrenas, 2014). Many sex slaves who live in a club or brothel are not allowed to leave except with a customer, or only after a certain level trust has been established between the sex slave and her owner. In the trust scenario, the women who are able to leave are trained to come back (Batstone, 2007; Kara, 2009; Hoang & Parrenas, 2014; Hodge, 2008; Schauer & Wheaton, 2006).

Pimps are used around the world to facilitate the sales of these women, but they are not usually the traffickers or recruiters (Batstone, 2007). They merely purchase men and women from traffickers and then sell them to customers for sexual exploitation. Pimps operate in brothels, bars or clubs, and many are connected in urban areas, working the local hotel scene for potential customers (Bales & Soodalter, 2009; Hodge, 2008; Kara, 2009;). Sex tourism is a growing trend in the sex trafficking conversation. With sex tourism, people pay for trips where they are connected with women who are tailored to the customer's wishes – age, race, and other specifications. There are also other, less formal methods of sex tourism, and some countries are just known as destinations for sex tourism. It is important to stress that sex trafficking and sex work are very different. Sex workers choose to be in this work, and while they may have pimps or have to pay bar fees, they are still free to live and leave. Later in this paper the debate of sex work versus sex trafficking will be discussed, as well as how the growing market for sex keeps sex trafficking in business (Hoang & Parrenas, 2014; Weitzer, 2000; Weitzer, 2014).

The International Labor Organization estimates that female sex trafficking or exploitation accounts for only 22% of the human trafficking industry, and it is important to remember that men and boys are exploited in this industry as well (ILO, 2012). The U.S. State Department estimates 600,000-800,000 people are trafficked for sexual

exploitation across international borders, while other NGOs claim the number is anywhere between two to four million. Once again, the numbers are not in agreement (Andreas & Greenhill, 2010). However, the U.N. reports that although sexual exploitation is a specific area of trafficking, 95% of victims in other forms of trafficking experienced physical or sexual violence. The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime uses mapping to track where victims are going and coming from. Statistics show that victims are most predominately from Asia, Russia, Africa and Eastern Europe (Hodges, 2008).

Although sex trafficking is one of the more prevalent types of human trafficking in the news and media, there has not been enough done to combat it and information is still woefully inadequate and misdirected. One reason for this lack of effective action is that organizations that work on the issue are underfunded and under coordinated internationally. Organizations aren't combining resources and foreigners start NGOs with little understanding of what may actually be happening in that country and with little local involvement. The next obstacle to further understanding the issue of trafficking is the fact that the laws against human trafficking are weak and poorly enforced. Finally, although multiple studies have been done on this section of trafficking, a systematic business and economic analysis of the industry to identify patterns and trends of financial gain and strategic points of intervention have not been undertaken (Brysk & Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2012; Hoang & Parrenas, 2014; Kara, 2009).

### ***Forced Labor***

One of scholars' and activists' biggest complaints is the lack of emphasis placed on labor trafficking. Forced labor, or labor trafficking, is the largest form of trafficking throughout the world. What the media often neglects to mention is that 68% of trafficking

victims are found in conditions of forced labor (ILO, 2012). Forced labor encompasses the range of activities that has been discussed, “recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining - involved when a person uses force or physical threats, psychological coercion, abuse of the legal process, deception or other coercive means to compel someone to work” (TIP, 2014, p. 33). What is often misunderstood is the fact that sexual exploitation in private homes by individuals who often demand sex and work (in the home or even outside the home) is categorized under many laws throughout the world as labor exploitation or labor trafficking, rather than sex trafficking (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009, p. 4). A very common definition that is widely accepted for labor trafficking or forced labor is from the International Labor Organization; “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily” (ILO Convention No.29, 1930). More recently, however, the ILO identified six factors of forced labor which included threats of physical or sexual violence, restriction of movement of the worker, debt bondage where the employer may provide food and accommodation at such inflated prices that paying off the debt is extremely difficult for the worker, withholding wages or refusing to pay the worker, retention of passports and documents and threat of denunciation to the authorities (Hoang & Parrenas, 2014, p. 149; Brennan, 2014).

The most vulnerable population to this kind of trafficking is migrants. In fact, many researchers describe human trafficking as migration gone awry (Brennan, 2014). This section of trafficking is extremely difficult to understand, as it is enormous. Slave labor contributes to the products of at least 122 goods from 58 countries around the world (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012; Schauer & Wheaton 2006). This is the part of trafficking that



everyone, in a sense, is touched by in some way. Some of the most common areas of forced labor include agriculture (crops and livestock), fishing and aquaculture, logging, mining, construction, factories, restaurants, hotels and private homes (Bales, 2004). These are all areas that have various levels of public visibility, yet somehow these people stay “hidden.” The domestic portion of forced labor is incredibly large throughout the world, but especially in the U.S and Western Europe. This includes nannies, housecleaners, cooks and other forms of domestic work; these are people who are kept in the house and sometimes are rarely able to leave. Victims may serve in one function or many, but they are certainly slaves in the home, as they are over worked and often suffer from sexual, verbal and physical abuse. Victims of labor trafficking exist in our backyard, yet go unnoticed, usually until a neighbor sees suspicious or questionable activity and reports it. (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012; Brennan, 2010; Brysk & Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2012; Schauer & Wheaton 2006).

“Forced labor exists today in part because exploitative labor conditions exist and are allowed to proliferate” (Brennan, 2014, p. 12). An increasing challenge in understanding labor trafficking is the fact that this sector already has multiple issues with working conditions, undocumented immigrants and low pay. When exploitation exists in some level of, it can simply become a normalized type of abuse where migrant labor predominates. An already exploitative field, many migrants labor in modern-day sweatshops where employers get away with paying poverty wages under bad conditions because they know they have the upper hand, as their victims fear detection and deportation (Basu et al., 2014). Debt bondage and fraudulent contracts are very common aspects of forced labor. Trafficked persons may not be restrained, therefore they may

look very similar when performing work, such as picking oranges, sewing a blouse or washing dishes, alongside other migrant workers. They appear to be working under the same conditions as their coworkers, but what distinguishes these coerced individuals is that they fear what will happen to themselves or their families if they actually try to leave. All trafficked persons in forced labor or any form of trafficking, regardless of how they got there or circumstances of exploitation, have a compromised ability to walk away, which is achieved by intimidation and fear (Brennan, 2010; Brennan, 2014; Hoang & Parrenas, 2014; Weitzer, 2014).

### *Child Trafficking*

The second most advocated sector of human trafficking is child trafficking; however, just like sex trafficking, there is much that is unknown. Children are used in every sector that adults are used in, and the conditions are usually worse, as they are put in more dangerous situations, being small and naïve (Goździak 2008). Most laws have followed the U.N. definition of human trafficking when they define the role of children in their laws, but how the children are exploited is not further defined. For example, most laws state that when a child (under 18 years of age) is “recruited, enticed, harbored, transported, provided, obtained or maintained to perform a commercial sex act, proving force, fraud or coercion, it is not necessary for the offense to be characterized as human trafficking” (TIP, 2014, p. 29). However, when it comes to forced child labor, in many countries it is legal for children to work; therefore, child labor is defined by criteria of age, duration of labor and type of economic activity. Light work is globally recognized as an activity suitable to be performed by children, whereas heavy work and forced labor are elements of human trafficking (Alexandru, 2013), although it is possible for a child to be

a victim of human trafficking regardless of the country of exploitation. Some warning signs of possible child forced labor include situations where the child appears to be in the custody of non-family members who require the child to perform work that benefits someone not involved with the child or their family, and similar to trafficked adults, the child does not have an option of leaving (Alexandru, 2013; Brisk & Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2012; Gozdzia, 2008; TIP, 2014).

Commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of minors are commonly overlooked, misunderstood and unaddressed forms of child abuse. The range of this sector is extensive and includes the following: using a minor for the purpose of sexual exploitation, exploiting a minor through prostitution, exploiting a minor through survival sex (exchanging sex/sexual acts for money or something of value [e.g., shelter, food, drugs]), using a minor in pornography, exploiting a minor through sex tourism, mail order bride trade and early marriage, and exploiting a minor by having her or him perform in sexual venues (e.g., peep shows or strip clubs) (Clayton, Krugman, & Simon, 2013, p. 2). Child sex trafficking is by far one of the most researched and advocated areas of study in trafficking, as the loss of innocence pulls at the public's heartstrings (Batstone, 2007).

Some other forms of child trafficking that are more common are those in forced labor. This includes: scavenging the streets and landfills for recyclables to sell in India; begging and stealing in Western Europe; working in the fields gathering poppies that will be made into opium or heroin in Afghanistan; collecting cacao beans in Africa, household work in the U.S; working in factories in Bangladesh and working in construction South

America. Note that all of these sectors exist globally (Bales & Soodalter, 2009; Bales & Trodd, 2008; TIP, 2014).

One emerging trend within child trafficking is that of child soldiers. UNICEF estimates there are over 300,000 children being exploited in over 30-armed conflicts throughout the world. While the majority of child soldiers are between the ages of 15-18 years old, some are as young as seven or eight (Lusk & Lucas, 2009). Child soldiers are the unlawful recruitment or use of children, either through force, fraud, or coercion, or by armed forces as combatants or other forms of labor. Perpetrators may be government armed forces, parliamentary organizations or rebel groups. Some children are abducted to be used as combatants, while others are used as porters, cooks, guards, servants, messengers or spies. Both male and female child soldiers are often sexually abused and some are used as sex slaves, all of which put them at high risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (Lusk & Lucas, 2009; TIP, 2014).

Advocates estimate that anywhere between one and two million children are trafficked globally each year (Gozdziak, 2008). The lack of empirical studies and research, as well as limited access to victims, pose challenges for identifying concrete numbers. Scholarly literature also points out a challenge in understanding that this child trafficking issue boils down to the understanding and discussion of the various definitions of trafficking and defining what constitutes a child. We have already discussed the challenges of the trafficking definition, but the debate with the term “child” comes down to the fact that laws simply categorize it by age. The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, which founded the definition and laws of child trafficking, uses chronological age as its measure of biological and psychological maturity universally. Using this scale,

however, rejects cultural and social meanings attached to local systems of age ranking and understanding. This legally designated innocence shields us from the puzzling questions of agency, motivation, consent and the nature and extent of exploitation that frequently complicate adult victim identification (Gozdziak, 2008; Andreas & Greenhill, 2010, p. 51).

### *Organ Trafficking*

One industry that receives perhaps the smallest amount of press and research but is very much a concern, is the trafficking of organs. More than 114,000 legal organ transplants are performed every year around the world, but this only satisfies less than an estimated 10% of the global need for organs such as kidneys, livers, hearts, lungs and pancreases. This shortage of organs, combined with the desperation experienced by patients in need of transplants, is driving an international shadow market (TIP, 2014; Basu et al., 2014). The sale and purchase of organs themselves, while illegal in many countries, is not necessarily human trafficking, but organ trafficking. To constitute trafficking, the person must have been alive when the organs were taken, which means the organs that are donated from deceased donors who have died from natural causes do not involve human trafficking. The crime of trafficking in persons requires the “recruitment, transport or harboring” of a person, this time for organ removal through coercive means (TIP, 2014; Basu et al., 2014).

Recipients of the organs are generally independently wealthy or supported by their governments or private insurance companies, while the victims and owners of the organs are usually poor and from poorer countries, often employed and with a low level of education. Donors are generally desperate for financial assistance, so when the

opportunity presents itself to sell non-essential organs, they may enter into an agreement in exchange for money. The passports or documents of the victims will be withheld as a means to control the participants so that if they try and back out of the agreement or operation they encounter violence or threats of violence. “Victims are seldom provided adequate post-operative medical care and many suffer physical and psychological harm as well as social exclusion due to the stigma attached to being compelled to sell one’s own organs” (Basu et al., 2014, p. 19). A recent study by the U.S based Coalition of Organ Failure Solutions has documented the use of debt bondage and extortion as a means of coercing organ “donation.” Victims are given the opportunity to sell a kidney to pay down their inflated debt, but this is very risky, as the conditions for the surgery and post-care are not safe, and the debt is never fully paid off (Basu et al., 2014).

Cases like these are hard to find, but it is believed that they happen all over the world. Case studies in the news have most recently involved victims from countries like Turkey, Moldova and Russia who were lured to Kosovo to give organs to recipients in Canada, Germany, Israel and the U.S. In South Africa this continues to be such a problem that law enforcement agencies have labeled this long-standing and flourishing market, “transplant tourism” (Bales & Trodd, 2008; Basu et al., 2014). Governments and international organizations have chosen “to address the issue of the illicit sale and purchase of organs through the “adoption of regulations, laws, codes of conduct, awareness campaigns and mechanisms to improve traceability of organs as well to protect the health and safety of all participants” (TIP, 2014, p. 32).

### **Human Trafficking International Law and Frameworks**

For the purpose of this scholarly review, it is impossible to examine the laws of human trafficking at a micro, nation by nation level, but an understanding of general anti-trafficking laws and international law of human trafficking is necessary to understand how the industry is regulated so that advocates can effectively fight the system. Until the end of 2000, the term “trafficking” was not even defined in international law, for the same reason trafficking is difficult to define today. There was great debate over the end result of trafficking; it’s constitutive acts and their significance, the role of movement, as well as the differences and similarities between migrant smuggling and illegal migration (Gallagher, 2010). Human trafficking is not a “new phenomenon,” and this is the same for the laws that surround and define it. In fact, human trafficking first came into international legal use in the early twentieth century in connection with white slavery. The first legal agreement was against white slavery in 1904 and sought to defeat the “criminal traffic” of women or girls that were exploited for “immoral purposes,” and create the International Agreement for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic (Gallagher, 2010; Wooditch, 2011). The 1910 International Convention followed this agreement for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic, however, since the language of the agreement only protected white women, the law was not suitable for general human trafficking crimes and was disregarded in 1927 (Gallagher, 2010; Morehouse, 2009; Wooditch, 2011).

It was in the late 1920s that the League of Nations was created. Founded at the end of World War I, it was formed to work on multiple issues, though the primary focus was to prevent wars through collective security and disarmament and settle international

disputes. Other issues were treaties, issues regarding labor conditions, global health, arms trade and human and drug trafficking (Gallagher, 2010). In 1921 at the Anti-Human Trafficking Convention, the 1921 International Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children was created, and was followed by the 1933 International Convention of the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age. Again, these laws privileged only one particular demographic and neglected to realize the full scope of the issue. When the U.N. was created, treaties fell under its jurisdiction and continued to expand. In 1949 the U.N. adopted the Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. Although the term *traffic* was not clearly defined, this was the first definition and legal recourse to be more broad and inclusive, despite that it was very much still focused on prostitution (Gallagher, 2010; Morehouse, 2009).

The issue of human trafficking did not go dormant over the next half century; however, the evolution of the law did. It wasn't until the early 1990s that the issue was brought to light again, but this time the victims were no longer white or from developed countries. Instead, they groups of color and from poorer, underdeveloped nations. During this time, the HIV/AIDS epidemic brought attention to human trafficking, as the feminist organizations working on the abolition of prostitution viewed trafficking as a vehicle for continued infection. Although the main focus was still prostitution, other global criminal trends began to emerge, including the facilitated movement of migrants across borders for private profit (Gallagher, 2010; Thachuk, 2007). It was also during this time that the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the major intergovernmental organization for migration issues, was working on human trafficking and creating



conceptual definitions. As the years went by, there were continued debates over the definition of human trafficking and the inclusion of gender, prostitution, age, internal vs. international movement and the inclusion of coerced labor and organ trafficking. Multiple organizations and countries including the Council of Europe, the European Union and the U.S. Department of State set out to document their own definitions and laws (Gallagher, 2010; Moorehouse, 2010).

Finally in December of 2000, the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime addressed and accepted signatures for the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons. It was enforced September 2003 (Gallagher, 2010; Morehouse, 2009), and it is the first global legally binding instrument with an agreed definition on trafficking in persons. This was instrumental in the understanding of human trafficking as it was the first definition to be inclusive about forms of exploitation, including ethnicity and addressed the concept of migration patterns. Before this protocol none of the definitions had ever included organ trafficking or the inclusion of forced non-sexual labor. It wasn't until 1949 that internal human trafficking was included (UNDOC, n.d.; Gallagher, 2010; Morehouse, 2009). Since 2000, there still have been many debates on the inclusivity of the definition and laws that countries adopt. Combating human trafficking is a complex policy area, as it intersects multiple high priorities for various countries including immigration, prostitution and fair trade (Andreas, 2010). Nevertheless, it has become a global priority for nations and their intergovernmental organizations to face the issue (Wooditch, 2011).

### **Country, Intergovernmental Interventions and Frameworks**

The United States took an aggressive stance against human trafficking by enacting the Trafficking Victims Protection Act in 2000. The TVPA encompasses many of the terms used in the U.N. definition: *recruitment, harboring, coercion* and others. As well as the understanding that when a victim is under the age of 18, consent is irrelevant. It is also important to understand that the definition includes both native born U.S. citizens as well as those visiting and living in the U.S from abroad, and it does not require movement. The TVPA standards does not include illegal adoptions, trading in human organs, prostitution and child pornography, which are all included in the U.N. definition (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012; Bernat & Zhilina, 2011; Potocky (2011); Schauer, Wheaton 2006; Wirsing, 2012).

In addition to the TVPA, the U.S. Department of State has attempted to address global human trafficking in other ways. Since 2001, the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report has been published annually. The report includes compiled data on various forms of international human trafficking, recent statistics, trends, and a four-tier country ranking system. The U.S Department of State ranks each country based on their extent of government action to combat human trafficking and then on the actual size of the country's problem. The ranking is also based on the government's efforts to comply with the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking, which follow the aforementioned Palermo Protocol. Tier 1 is the highest ranking, but it does not mean there is no problem in that country or that the country can't do more to combat human trafficking. Instead, it means that the government has acknowledged the issue and has made efforts to address the problem. Each year the countries are ranked, and progress

needs to be made for the country to stay at their status. Progress-based rankings are adjusted accordingly. The assessment is based on the laws and punishments defined by the TVPA, victim identification measures, government funding and partnerships with NGOs to provide victims access to resources, victim protection services and the governmental measure to prevent human trafficking (TIP, 2014, p. 41).

Tier 1: “Countries whose governments fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act’s (TVPA) minimum standards” (TIP, 2014, pg. 43). Tier 2: “Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA’s minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards” (TIP, 2014, pg. 43). Tier 2 Watch List: same as Tier 2, but the number of victims is significantly increasing, and the country is failing to provide evidence of increasing efforts. The last and final tier is Tier 3: “Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so” (TIP, 2014, pg. 43). The TIP report is important on the international stage for multiple reasons, for one it is one of the more extensive documents outlining trends, legal recourse and what little statistics there are, although its numbers are critiqued like others. The TIP also serves to build partnerships and networks of NGOs and individuals working against human trafficking. The TIP rankings are taken very seriously, and, in fact, the governments of Tier 3 nations may be subject to certain restrictions on their bilateral assistance as a result. The “U.S government may withhold or withdraw non-humanitarian assistance, non-trade-related foreign assistance...as well as assistance (except for humanitarian, trade-related, and certain development related assistance) from international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the

World Bank” (TIP, 2014, p. 44). The report clearly states, “No tier ranking is permanent. Every country, including the United States, can do more. All countries must maintain and increase efforts to combat human trafficking” (TIP, 2014, p. 43). Following is descriptions of the E.U. and ASEAN. These regional associations were chosen because they are the most outspoken and researched areas of trafficking, after the U.S. A description of the E.U.’s and ASEAN’s efforts and legal framework, as well as a list of their rankings from the 2014 TIP report provide a new perspective (Bernat & Zhilina. 2011; TIP, 2014).

Similar to intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations have also worked hard to create interventions, policies and definitions to address the issue of human trafficking. Organizational updates are crucial, as they must keep up with the migration patterns and trends among nations.

On July 19, 2002, the E.U. adopted the Framework Decision on the trafficking of human beings. Almost ten years later, on April 15, 2011, the dramatic continuous rise in the human trafficking industry caused the E.U. to revisit the framework, following the shift after the Lisbon Treaty. Post-Lisbon Treaty, the EU issued a Directive, which was even more powerful than the human trafficking framework. In fact, the Anti-Trafficking Directive is the first agreement between the Council and European parliament in the area of substantive criminal law since the Lisbon treaty. The E.U. now has the competence to establish certain criminal offenses and set minimum sentences to override national criminal laws, as human trafficking affects all of the member states and, more importantly, the movement between the member states (Bressan, 2012). “The overall goal expressed in the preamble of Directive 2011/36/EU is the further approximation of

separate law and penalties into the field, ensuring the prosecution of traffickers, giving better protection as assistance to trafficked people and favoring prevention” (Bressan, 2012 p.140). The new directive has been noted as a positive and important move for the fight against trafficking, as it is felt to be more victim-centered, establishing more effective rights for victims through binding E.U. rules. The directive also broadens the concept of what should be considered trafficking and includes additional forms of exploitation, i.e. forced begging and exploitation of criminal activities (pick-pocketing, shop-lifting and removal of organs). The Trafficking in Human Beings in Directive 2011/36 EU, Article 2 that is now followed by the E.U. states:

1. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or reception of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over those persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.
2. A position of vulnerability means a situation in which the person concerned has no real or acceptable alternative but to submit to the abuse involved.
3. Exploitation shall include, as a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, including begging, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the exploitation of criminal activities, or the removal of organs.
- 4 The consent of a victim of trafficking in human beings to the exploitation, whether intended or actual, shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in paragraph 1 has been used.
5. When the conduct referred to in paragraph 1 involves a child, it shall be a punishable offence of trafficking in human beings even if none of the means set forth in paragraph 1 has been used.

In the context of the TIP Report and the E.U. and other European countries’ efforts, most of the western countries in Europe are classified as Tier 1, while Eastern Europe is majority Tier 2 and Tier 2-Watch List, and Russia is Tier 3 (TIP, 2014).

In Southeast Asia trafficking is predominantly forced labor, followed by sexual exploitation. It is important to note that some victims are victims of both forced labor and sexual exploitation, as rape and sexual abuse are often part of the breaking or “seasoning” of a victim to control them, regardless of gender. The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development believes that there are such high numbers of people trafficked or in forced labor in Asia because many ASEAN countries are at the bottom of the globe’s supply chains for food, garments and technology (ASEAN, 2010). To provide some perspective on the issue and its severity, in the 2014 TIP report, the 10 Southeast Asian countries all fell into either Tier 2, Tier 2-Watch List and Tier 3 because of the lack of effort to combat human trafficking. Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Brunei are all listed as Tier 2, while Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Timor-Leste, and Thailand are all listed as Tier 2-Watch List. Both Thailand and Malaysia were downgraded from Tier 2-Watch List to Tier 3 last year (TIP, 2014). As stated above, these rankings are extremely important because human trafficking is an issue that the U.S., E.U. and other foreign donor countries and agencies are very serious about, and if countries’ rankings continue to drop they will lose funding. Many Southeast Asian nations have laws against trafficking that are actually quite comprehensive, however, they are not enforced strongly enough or at all, and even when they are, the resources for the victim are small and the case goes nowhere. The number of convictions and prosecutions is incredibly low compared to the estimated number of victims. Critics have been particularly skeptical about the amount of attention given to the victim. This is especially visible when governments push brothel raids and leave the victims in detention centers for months at a time, still in a country they don’t know and where they may not speak the language. They

are scared, alone, and adequate medical and mental health attention is not given. The system of sending trafficking victims back to their home city or country is also highly criticized, because the initial reason the victims entered the human trafficking industry is never addressed, meaning that many fall victim to trafficking again (AFPPD, 2013; ASEAN, 2010; Truong & Gasper, 2011).

### **The Power of Globalization and the Internet**

Although human trafficking has occurred for the hundreds of years, it's only in the last decade and a half that it is has received so much attention. One reason for the recent media attention is the power that globalization has had on the crime, specifically the growing power of technology and the Internet.

The technological aspect of globalization has caused the 21<sup>st</sup> century's human trafficking industry to go digital, and in doing so has enabled traffickers to harm or exploit women and children more efficiently, anonymously and at an alarming rate. "The integration of new communications and information technologies has created a global revolution in communications, access to information and media delivery" (Hughes, 2002, p. 29). Although these factors are extremely beneficial to communities of poverty, it has also exposed them to another level of sex trafficking and vulnerabilities (Hughes, 2002). The new age of technology has assisted traffickers in recruitment, increased profits and decreased risks.

The first avenue that traffickers are able to pursue via the Internet is the recruitment of their victims. Victims of trafficking are forced into it by one of several ways: they are born into slavery, kidnapped, sold or physically forced and tricked (Luther, Walker, & Hunt, 2009). The trickery and falsehood is where the Internet comes

into play. Traffickers create fake agencies to recruit potential victims. These agencies promise employment, modeling jobs and marriage, and they promise young women a better life in wealthier countries (Hodge, 2008).

Traffickers also use websites to build their business and increase their profits. One of the advantages to selling of humans as opposed to illegal arms or drugs is that with arms and drugs, one can sell the goods only once, however one can sell a human over and over again. With the use of the Internet, a trafficker's market is global and in real time, making their business potentially limitless. Traffickers use pornography as both a way to keep their victims under their control through invoking shame, but also to increase profits. Once a picture or video has gone digital, traffickers will sell it over and over again, which further exploits the young woman. Video transmissions are used for live sex shows, auctions of girls being sold and chat rooms in which customers can request sexual acts for the girls to perform (Hodges, 2008 & Hughes, 2003). The sex industry is one in which every person can be marketed, regardless of her nationality, age, gender or size. Being able to advertise their "products" on the Internet increases the traffickers' demand for pornography and prostitution (Hughes, 2000, McKinnon, 2006).

### **Challenges and Emerging Trends to Activism**

In the last two decades human trafficking has generated an enormous amount of public attention. Activism in the field has skyrocketed, but, just like any issue, there is always an opinion on the other side. In the last few years, many concerns have been brought about activist challenges in combating trafficking. This section will discuss the challenges that arise when advocating against human trafficking. This is important to



discuss because these challenges bring the conversation further from the issue of human trafficking and a larger focus on the misunderstandings and criticisms.

A large majority of the challenges in human trafficking involve myths and misconceptions, gaps in research and misunderstandings. There is, however, no bigger debate or challenge to understanding human trafficking than the confusion about the size and scope of the issue, as there is no concrete or even semi-concrete empirical data (Weitzer, 2014). There are many reasons for this, the first being that human trafficking refers to the process by which people become enslaved rather than to a fixed or permanent status. For some, slavery is a lifelong condition, while others may be enslaved for shorter periods of time. Time, of course, is not as important as the level of exploitation by economic gain through violent or psychological control (Bales & Trodd, 2008). The definition of a trafficking victim, too, is broad and incredibly misunderstood, such that the victims themselves may not be aware they are in the process of being trafficked until they are enslaved (Brysk & Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2012; Zimmerman, 2013). Statistics themselves can also be very misleading. Positive or negative, they are often accepted uncritically and reproduced over and over again, because they are assumed to have been generated by experts with a specialization in the field. However, when one goes back to track the numbers, the root or formula is very difficult (if not impossible) to find (Andreas & Greenhill, 2010). This lack of data is one of the largest criticisms against anti-human trafficking campaigns. “The announcement of an impressive sounding number can generate substantial media attention which further legitimates the number and stimulates its circulation- and the original source of the number becomes lost through repetition in media accounts” (Andreas & Greenhill, 2010, p. 26)

### *Sex Work Vs. Sex Trafficking*

Sexual exploitation is by far the most researched, advocated and spoken about form of exploitation when referring to human trafficking. However a reoccurring challenge in activism is the debate between sex work and sex trafficking. Although the legal stance is not important in defining these terms, it is the assumption that all sex workers are being victimized and exploited and therefore trafficked. For this reason there is criticism of inflation in the statistics because they include individuals who are in sex work by choice.

To address human trafficking in a way that disrupts the social dynamics where human trafficking can grow, it is necessary to think differently about the whole enterprise of anti-trafficking (Zimmerman, 2013). To understand this issue as a whole in terms of advocacy, it is important to look at the debate and role of sex trafficking victim versus voluntary sex workers. Each country has their own set of prostitution laws, however, prostitution exists in every nation, despite efforts to try to abolish it for decades. Economic hardships and a growing sexual industry push women and men into this sector. Voluntary sexual exchanges between adults for money has been described countless times as sex trafficking in the media, and this has produced a kind of moralizing sex panic when discussing the trafficking debate (Brennan, 2010). Whether or not prostitution is legal in a country, sex workers face many threats, not only from clients including rape, theft, police corruption and abuse, but they also face a great deal of backlash from the anti-trafficking efforts through media campaigns, brothel raids and rescue missions. Sex workers are constantly victimized by people who assume they need help, because of their ‘immoral choices’; However, “there is mounting evidence that sex

workers, including people who are trafficked or coerced into sex work, are far more harmed than helped by efforts that force them to identify as either victims or criminals” (Basu et al. p. 24).

In this debate, the question of whether sex work should be legal, decriminalized or remain illegal is spoken about often in trafficking literature. Some believe that with the continued actions of abolitionist efforts, that sex trafficking would decrease. While others are in favor of decriminalization, which will give sex workers the right to come forward and victims of trafficking will be more exposed. There is also the hope that these efforts will minimize the violence and crimes against them (McKinnon, 2011). Scholars speak of the differing models and power they could potentially have on trafficking, as it too soon to tell what will actually be the case. Sweden became famous for the Nordic model, which criminalized offenders (the Johns) who buy sex, not sex workers who sell it. Sweden believes their model is working and continues to promote their model across Europe. Some, however, believe this model is actually encouraging prostitution and in turn, forcing trafficking further underground. One of the most controversial laws is in New Zealand, which decriminalizes prostitution allowing sex workers to have more rights and even report crimes against them. There is even a tribunal for them to bring up their disputes. Like the Nordic model, it serves to protect the sex workers (Sanders & Campbell, 2014; McKinnon, 2011).

### ***Undocumented Immigrants/Migration***

Migration issues and labor conditions go hand in hand regarding human trafficking. Many researchers state that it is not clear what kind of success law enforcement would have if they attempted to investigate labor conditions in work sites

where fear of one's employers/traffickers, of law enforcement, and the possibility of deportation reigns. For many countries, especially the U.S., there are more deterrents than ever before to come forward as a victim if undocumented or if a person knows someone who could be at risk but is also undocumented. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducts raids on workplaces where undocumented migrants may work. Because of this pass, the passage of local laws that allow police officers to check the immigration status of individuals stopped, for other violations have caused a serious separation in the relationship between law enforcement and migrant communities (Brennan, 2010; Weitzer, 2014). This is a serious problem for many reasons, as more and more victims of exploitation and bad working conditions go undiscovered. All of these conditions force undocumented migrants further underground and away from services that could assist them if they are being exploited. Combined with public views of undocumented and illegal aliens, people, and even law enforcement officers, ignore symptoms of trafficking. This, in turn, continues to put many migrants at risk for deportation and criminal charges when their story may be so much more complicated and dark (Brennan, 2010). The reasons or push factors for why people migrate also needs to be examined when looking at trafficking in this context. Many of those who migrate do so because there is a lack of economic opportunities or there are poor working conditions in their local community. The continuance of the preying on human vulnerabilities is a symptom of a society that continues to prioritize business over human lives (Brennan, 2010; Basu et al., 2014).

### *Myths/Misconceptions*

This literature review has shown that there is an abundance of knowledge regarding trafficking, yet many gaps and misunderstandings, such as defining trafficking

and the numbers affected, still exist. However, more than that, governments and NGOs fear that the public falls prey to many myths and misconceptions of human trafficking, which poses more challenges to human trafficking activism. Listed below are several of the popular misconceptions mentioned in scholarly literature:

There are many myths surrounding the location of trafficking, specifically that it doesn't exist in developed countries such as the United States and Western Europe. This has been disproved several times over, in terms of both importation and exportation of humans. Another myth is that victims are only foreign-born individuals who are poor. This myth has also been disproved, as a victim can be trafficked in their country of origin. Although poverty can be a factor, it is not the only one, and a better term would be vulnerabilities (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012; Vance, 2011).

Similar to the governmental bodies, the public may confuse on the terms as well. Human trafficking and human smuggling are often confused for one another, and the terms are used interchangeably. A myth that individuals are only trafficked because of deceit or kidnapping is also not true, despite that many are tricked with phony contracts, false job postings and misguided family or friends. There are other times in which victims understand they are entering a situation of exploitation, but they choose to do so because they believe they will ultimately profit. They make this decision because there is a lack of economic opportunities in their community (Brennan, 2014). That being said, even if the trafficked person consented to be in their initial situation or was informed about what type of labor they would be doing, they are later exploited through force, fraud, or coercion and their initial consent is not relevant; they are now a victim of a crime (Trafficking Resource Center, n.d). It is also believed that human trafficking only

occurs in illegal underground industries. The reality, however, is that trafficking can occur in legal and legitimate businesses such as restaurants, hotels, farms, and factories, as well as underground markets, like brothels and street-based commercial sex (Brennan, 2010; Kara, 2009).

The industry would fail if it couldn't use forced labor. Obviously, we cannot believe this is true for so many reasons, the main one being that forced labor is a human rights violation. That being said, in the world we live in, people have grown accustomed to certain lifestyles and they search for cheap goods. Of course, there is a reason that some goods and services are so inexpensive; "Fair labor practices are necessary for legal, moral and economic reasons. It is true that the cost of eradicating slaves might be borne largely by wealthy classes, but it will also lead to the modernization of industry practices and may boost the country's economic progress" (Batstone, 2007, p. 96).

### ***Media & NGO Journalism***

The general public has learned about trafficking in different contexts including advocacy campaigns from NGOs, government and UN bodies, and news reports and film. However, one growing trend in educating the public is the over-sensualization of human trafficking. These stories are in a various forms of media including box office movies, documentaries, TV shows, news columns and books. Today many people have gained their human trafficking knowledge from the 2008 Luc Besson thriller, *Taken*. In the film, Liam Neeson plays a former CIA operative whose daughter is kidnapped by an Albanian human trafficking ring when she visits France with friends. The crime ring sells his daughter, a virgin, to a French businessman who auctions her off to an Arab Sheik who is about to take her virginity when her father jumps aboard the yacht and shoots the Sheikh.

This film, along with many of its counterparts, captures human trafficking in a very pinhole view of solely women and sex trafficking and exaggerates the surrounding details. They chose to capture traffickers as evil and powerful and the victims as unaware, innocent, weak, and above all, needing to be saved. The problem with these images is that they continue to mask the real issue of trafficking (Basu, 2014). By only showing sexual exploitation of girls and leaving the issues of migration and forced labor out of the picture, there is a general misunderstanding of the various forms of trafficking (Weitzer, 2014). “These images perpetuate the idea that human trafficking is not a structural problem that could be addressed by reducing poverty or improving labor protection laws but instead a crime committed by evil people” (Hoang & Parrenas, 2014, p. 5).

High profile campaigns by NGOs in the media with continued focus on the victim and their detailed horrific story adds more power to the myths (Musto, 2008). Currently in debate, is advocacy surrounding trafficking, how much of the story should be led by the victim. Some feel it is important for empowerment and for the public to see a face, while others worry it takes away from the facts of the issue and it almost re-victimization (Brennan, 2010; Musto, 2008). NGOs can be some of the loudest voices in the world of activism, no matter the cause. This is extremely pertinent to that of human trafficking. NGOs must choose sides, and they will act according to where their funding comes from. For example, in the past, U.S. and international NGOs receiving U.S. government funding were pressured by the Presidential Directive in 2002. The directive charged that as a result of the prostitution-trafficking link, the U.S. government concludes that no U.S. grant funds should be awarded to “foreign non-governmental organizations that support legal state regulated prostitution” (Musto, 2008). Based on claims that trafficking thrives

in areas where prostitution has been legalized and/or decriminalized, organizations are at risk of losing funding if they promote and/or accept sex work as legitimate work (Musto 2008). Furthermore, this puts trafficking in the context of crime control and prevention in regards to prostitution only. Funding has poured into combating trafficking. NGOs that previously cared for battered women refashioned themselves as “trafficking NGOs, to heighten their attractiveness to funding” (Feingold, 2010, p. 51). This trend in funding and NGO campaigns skyrocketed the moral campaigns explaining that all forms of prostitution are exploitative which still affects advocacy and its limitations today (Musto, 2008). This is only one example of funding manipulating efforts, which can have a serious effect on the mission (Bales, 2004; Batstone, 2007, Weitzer, 2014).

### *Sporting Events*

Another platform for criticism and confusion is the example of the hysteria produced with major sporting events. Major sporting events such as the Olympics, World Cup and Super Bowl have, in the last several years, gained mass media attention as places where sexual exploitation and sex trafficking is rampant. NGOs report high numbers of victims being trafficked to accompany the vast number of tourists that flock to the games. The first instance of this was in 2006 when the World Cup was in Germany. NGOs warned the public that upwards of 400,000 women and children were being trafficked in Germany to fulfill base desires of soccer fans. The rumors went wild, with similar numbers and statistics and stories of porta-potty brothels being set up to service the fans as “quickie brothels.” NGOs and governmental bodies addressed the issue as quickly as they could, yet reports from the State Department and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) found no evidence of an increase in



either prostitution or trafficking as a result of the World Cup. Activists claimed that the lack of trafficking was because all of the hysteria had raised the alarm (Feingold, 2010; Hayes, 2010).

The same fears came about with the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and the 2012 Olympics in London. Countries and organizations, however, choose not to take chances and to raise their security levels of access to the events and rumors of visa restrictions (Feingold, 2010; Hayes, 2010; TIP, 2014). The truth is that either side of the argument has only some evidence for their claims. On one hand, it makes sense that the rational thoughts of the large number of people attending world-sporting events naturally would increase the demand for prostitution in the host city. It is also believable, as human trafficking is a business, that traffickers would see this as a business opportunity and take advantage of travel visas. It could even make recruitment easier for traffickers: unaware of their true intentions, women and young girls believe they are being offered legitimate jobs in the host country for the particular event and then find themselves in a exploitative situation (Hayes, 2010; TIP, 2014). However, it also could be said that it is not cost effective for traffickers or pimps to bring prostitutes into a city for such a short amount of time when accounting for the cost of accommodation and transportation. It would, in fact, outweigh the potential profit. Furthermore, by creating moral panic, anti-prostitution activists were able to raise public opinion and catalyze government crackdown on local prostitution during the events where the funding and manpower could have been more beneficial in other areas (Weitzer, 2014).

What the media doesn't always advertise when referring to the potential surge of trafficking with world sporting events is forced labor. These events often entail massive capital improvement and infrastructure projects, creating a huge demand for cost-effective labor and materials. Such an increase can certainly increase the possibility of forced labor. To attempt to prevent this, governments and civil societies are urged to ensure labor laws meet international standards, regulate labor recruitment agencies and frequently inspect the sites (TIP, 2014). There is some benefit that can come out of this bi-annual hysteria: as governments and civil societies prepare for the worst, they work hard to implement analyses, training programs and media campaigns years in advance. While the event is occurring, there is an increase of training programs, volunteers and establishing partnerships, all of which continue to have lasting effects as partnerships are strengthened and the public is educated. There are other wins, too, as some prosecutions and identifications are made - nowhere close to 400,00, although, to this day, organizations and scholars don't know where that number came from. During the 2009 Superbowl in Dallas, Texas, though, there were arrests of traffickers and 24 children were taken into family services as victims of sexual exploitation (Goldberg, 2011).

### **Best Practices of Interventions**

Many interventions have been put into place for the combating of human trafficking on the three major fronts; prevention, identification and reintegration services. As discussed, there are serious limitations to the laws and protocols that have been put forward by government and intergovernmental organizations like United Nations bodies. Therefore, some of the forefront bodies that are combating the issue of human trafficking are NGOs and non-profit organizations. Later in this paper in the section of proposed

intervention, specific organizations, which are making wonderful impacts on the issue of trafficking, will be discussed. For this section, however, only practices for the most effective or least effective methods of prevention, identification and reintegration (life after trafficking) will be discussed.

### *Prevention*

Many people are unaware of the problem of trafficking in their own country, so many times victims are viewed as illegal immigrants and it can be the societal perspective to lump together all people they see who work labor jobs, speak little English and are outcasts of a society into one group (Roby, Turley & Cloward, 2008). Even if people do have reservations or see something suspicious, often they will not get involved, because unfortunately the response or reaction from a witness is to stay silent.

To increase awareness of the issue, many organizations and coalitions use multiple dimensions to advocate for the cause by way of public service announcements, posters in public areas, workshops, presentations and media advocacy. Organizations also build and implement resources to train law enforcement on identification and how to deal with a potential victim of trafficking, as well as trainings and technical assistance to agencies providing services to trafficked persons (Hopper, 2004).

Grassroots education and awareness campaigns targeting specific community audiences can be effective not only in educating populations when dealing with similar culture and language similarities, but helping identify victims and providing services as well. Multiple organizations will also provide trainings to professional groups like hospital workers, child protection officers, therapists, students, utility workers, union representatives and service personnel. In addition to topics of how to identify a

trafficking victim, learning how to work with at risk youth, basic legal information, communicating the value of the girl, buying “clean” goods and services and how to be a better activist are also covered (Wirsing, 2012). In developing countries where the issue is the exploitation of trafficking, many local community groups and organizations will hold workshops and presentations about trafficking and safe migration practices. They will also work to create programs for microcredit lending, education programs for women or formal school for girls because in many countries girls do not attend school past a certain age, or even at all. No matter the country, increasing community surveillance can be very effective. If you see something, say something (Vance, 2011; Wirsing, 2012).

### *Identification*

Identification of individuals who may be in situations of trafficking is a crucial part not just in combating the issue, but understanding it as well. The responsibility of identification falls on everyone: the neighbor, the hotel guest, the tourist and the police officer. The police officer is one role that many organizations criticize. Despite the fact that human trafficking has been around for a long time, the laws only started coming into place in countries since the 2000s. It is argued, however, that even though these laws have been enacted they are still not properly enforced (Hopper, 2004; Potocky, 2011), and many blame it on the lack of knowledge of law enforcement. As crimes related to trafficking can be lumped with other criminal charges such as illegal immigration, prostitution, sexual assault, kidnapping, visa fraud and theft, they are grouped together as solely those crimes (Wilson, Walsh & Kleuber, 2006; Farrell, 2013). While trafficking is a transnational crime, it is the local law enforcement officer, rather than the federal agent, that encounters crimes related to trafficking. They are the first responders, and in order

for them to properly help identify victims, they need specialized training and understanding of the issue to see past surface crimes and explore the true nature of the violation. Studies have also shown that many law enforcement fields may have *some* knowledge about human trafficking, but not to the extent they could. This means that many believe it is a problem, but not one that affects their area of jurisdiction (Wilson, Walsh & Kleuber, 2006; Potocky, 2011). Therefore, as previously discussed, many organizations create training modules and workshops to assist in training the officers. Pressures from organizations, along with pressures from the community, push these workshops and trainings to be more instrumental (Farrell, 2013).

Until we can properly identify victims, we will never truly know the scope or depth of this problem. The estimates the public receives are ranges and merely estimates not exact numbers, service providers and advocates should focus on the establishment of networks to facilitate data sharing and service building. The development of these networks will allow more resources to be utilized, leading to increased local impact. Networks like these also provide a unified voice to decision makers and officials to help pass more rights-protective services to trafficked victims and policies combating trafficking as a whole (Hopper, 2004; Potocky, 2011).

When identified, a number of services need to be carried out to assist the victim including emergency medical attention, food and shelter, vocational and English language training, case management, mental health counseling and legal support. Many organizations not only implement these services, but larger organizations and coalitions have had success developing models of care that “address the complexity of human

trafficking with a coordinated response across multiple disciplines and services” (Hopper, 2004, p. 134).

Locations of relief services and organizations are crucial. Although there are many organizations in urban areas, human trafficking is not location specific. As a result, many types of trafficking are in areas where there are no advocacy organizations, especially in rural settings. Types of trafficking that are affected by this limitation include forced labor in the agriculture, mining and aquaculture sector as well as war slaves. Therefore, advocacy organizations that work with large areas, often in a networking context, can be very effective (Vance, 2011).

Many organizations’ goals are to assist people in leaving or escaping their exploitative situations and helping them stay out (Wirsing, 2012). Successful organizations that do this know that in order to help a victim get out of the industry and stay out, immigration and prostitution raids are not effective. Instead, they advocate to build relationships with the individual as best they can. Hotlines and referral services are incredibly instrumental in identification. Many organizations like the FBI have their own. There are toll free numbers that operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and when operated correctly, the on-call worker is educated about the issue of trafficking and surrounding issues and how to best help the person on the line. The general public may call with questions or concerns about something they have witnessed and the representative should connect them with the proper services to provide the caller with more information. When law enforcement officers, or health care workers call, it is important for the representative to dispatch someone from the organization or partner organization to that location immediately. And finally, a person may be calling on behalf

of herself looking for assistance. The representative will keep the caller on the line as best they can, helping to understand their situation and determine if they meet the criteria of a trafficking victim. Even if the caller does not qualify as a trafficked victim, a socially responsible organization will connect them with resources regardless (Wirsing, 2012).

Traffickers or slaveholders keep their victims hidden in many ways that could have serious effects on a person's mental and physical health. These effects include "victimization in their country of origin, abuses in the context of trafficking situations including psychological abuse, lack of basic human necessities, physical violence, and sexual violence, and displacement and isolation after their escape" (Hopper, 2004, p. 13).

Such abuses are associated with a range of psychological effects that may include depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Depression can be an instrumental part of why an individual doesn't seek help in a desperate situation (Bales, 2004).

Symptoms of depression include feelings: of worthlessness, excessive guilt, hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, insomnia and fatigue. An individual feeling many of these symptoms, regardless of circumstance, is unlikely to utilize resources for help (Schauer & Wheaton, 2006). PTSD can also have serious symptoms that include re-experiencing the crime or memory, avoidance and arousal. All of these symptoms lead to significant clinical distress or functional impairment and pose serious obstacles to trauma victims in relaying a coherent story of their victimization. All of these symptoms of post-trauma further prevent the victim from self-identification. Therefore, it cannot be stressed enough that it is the duty of the public to be more aware and able to assist in identification of victims (Hopper, 2004; Schauer & Wheaton, 2006).

### *Life After Trafficking*

Victims of trafficking in the United States that fall under the TVPA guidelines may receive benefits including protection and assistance (Food Stamps, Medicaid Supplemental Security Income, etc.) and a continued presence in the United States. However, in order to receive these benefits, the individuals must fit the TVPA guidelines and, as discussed earlier, the guidelines are not as inclusive as they could be. The individual must also assist in the apprehension and prosecution of the perpetrator – a feature that many scholars and researchers believe is unrealistic and perhaps the most detrimental point of the TVPA. However, if the individual does aid in the prosecution of the perpetrator, they can apply for a T-visa for their Continued Presence status in the U.S. The nonimmigrant T-visa allows them to live and work in the U.S for three years and later apply for permanent residency. Although some countries like the U.S. have federal programs set up to help trafficking victims, they usually fall short, and many countries don't have any programs in place at all. Organizations are crucial to the afterlife of trafficking victims (Hopper, 2004; Roby, Turley & Cloward, 2008).

Individuals who have fallen to trafficking situations may come from next door or across the globe. With the latter, there can be serious communication barriers in communicating with the person and helping them get the services they need. In order for them to tell their story, there needs to be interpreters and translators in place, too. In addition to language differences, strong intercultural competence is needed to assist, as communication styles tend to differ across various countries. Trafficking victims are typically unfamiliar with the legal processes in the country they find themselves living in and may be intimidated by the legal proceedings. These different styles of



communication can impact the victims' ability to cooperate with the investigation and prosecution. For example, in some cultures it is impolite to ask questions repeatedly, which happens countless times from the identification of the victim to the prosecution at court. Some individuals change their story in response to the repeating questioning. No matter where the individual is from, communication differences have similar effects on children. Children may not understand the questions, they may not disclose the entire story, and they may respond incorrectly or change their answer because they interpret the repeated question asking as their answers being wrong (Hodge, 2008; Hopper, 2004).

After trafficking there is still life to live, meaning victims need help to move on. No matter the form of trafficking an individual may have been victim to, they often need after-care services, especially if they were exposed to chronic trauma. Treatment of the psychological conditions stated above is important for victims' reintegration into society. In addition to psychological trauma, the person may have suffered serious physical harm. Although they are freed, their life could be shorter and filled with difficulty as a result (Brennan, 2014; Hart, 2009). Similar to many labor sectors that contain labor trafficking, there are no regulations and no protective gear, so people suffer from back pain, cancer by smoke and insecticides, loss of hearing from construction sites and factories because of lack of ear protection as well as loss of limbs from different sectors such as war, meatpacking, construction and factories. Addiction is not uncommon when rescuing victims, so helping them get clean is important to ensure that they don't return to their situation or to drugs, and there is always the possibility that the victim has HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases (Hart, 2009; Bales & Soodalter, 2009).

Victims also need to provide for themselves and their family. Recipients of the T-visa typically enter low-wage, insecure and possibly exploitative labor conditions, so even if they aren't directly in a trafficking situation, they may be at risk of exploitative work. Few victims have significant savings or social networks to help find better wages, jobs and security, thus it is difficult to get through short-term rough patches, which affect their economic security and mobility long term (Brennan, 2014; Hart, 2009). Scholars state that programs like the T-visa only do so much, and that other benefits need to come through. Many nations won't even provide the minimum which is why organizations step up to assist former victims with networking, job skill training, school, finding better wages and building security and stability in their life. Organizations work to stay connected with victims so that they do not fall back into exploitation due to their vulnerabilities. Many organizations hold workshops and forums to address these issues, and these are beneficial for multiple reasons: not only do they provide individuals the opportunity to grow their financial security and mobility, but they are also able to connect with other individuals who have a similar story. The human connections show them they are not alone, which can be incredibly powerful for moving forward (Brennan, 2010; Brennan, 2014).

Many organizations have found niche markets in teaching victims of trafficking to create art, jewelry, tote bags and clothes. The goods are sold online, at anti-trafficking conferences and fairs and are part of the multi-faceted mission. The products serve as both an advocacy tool, as a story for the victim and their life post trafficking, as well as a method to generate funding, which will go to the victim and the organization. The organizations that use this tool do not solely advocate for trafficking victims, but also

work to encourage voluntary sex workers to leave the industry permanently. Scholars and activists disagree on this form of funding and advocacy: one side sees the benefits mentioned above, while others worry it is a way of exploiting the victim's story. The narratives that come along with "buying for freedom" garner sympathy and support for the NGOs but do not show the complexity of the issue of trafficking or the difficult decision women have to make to leave their post as a sex worker, where they made much more money (Basu et al., 2014). There have also been many critiques of organizations about how much funding goes back to the victim. Those who subscribe to such a philosophy believe organizations simply wield power over the victims in another way, and encourage nations to put the word *rescue* back in the conversation ( Basu et al., 2014; Musto, 2008; Weitzer, 2014).

### **Social Media Advocacy**

Many of the best practices in intervention of human trafficking have a key component, the public. The literature shows it is the public that needs to be educated on the issue of human trafficking, because it is the public that can help identify the victims and demand transparency from their governments and companies. And public intervention is a major part of the solution. One of the best ways the public can be reached is through the Internet. Earlier it was discussed while technology allows trafficking to grow, there is actually hope that technology has also been used to effectively combat human trafficking. Technology will help prevent new victims, identify and rescue current victims, prosecution of traffickers and raise public awareness for advocacy. President Obama, in his September 25, 2012 address to the Clinton Global Initiative, said, "We are turning the tables on the traffickers. Just as they are now using

technology and the Internet to exploit their victims, we are going to harness technology and stop them” (Whitehouse, 2012).

In this section, social media advocacy will be explored in depth and not just in terms of combating human trafficking but also in how social media campaigns have changed the world of advocacy, and as how non-profits have effectively used the Internet and social media to help them reach different audiences for advocacy, programming and funding.

Since the beginning, the Internet has been considered a very powerful tool for the connection and mobilization of the public. The Internet, social media in particular, provides an avenue unlike the public spheres of mass media where a singular person (a celebrity, a politician, etc.) is the center. Instead, social media allows the public to be the center. Anyone can create a space for themselves and can create an online community, which can reach all over the earth (Early & Kimport, 2011).

Advocacy is a core nonprofit function and a large part of many societies. Through advocacy activities, organizations contribute to democratic governance by representation of the interested citizens and promising change in public policy and improving the lives of the community (Guo & Saxton, 2013). For several decades in the U.S, the federal government cut funding and spending to different social welfare programs and services (food, shelter, healthcare, and assistance to vulnerable populations). To make up for this need for services, the non-profit sector was created and has grown exponentially today (Tatarchevskiy, 2010; Salamon, 2003). According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), more than 1.5 million nonprofit organizations are registered in the U.S. alone, making it a multi billion-dollar industry. So it is no surprise why these

organizations are at the frontlines of this battle to combat human trafficking. Nonprofits fund their services through a variety of revenue including fees for services, member dues, product sales, grants and private funding (donations). As funding continues to be cut, one of their largest challenges is building their funding audience and revenue services to make social justice and welfare marketable, which is why they have followed the trends and have gone online to reach new audiences and members (Tatarchevskiy, 2010).

Over the decades, the nonprofit sector has used a variety of campaigns that are meant to pull on the heartstrings and the purse strings. The use of star power has been a common piece to these campaigns as well. International development organizations especially use Hollywood stars to represent their organizations or causes. Human trafficking is no different; Angelina Jolie and Mira Sorvino are just two of the many poster celebrities for the cause, each of them acting or producing in a human trafficking film. Much of the literature criticizes this particular attribute of campaigns due to the questionable qualifications that make it possible for a celebrity to represent a goodwill cause. And “making the message of social justice more appealing, even entertaining, raises questions for some about the democratic potential of such culture of popularized charity and advocacy” (Tatarchevskiy, 2010, p. 302). Critics also question societal motives for celebrity support. Nickel and Eikenberry infer that having celebrities as symbols of advocacy action confounds activism with a calculated publicity stunt: “Celebrity philanthropy is not the celebration of philanthropy, nor is it a political statement; [it] is an uncritical celebration of celebrities and their production of an elite society that can only be philanthropic by virtue of its ability to distance itself from

poverty” (p. 981). They are still celebrities, but there is also an opportunity for the individual to have a voice, to express concern and to share an opinion or even a solution (Guo & Saxton, 2013).

When someone goes to a website, no matter the platform or the subject, a majority of the time there will be social media icons to share the article, picture, or video on your personal social networks including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest pages. This is not surprising, as so much of the world is not only, online but on social media. There are one billion users on YouTube and in 2011 there was a total of one trillion video views (Smith, 2014). Facebook celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday earlier this year with over 1.2 billion users (Kiss, 2014). 284 million people use Twitter with 500 million tweets being sent per day (Twitter, 2014).

Today social media offers nonprofits a new line of communication to develop their donor and volunteer base. There aren't as many posters, brochures and leaflets empowering a movement, but instead, tweets, posts, statuses, pictures and videos, in real time - but the motive of advocacy is the same. It is the means not simply to convey abstract opinions, but also to give form to the way people come and act together through collective action (Gerbaudo, 2012). Social media is the latest of a sequence of technological transformations changing the production, transmission and consumption of information that the public receives. And for the most part, anyone can use it, one doesn't need to know coding, HTML or other technological intricacies; social media is user-friendly and user-generated (McPherson, 2014).

Advocacy organizations are organized actors who systematically pursue particular causes through direct information at targets with the motive of driving change

(McPherson, 2014). The literature even compares advocacy organizations today to a particular form of journalism called “NGO Journalism.” After all, NGOs are producing more and more of the news we receive, whether it be through traditional media or social media. NGOs are one of the driving avenues of stories, facts, figures and statistics about particular issues. Although NGO efforts can be compared to journalism, advocacy organizations’ communications differ in their communicative aims. Advocacy organizations seek for social change. Their goal is to target emotion and turn it into action to raise funds, change policy or promote awareness of an issue (McPherson, 2014).

The use of social media for listservs, blogs, e-petitions and social networking is endless. Often just by interacting in an online discussion, people may contribute to the social and public good (spreading awareness and information about an issue). They could do this through their own networks or platforms, share information on forum websites or in discussions and comments to the other blogs (Tatarchevskiy, 2010). Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) did a study that identified three key communicative functions in the tweets that were sent by the 100 largest nonprofit organizations, which were information, community, and action. Information includes tweets containing information about the organizations activities, event highlights, facts, statistics, reports or information relevant to the organizations stakeholders. The “community” function includes tweets that serve to interact, share and build conversation with stakeholders in a way that builds an online community around the theme of their choosing. The “action” function includes tweets that aim to get followers to “do something” for the organization. This could include donating money, buying merchandise, attending events and engaging in their advocacy campaigns (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Guo & Saxton, 2013). BBC journalist Paul Mason

emphasizes that for people and organizations to be involved in these social movements they need to be involved in the ‘full suite of information tools’ used by contemporary activists. “Facebook is used to form groups, covert and overt - in order to establish those strong but flexible connections. Twitter is used for real-time organization and new dissemination, bypassing the cumbersome ‘newsgathering’ operations of the mainstream media “ (Mason, 2010, p.75).

Much of the literature argues that social media advocacy has helped renew the public’s civic engagement (Tatarchevskiy, 2010). Social media advocacy is a real opportunity for engaging people who do not frequent websites of human rights, for example (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Studies have shown that an important piece of why social media advocacy has had an extreme impact on the individual, especially youth, is that they are able to see their impact. Online interactive experiences allow individuals to learn what they are capable of. Their actions of advocacy online can lead to actionable change offline (Velasquez & LaRose, 2014).

### **Social Media Causes and Campaigns That Changed It All**

When discussing social media advocacy there are a few cases campaigned by non-profits, which should be highlighted. Two of them are the KONY2012 and their viral video and efforts to take down a warlord, and the 2014 ALS Ice Bucket Challenge.

#### ***KONY2012***

The case of the KONY2012 campaign is still baffling activists and scholars today. KONY2012 was started by the San Diego based NGO Invisible Children, whose mission and objective is to permanently end the LRA (Lord’s Resistance Army) conflict in Uganda by raising awareness of their illicit activities and mobilize action to stop the



violence and the conflict. The organization started small by sharing their video campaign within their networks. Soon it put them on the map and made their campaign a household name, not only in just the advocacy field, but all over. What went viral was an Internet video campaign called “KONY2012,” a 29-minute video which sought to raise awareness about the horrendous Ugandan rebel leader Joseph Kony, who has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes. The video was a call to action and solidarity for political leaders, celebrities and citizens of the world to help stop the brutal LRA rebel leader (Guo & Saxton, 2013). Their aim was to make Kony “famous” by selling a KONY2012 kit (t-shirts, posters and wristbands) and to mobilize on April 20, 2012 to help bring Joseph Kony to justice for his cruel deeds by covering the world with the images of him and what he has done. The video was uncharacteristically long for a campaign video and is filled with dramatic images and music with a particular focus on a young man is who the founder of the Invisible Children organization, the producer of the video and campaign. The video, no doubt, is rich with emotion and causes the viewer to feel the same. After all, it focuses on the LRA’s abduction of children to turn them into child soldiers and sex slaves (Taub, 2012). By day four of the video’s launch it had reached over 70 million views, and after the first week there were nearly 5 million tweets about the campaign (Shwarz, 2014).

Two years later the video sits at 99 million views. The video created a story and a request. There is no contesting its ability to raise awareness about its mission through the sharing networks of Twitter and Facebook, but what about inspiring action? Well, within three weeks of the campaign’s launch it had gained attention on Capitol Hill. Over a third of U.S. senators introduced a bipartisan resolution condemning Kony and his troops for

“unconscionable crimes against humanity.” Senator Lindsey Graham even went on to say, “When you get 100 million Americans looking at something, you will get our attention... this YouTube sensation is going to help the Congress be more aggressive and will do more to lead to his demise than all other action combined” (Taub, 2012). One of the many strengths and weaknesses of social media sharing is the ability to show both sides. When the video launched, the social media sites exploded with critiques of the video and the campaign all over Facebook, Twitter and various blogs, including discussion points of re-traumatization to making a very complex war seem black and white (Shwarz, 2014; Taub, 2012). While the views are proof that the message was spread, the question is how much lasting impact and offline activism actually occurred. Unfortunately, the day of April 20, 2012, came and went and without much visible and lasting impact. It mobilized people online but failed offline (Shwarz, 2014).

### *ALS ICE Bucket Challenge*

The final and most recent example of a social media advocacy campaign is the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. All summer, anyone who logged on to their Facebook page could see friends, family and celebrities dumping a bucket of water on their head for charity. The campaign was launched to promote the awareness of ALS. Described on the ALS Association’s website, ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis),:

often referred to as "Lou Gehrig's Disease," is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord. Motor neurons reach from the brain to the spinal cord and from the spinal cord to the muscles throughout the body. The progressive degeneration of the motor neurons in ALS eventually leads to their death.

When the motor neurons die, the ability of the brain to initiate and control muscle movement is lost. With voluntary muscle action progressively affected, patients in the later stages of the disease may become totally paralyzed.

The campaign involved video taping an individual dumping a bucket of ice water on their head and then uploading it onto social media platforms and nominating challenging other individuals to do the same thing. The nominees must complete the challenge in 24 hours or they must donate money to the ALS association or to another charity. The origins of the campaign are unclear, but the little evidence there is shows that it started outside the organization and originally was not even attached to a cause or a charity. The first person to actually post the video of the ice bucket challenge had chosen to mention ALS, and the two were forever linked. As the campaign went viral, hashtags started emerging (e.g. #icebucketchallenge, #alsicebucketchallenge, #strikeoutals), which helped the organization and participants track its progress. Soon celebrities, politicians and athletes were getting involved from Oprah and LeBron James to Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg. Luckily, people were not just doing the challenge but also donating money (ALS, n.d; Saporito, 2014; Wolfman-Arent, 2014).

The outcomes of this campaign were incredible. The short two months of summer that the challenge was most active, the ALS Association raised over \$100 million from 3 million donors. To provide some perspective, in the same period in 2013 the ALS Association raised only \$2.8 million (Worland, 2014). The campaign also provided another outcome the ALS Association was searching for: the Ice Bucket Challenge helped rebrand them. ALS has long been known as Lou Gehrig's disease, which is a nod

to the beloved baseball player who died in 1941. The organization reports that for the last two years they have been trying to rebrand the disease so that it is exclusively known as “ALS.” The campaign took them one step closer to that (Woldman-Arent, 2014). With such enormous outcomes, it isn’t a surprise that the challenge and campaign was met with some backlash, with everything from concerns for wasting water to the importance and direness of the cause and health risks. Other organizations have tried to try to recreate the frenzy, and while campaigns before and after this have gathered a good amount of funding, the results are nothing compared to the ALS Bucket Challenge. The ALS Association has worked fast in using this strike of amazing luck by hiring more staff to work with all of the new funds and donors and they have published a page of frequently asked questions about the Ice Bucket Challenge. The funds raised for ALS are now over \$115 million and will be spent on research for treatments and a cure, global research projects, and ALS projects and programs all over the country (ALS, n.d).

Although it had a different motive, the “Twitter Revolution” should be noted as an important piece to social media history. The ability to break down barriers in authoritative countries is one that could not have been achieved without the use of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Social media sites became a huge asset in the political protests in Iran, Tunisia and Egypt. They served as not only a place to gather people, send messages, and stage protests, but also a way for the rest of the world to see the gruesome treatment and abuse of power happening in their already closed country. This in turn rallied partnerships across the globe to fight the injustice and urge their policymakers to step in. Although The Twitter Revolution had some similarity in its sparks and root grievances, the most significant similarity that unifies all the movements is the use of

social media. All of the countries had tight controls over freedom of speech and freedom of press, meaning that social media sites were one of the only platforms for people to discuss political and social independence. By using social media and hashtags, movements were able to gather traction. The world was able to see something that was happening in real time, to which they would not usually have had access. It spread information and mobilized action in not just one country but the entire world (Salvatore, 2013).

### **Benefits to Non Profits**

The events that transpired during the Twitter Revolution are examples of how information is now being spread through public space and advocating for change – change that took down governments. Social Media campaigns like KONY2012 and the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge show that there is a niche market for nonprofits and NGOs to get involved. These campaigns show how the Internet and social media have created new opportunities for advocacy organizations to engage their audience and influence public policy, grow funding and build their networks (Guo & Saxton, 2013). It makes sense that sites like Facebook and Twitter have been so successful for advocacy of nonprofits, as they are primarily communication networks. In January 2014, a study from the Pew Research Center captured which demographics use social media, which included 72% of males and 76% of females, 72% of people with a high school education or less use social media and 73% of users have a college degree. The younger generation uses social media the most with 89% of users are of age 18-29 years, followed by 82% of users are 30-49 years of age, 65% of 50-64 year olds and 49% of people over 65 (Pew Research, 2014).

Even though there is an incredibly large portion of the younger generation on social media, as it grows, it continues to reach populations crossing all demographics across the globe (Guo & Saxton, 2013). There is also a lot of research showing the capacity that youth have with social media advocacy. After all, looking back at many social movements, youth have been on the frontlines (Al Deen & Hendricks, 2012). Social media has been claimed to help organizations engage present and potential stakeholders by sharing, cooperating and moving joint actions in real time (Golbeck, Grimes, & Rogers, 2010). Social media's interactive environment is a great use of time and money, as it offers a low-cost way for organizations to mobilize supporters, create dialogues and captivate large audiences on issues that might not catch it on traditional media. Through the use of hashtags and other tools, organizations can evaluate and track their successes and missions (Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012).

Another advantage of social media use for organizations is, that while in the past smaller organizations were at a serious disadvantage when it came to the adoption of new technology, like computers, websites, and e-mail, today, technology has been incredibly beneficial for small organizations (Guo & Saxton, 2013). It is important to remember, however, that Facebook and Twitter are online tools for social interaction and they are very good at facilitating, but it's up to the individual to take the next action. Even if the organization is advocating for a cause online and it's beneficial to share the information, the cause and the support for the cause still needs to also be taken offline. They [Facebook and Twitter] are only tools; they can never truly replace old-school advocacy (Golbeck, Grimes, & Rogers, 2010).

### **Challenges for Nonprofits and Social Media Advocacy**

While social media advocacy has benefits, it also poses some challenges for nonprofits. No matter the campaign, it seems there is always some sort of backlash when it goes viral, and there is no promise that an organization's campaign or "call to action" will go viral, which is why it's important for organizations to not just focus on these single campaigns but to continue other methods of getting their message and information out about their cause and efforts to the public. There is also the chance of disseminating information but not being able to come through with mobilizing actual offline action, similar to KONY2012. There are, of course, many limitations in social media advocacy, as some issues are just too complex or offline that there isn't much to be done online but to raise awareness. This happened with #KONY2012: the war is complex and many countries were actively searching for the warlord, but the issue is more complicated than a hashtag can fix. With the boosting of social media viral causes, there has been a new term coined as *slacktivism*. "Slacktivism is the ideology for people who want to appear to be doing something for a particular cause without having actually to do anything" (Pfeifle, 2012). Though the intentions are usually very good, the symbolism can rarely affect an issue or truly raise awareness. Unfortunately, in a time where we live with instant gratification, social media advocacy is the instant gratification version of helping. In 2013, *The Atlantic* posted an article outlining the benefits of online activism and its ability to do amazing things, such as the shaming of a homophobic fast food chain or igniting the spark of the Arab Spring. In reality, though, simply "liking" something on Facebook isn't going to get malaria nets to African villages. The "liking" needs to connect to something tangible. UNICEF went on record thanking their supporters for all

of the “likes” but stated, “Likes don’t save children’s lives. We need money to buy vaccines, for instance.” While social media is a great way to connect people to advocacy and education, activism through social media is only one aspect of achieving change (Khazan, 2013). Organizations are also cautioned against sharing messages online, as once something is on the Internet, it is permanent. It is a good practice to have social media handbooks and agreements with your nonprofit as well as having employees monitor their own networks. There are also other legal pitfalls organizations need to be aware of including, defamation, invasion of privacy, and the distribution of false information (Al Deen & Hendricks, 2012).

### **Social Media Activism And Human Trafficking**

Visibility: it’s impossible to solve a human rights issue without it. If the public can’t see the issue, then it’s difficult to raise awareness and more importantly, attain financial and political assistance. This is particularly relevant to the issue of human trafficking. Human trafficking is illegal and very much hidden. Since 2000, when human trafficking was redefined, the media and non-profit sector have worked to convince the public once again that slavery is still in existence. Advocating for any human rights cause can be difficult for many reasons, but the main reason is that one does not want to exploit a person or their story. This is especially applicable with human trafficking because while sharing stories is important, journalists and NGO workers do not want to push too hard and traumatize survivors (FitzPatrick, 2013). In the past there have been a number of reports in the media about trafficking that had misinformation, outdated statistics, blamed or exploited the victims and conflated terminology. Instead of shining a brighter light on the issue, these reports confuse an issue that already is underreported and misunderstood



by the public (Kaufman & Crawford, 2011; TIP, 2014). Therefore, based on the literature, here is what is recommended to be an anti-trafficking advocate for media engagement:

Language is key. It might be simple, but there is a difference between the words *survivor* and *victim*, *prostitution*, *sex worker* and *sex trafficking*, *human smuggling* and *human trafficking*. Not only do many of these words carry stigmas that can affect the way the story is perceived, but the continued use of incorrect or outdated terms and definitions continues to weaken the understanding of the issue. Although organizations and activists want to grab the public's attention with words, phrases, and large numbers, if they are not used properly they can actually hurt the efforts (Haynes, 2014; TIP, 2014).

How one can utilize trafficking victims in campaigns is something that should be examined carefully. Nonprofits and NGOs should have staff on-hand that have experience in counseling and working with victims of trauma, and how they should handle interviews. Organizations should also realize that sharing photos or names of human trafficking victims can be dangerous and can potentially re-victimize the individual. Think twice before sharing, and above all, always help the victim realize that their story will be available to the public at large (Haynes, 2014; TIP, 2014).

As advocates it is important to show as much of the full story as possible, meaning that when only one type of trafficking is exposed (sex trafficking), it is equivalent to sharing only a piece of the story. While some organizations have specific areas they target, it is still important to try to strengthen the public's understanding of human trafficking as a whole and show the full scope of the crime (Basu et al., 2014, Haynes, 2014; TIP, 2014, Weitzer, 2014).

### **Future Research and Conclusion**

When we look at what supports slavery around the world, things seem a little discouraging. Apparently all we have to do is end world poverty, stop all corruption, keep people from being greedy, slow the population explosion, end the environmental destruction and armed conflicts that impoverish countries, convince the big lenders to cancel international debt and get governments to keep the promises they make every time they pass a law” (Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2012, p. 195)

It’s no secret that this is a hot topic; there are dozens of facts, figures, pictures and stories circulating the world and the web. If we are going to free slaves, help them build a life and help governments enforce their own laws, we must understand what slavery is today and where it is going. After all, a problem can’t be solved unless it is understood. The first step in combating human trafficking is to understand it. More research needs to be done in almost every single avenue and sector of the issue. Studies need to be conducted to “clearly define key terms, survey or interview migrants and their facilitators in all types of trafficking, document the social and ecological dynamics of migration and trafficking in specific contexts and examine patterns in law enforcement practice and rescue options” (Weitzer, 2014, p. 8). The fact that human trafficking perseveres in democratic countries shows that there is a true gap between the principals and values we act upon and the social beliefs we preach: equality, liberty and the right to life. These beliefs exist in our core being, deeply rooted in our daily lives and societies, but are they really part of *everything* we do? Human trafficking challenges democratic countries to reflect more closely on which principals really drive our actions (Morehouse, 2009).

This is a global issue and it needs to be treated as such; however, it also needs to be treated on individual bases, meaning there is no “one size fits all” answer. To end trafficking in the United States, we will need very different efforts exercised than are in Thailand, India or Uganda. Transparency of government, NGOs, countries and businesses is key to further understanding the issue and the trace of money is vital (Andreas, 2010).

Can social media become a true avenue of intervention? Scholars are beginning to explore the claims that social media might lead to more collective action outcomes and are considering the tools that may contribute to those outcomes. Further research needs to be explored into these tools, especially the networks, as they are a critical factor in understanding the potential power of social media. There is no denying the ability to pass on information, but what needs to be continually studied is the measurement of tangible asks – especially fundraising (Schwarz, 2014; Guo & Saxton, 2013).

There is a lot of research on the impacts that online social networks have on offline activity, and the evidence shows that there is indeed a relation in that the interactions online not only reflect offline social networks, but also have the capacity to shape aspects of those offline social networks. The online and offline realms should not be considered as separate entities but spaces that intersect and share characteristics. The data is still very new, however, and it will take time and more research to see how each digital space affects the other (Shwarz, 2014). Social media advocacy gives everyone a chance to have his or her voice be heard, and it continues to bring like-minded individuals together to harness the power of networking, which will be extremely beneficial for the future. “Trafficking is a dynamic phenomenon, the patterns of which evolve through time. These patterns change not only in response to varying labor

demands at destinations, but also relation to changing social, economic, and cultural at points of origin” (Feingold, 2010, p. 69). It will keep changing, which means we need to keep understanding it. Therefore further research will show if a platform like the Internet could be an effective tool to combat human trafficking as just like trafficking it is constantly changing.

### **Project Description**

The literature has shown that human trafficking is not a clearly developed issue. It is a complicated issue, and one that is rooted in several sectors of society. Although numbers are not concrete, there is no denying the severity of the issue. The research and literature demonstrates the limitations there are for understanding and ending human trafficking. Lack of awareness, lack of transparency and lack of engagement are all pieces. There are multiple types of interventions that could serve this need or cause including, but not limited to, addressing public policy (internationally and domestically); which creates better services for victims and stricter laws, supporting more programs of identification, supporting more efforts internally or demanding full transparency business; creating law enforcement and health worker sector training modules or launching more comprehensive studies to focus on empirical data. All of these interventions are indeed noble, but they are out of the scope for this particular project and resources. These interventions are also the ones that need to be taken on by different sectors of state and governments in partnership with NGOs, as many involve public policy. However, what has been discussed and is a crucial piece, is the role of the public, and its role in advocacy support for organizations that are directly working on the previous interventions and more. Therefore, based on existing research describing the

need for more public engagement, I created an online platform that will turn advocacy into action to combat human trafficking. It serves to educate individuals so they can connect with organizations, take action, be inspired, and help stop modern-day slavery.

If an individual uses the Google search engine to type in “human trafficking,” she will receive over 21 million hits with links leading to government, the UN, and the FBI on the top followed by NGO sites. There will be news stories of current articles commenting on criminal cases, prostitution and policy changes. Images will be of NGO campaigns, many with pictures of women or young girls with barcode tattoos along their forehead, ropes around their neck or hands covering their mouth. Scrolling to the bottom there is a list of “searches related to human trafficking” that includes “human trafficking statistics,” “human trafficking movie,” and “Super Bowl human trafficking.” Just from a simple Google search one can see clearly why the public has fallen into misconceptions, particularly the emphasis put on sex trafficking. One can also see that all of this information is incredibly overwhelming. It makes you wonder how many people continue to click or at what point they will simply give up.

Although similar sites have been created, they are geared more towards building coalitions and networks of organizations. My focus was the public. I also wanted to create a site that was a ‘one stop shop.’ The site provides everything from comprehensive background information, organizations currently involved in the cause, notable news stories, resources such as books and films, and actions that each individuals can take offline or online. We cannot help something we do not understand or see. For us to understand more, we need to be able to identify more. The public is a key component of

understanding the issue more, and this site serves to assist in being that key: to not overwhelm, but simply to educate and inspire.

### **Structure and Content**

The website is built on a wordpress.com platform, “the most popular online publishing platform, currently powering more than 20% of the web” (Wordpress, n.d). The site is a platform that allows users to build free and cheap websites for all of their needs including blogs, sales, portfolios and information sharing. A well-known platform, it serves more than 409 million people who view more than 15.5 billion pages each month (Wordpress, n.d). The site has countless options for themes, fonts and layout options, which make the site incredible user friendly.

The name of the website is [www.TraffickACTS.org](http://www.TraffickACTS.org). The ACTS is an acronym for “Acquaint yourself with the issues, Connect with others, Transform society, Stop human trafficking”. This is described on the homepage/about page (appendix A) where it is also described why the site was designed, both passion driven and part of a Master’s Thesis. It is a call to action for the public to engage in combating human trafficking. In today’s society we are constantly being bombarded with images of devastation, depression and destruction, whether it be by human hands, by biological fate or natural disaster, and this can be incredibly overwhelming. As the images pile up, it is not hard not to wonder if there is anything that a person can do. However, time and time again we are proven wrong; there is indeed many ways a person can help and there are already contributing toward the cause. It is no secret that people have what we will call “fad causes”, meaning they are revved up about breast cancer this week, gun control the next and lunch programs by the end of the month. All of these causes are very important but as we jump

to the next cause we leave the last one in our wake. People want to help but they don't know where to plug in their passion. In addition, in today's society people are wary of non-profits and how much their donation or efforts will help the desired population. Therefore this site is part of the answer. It serves as a one-stop shop for people new to the cause of combating human trafficking to the seasoned veterans. On the homepage there is also a description of how to best use the site and utilize all the tools. The site has eight themes or tabs that separate the website: the need to know tab, the organizations tab, the how you can help tab, the news tab, the blog tab, the learn more tab, the talk to me tab and the starfish tab.

The 'Need To Know' section is an extremely comprehensive background of the issue of human trafficking. Separated into three sub tabs: 'Background', 'Law 101' and 'Myths & Misconceptions' and adapted to laymen terms, the definitions and summaries are taken from the literature and the literature review. This is why the lengthy description is not attached. The background tab is broken down once more into three sections. The first is 'what is human trafficking' and defines human trafficking using the all-inclusive definition defined earlier in this paper, the United Nations definition and most widely accepted. 'Why is human trafficking an issue' provides the statistics that are available including the ranges of how many people are believed to be enslaved and the amount the industry is worth. A disclaimer is also listed, stating that these estimates are ranges and are only estimates. No concrete data is available however there is no denying this is a global crisis. And lastly the differing definitions of smuggling and human trafficking.

The next section of the 'Background' sub tab includes a lengthy description of the three main types of human trafficking described in this paper. And where they may exist

in the world. Emphasis is put on the fact that although sex trafficking is the most publicized sector, there is much more to human trafficking; especially labor trafficking. The final sub tab, 'Who? How? Where' lists a description of who the victims are, how they are vulnerable, how they become entrapped, who are the traffickers and where these victims come from and go and why they don't run. All of this background is crucial in educating the public about human trafficking.

'Law 101' is the second sub tab of the 'Need To Know' that provides the background on legal frameworks, and policies from the U.S, the European Union and ASEAN. For the ones who have an acute interest, there is also a history of International Law that describes the past 100 years of trafficking laws. This piece is important because it shows the progress that the world has taken on the issue. Originally (early 1900s) the laws solely protected white women and girls from developed countries who were in prostitution. Over the decades the laws evolved to include men and women of all ages, non-sexual forced labor and the concept of movement. The evolution of these laws shows the increasing understanding of the issue. The third and final sub tab of the 'Need To Know' is 'Myths & Misconceptions'; adapted from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center it lists the top 10 myths and misconceptions.

Previously it was stated when someone Googles 'human trafficking' they would receive over 21 million hits. However when Googling 'human trafficking organizations' the search engine produces over 5.5 to 12 million hits depending on if you pluralized organizations. Therefore I had an optimistic theory; more people would get involved if they weren't so overwhelmed by the sheer number of organizations out there and doubts about who they could trust. A solution to this was to create the 'Organizations' tab. This



tab has an important and unique function, it showcases and empowers non-profits and NGOs, which are working to combat human trafficking already through a variety of services including; advocacy, trainings, services for victims, and policy changes. These 20 organizations currently on the site are small and large, domestic and international and driven by diverse missions. The organizations are listed under various themes that I described as ‘foundational motives’ in the introduction of the site. It presently includes: ‘Children/Teens’; ‘Faith Based’; ‘Forced Labor’; ‘International Based Organizations’; ‘Pro Sex Work’, ‘Sex Trafficking’ and ‘U.S. Based Organizations’. These were created to help people find organizations that truly connect them to what they are passionate about.

When compiling the list of organizations there was a series of various criteria, which placed them on the initial, website which included: diversity, reviews, transparency of financials, services and programs and partnerships with other organizations. The organizations were found through Google queries, charity review sites such as Charity Navigator and many organizations were added to the list because scholars, activists and experts referenced them in the literature as recommendations.

The first qualification for any organization to be featured on the site is their registered non-profit status as a 501-C-3 or 501-C-4 charitable organization or equivalent. They needed to have at least three consecutive years of IRS Form 990 to ensure transparency and legitimacy and the organization needed to be active. The organization was verified by their current campaigns and social media pages. As social media advocacy is a key part of the site, evaluating how often the organization posts on their social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) was vital. Through my research, I learned there are many organizations that are no longer active but still have websites. It

was important to weed these out to not send activists down dead ends, as this can be very discouraging.

After evaluating their active status, I evaluated their practices. Based on the research and literature it was crucial that the organization was contributing to the causes in effective and ethical ways. Therefore as it has been proven that immigration and brothel raids in search for trafficking victims actually cause more harm than good; any organization that practiced this would not be included. That being said diversity of organizations was important because I didn't want to showcase the exact same organization over and over again. And so some organizations such as the pro sex work organizations vs. the conservative sex trafficking organizations may never collaborate. However based on my research of trafficking, each of the organizations were not wrong and they each had something to give that the other did not have. It is up to the public to find who they wanted to support based on their own values and opinions, I did not want to decide that for them.

Listed previously in the literature review were best practices for anti-trafficking organizations. Best practices were part of the core criteria in searching for organizations to be listed on the site. Some of these best practices include organizations providing hotlines or tip-lines, full service programs that included medical, psychological and legal assistance for life after trafficking, comprehensive training modules and workshops to engage and educate the public, healthcare workers and law enforcement and organizations that clearly defined the depth of human trafficking and provided different avenues for people to be involved. The good news is, there are many. The bad news I can

only showcase so many which is another reason why I broke the list down into foundational motives.

When an organization is approved it receives a page on the website. Each page is short and concise and highlights crucial information. This was done so that the activist may screen the pages quickly to find the organization that fits with them. On the page it includes their logo, their mission statement, the organizational services and programs and their wish list. Their wish list includes but not limited to volunteering, donations (listed is also where the funding goes) to policy change assistance. The last piece to every organization's website is social media icons leading to their Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube accounts. In addition there are links continually embedded in the page to lead the activist to the organizations' website and social media pages. In this way, my site is only a landing page. My goal was to lead them to a place that they can make a difference. Embedded in their page is a YouTube video or other media of a current campaign or advocacy effort. A selection of some of the organizations pages is included on appendix B. The goal is to continue to add organizations to grow the network. Of the date of this defense, there are 20 organizations showcased on the 'Organization' tab.

An additional feature connected to the organization tab is the "Starfish" factor. Any activist can tell you that in this field, there are always people who tell you, "One person can't make a difference." This attitude can be frustrating, but it could also be the reason we do what we do. Years ago when I was in a place of frustration, someone once told me the story of the starfish:

While walking along a beach, an elderly gentleman saw someone in the distance leaning down, picking something up and throwing it into the

ocean. As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young boy, picking up starfish one by one and tossing each one gently back into the water. He came closer still and called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?" The boy paused, looked up, and replied, "Throwing starfish into the ocean." The old man smiled, and said, "I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" To this, the boy replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die." Upon hearing this, the elderly observer commented, "But, young man, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!" The boy listened politely. Then he bent down, picked up another starfish, threw back into the ocean past the breaking waves and said, "It made a difference for that one."

Therefore, some organizations' pages display a picture of a Starfish, which means they have something I feel is unique or sustainable that differentiates them from all other organizations. Two examples include; GEMS and their peer-mentorship and youth outreach team and Urban Light's focus on boys and men which is often forgotten about in sexual exploitation.

The second half the website, although focused on human trafficking, could fit to any cause. It is the mission to mobilize people into action through various avenues of online and offline media. Within the 'How You Can Help' tab, two sub tabs are listed as 'original action' and 'social media'; original action (Appendix C) stresses that using both offline and online advocacy is a great way to help the cause. It provides a list of offline activities to engage the public including writing letters to the editor and congressperson, holding a fundraiser, workshops and presentations at your school, workplace, community center or place of worship, volunteer with an organization and continue to educate oneself to be able to help identify victims. All of these actions have various examples and links to sites that provide resources such as how to guides to writing a letter to your congress person (and how to find out who that is) and fundraising events. On the

'Original Action' tab there is also a detailed list of tips for recognizing victims of trafficking. Listed are the important numbers to report tips, injustices and concerns including 911, the national human trafficking resource center; a 24/7 toll free multilingual anti-trafficking hotline and the U.S Department of Justice worker exploitation line; a number that is open during weekdays for calls to report suspected instances of human trafficking or worker exploitation.

Following the hotlines is a list that was adapted from the U.S Department of State and the National Trafficking Resource Center (credit is given). The detailed list is in Appendix D but a summary is included here; where a potential victim of trafficking could be including but not limited to; domestic situations (maids, nannies), construction sites, restaurants and hotels, massage parlor and bars or strip clubs. Visible indicators of places of establishment include heavy security, barred windows, isolated location, the employees being heavily supervised and minimal access to leaving. A profile of a trafficked person states that most trafficking victims will not readily volunteer information about their status because of fear and abuse they have suffered at the hands of their trafficker. Therefore look for health characteristics of malnutrition, signs of rape or other abuse including bruising, broken bones and any psychological disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). These are indicators that will alert healthcare workers in what to look for. Finally there is a list of questions that are from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center that can assist someone in identifying a possible victim. On the site, it is highlighted and underlined how important it is to be careful. The best thing you can do for someone is to report it and get more information so that people and organizations with resources can assist the person.

‘Social media’ leads to three sub tabs; ‘How to’, ‘Facebook’ and ‘Twitter’ (see appendix E, F and G). These pages provide how to guides and tips for using these platforms for social media advocacy; from everything from creating a social media strategy and good principles to an infographic on the demographics of different social media platforms. The ‘Facebook’ page provides instructions on how to build a page, how to maximize viewing of your posts and other tips and trends. The ‘Twitter’ page includes information on terms and the use of Twitter feed, Retweet and Vines. As well as tips to build your network, start discussions and even how contact members of congress for policy change. Hashtags are broken down and explain how one can use them to evaluate their efforts. To encourage the use of mindful social media advocacy and not get caught up in 'slacktivism' as described earlier, the site is connected with its Twitter (@TraffickACTS) and Facebook page. This is to encourage people to follow, connect and re-share and retweet TraffickACTS’ efforts, as it will be keeping up with the trends of human trafficking activism.

To encourage the audience to continue to educate themselves on the issue as well as current information, there are three other tabs that will help them do so. The ‘News’ tab is one with current news articles related to human trafficking from respected news sources. The list is updated weekly and a sample of a weekly digest is on Appendix H. On the page it also encourages people to set up Google alerts so they may be informed daily. The ‘Blog’ page is one that includes posts written by myself or re-posted from other bloggers. It highlights emerging trends and controversial subjects relating to trafficking. Currently the top viewed blog posts are an article written about a boy who was trafficked to play Basketball in the U.S. (Starr, 2015) and about the movement of

truckers to combat human trafficking as truck stops and routes are a cesspool of trafficking offenses from movement to sexual exploitation (Couch, 2014).

The 'Learn More' tab includes resources to learn even more; these resources are broken down into books, journals and film. Many of the resources used for this thesis are included. The final tab is 'Talk 2 Me'; this page serves to continue to build the network and strength of the site. People are encouraged to send an email to [traffickACTS@gmail.com](mailto:traffickACTS@gmail.com) with organization suggestions so that they may be highlighted as well as with any questions. On this page there is also a link to a survey on [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) to provide feedback on the website.

### **Audience**

The first step to engaging the public is education, and the target audience is every person wanting to engage in the cause. Obviously this is a very large target audience and one that has many limitations due to resources, language and reach. Human trafficking is a transnational and global issue, and I tried very hard to focus on that. However, as I am from the U.S., that is my background, so while there are many global pieces, there is also a U.S. focus. I also recognize the need for Americans to understand the issue more, because there is a perception that trafficking does not exist here in the U.S., but it does – in our backyard, in fact (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012; Rand, 2012). The public has also fallen prey to the major misconceptions that human trafficking is solely sex trafficking. These myths further escalate the misunderstanding of the issue, which further puts the world at a disadvantage in terms of being able to effectively end trafficking.

I also realize that the United States is a key player in the philanthropy world, especially for causes like trafficking. Due to freedoms of press, speech and assembly,

American activists can be active in a safe way. They are often part of political campaigns that address the issues, such as asking Congress and the President to take measures to address the international issues. A study was recently done by the Charitable Aid Foundation and Americans are the top givers in annual funding towards the nonprofit sector (Goldberg, 2014). The United States is also on the forefront of combating trafficking due to its aggressive efforts since 2000, being the first country to create a federal law (TIP, 2014). The annual TIP Report essentially ‘writes the book’ on what needs to be done. For just that, however, activists and scholars argue the legitimacy of the TIP report for many reasons, one of the main ones being the reliance on data that truly cannot be verified. Therefore continuing to educate the public will create wider platforms for understanding the issue.

### **Project Evaluation**

The site was built and launched officially in April of 2015. It has continued to be added to and updated to continue to grow as a useful asset. The site was launched through my personal social media accounts and personal and professional networks. Evaluation is a key to the success of this project therefore, a survey was created and approved by Concordia University’s CURC (Concordia University Research Committee). However with permission, it was later adapted to a simple disclaimer in the beginning of the survey describing to the user that this was anonymous and the purpose of the results were to be used in the improvement of the site and for a Master’s thesis.

Wordpress sites are able to deliver statistics of their sites to their users. On the completion of this study, [www.traffickacts.org](http://www.traffickacts.org) had been viewed over 300 times with visitors from the United States, the United Kingdom, Thailand, Italy, Australia, and



Hungary. Analytics shows that visitors came upon the site from social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) and search engines.

SurveyMonkey was utilized to build the survey (Appendix I) connected to the site and will remain on the site for the continued success of the site. The questions were open-ended and Likert scale and a majority of the questions were optional to encourage more participation. Upon initial evaluation, there were 35 completed surveys with positive results. 97% (34 survey participants) found the site easy to use. When asked if the user took any further action they were given six choices and could select all that applied. The results are as follows, and note that some participants did not complete some questions as some were optional: 11 participants explored an organization's separate web page or social sites, five performed an offline action off the list, seven performed an online action, 8 learned more exploring the scholarly literature, books or films listed on the 'Learn More' tab, 10 shared the website on their personal social media page and two suggested an organization to be added to the site. A Likert scale was used for participants to note their knowledge about human trafficking before using the site. Ranging from '1. I know nothing about human trafficking' to '5. I consider myself very knowledgeable about human trafficking, the participants were able to pick those choices or any in between. Not all participants answered this question. However, on the ones who did, six participants selected #1 and eight selected #2 indicating they knew nothing or very little about human trafficking. 10 selected #3 indicating knowing an average amount and four selected #4, indicating knowing more than an average amount but not an expert. No one selected #5. However 95% of participants stated they considered themselves more knowledgeable about human trafficking after viewing the site.

The final two questions were open ended. The first asked for any recommendations for the site. Many responses were positive noting the organization and easy navigation of the site and the content displayed. While others included constructive criticism such as the recommendation for a graphic designer to re-design some of the pages. The participant suggesting this noted the pages are functional but could be more attractive with better special effects. Others suggested more personal preferences, for example, many of the links open to a separate tab and the participant worried users would be overwhelmed by how many pages could open up on their browser. A few suggested using more pictures or changing the colors or font to continue to grab the reader's attention. Finally a participant suggested linking this site to partner websites to build a coalition of advocacy organizations to the cause. But overall many commented on the easy navigation of the site and had positive comments about its mission.

The second open-ended question asked the participants to write something about they learned from the site or found interesting. This was one of the most beneficial questions because it continued to educate me on what people know or do not know; but this question was optional and not everyone completed this question. Some of the responses included learning about the differences between smuggling and trafficking, learning of the many different organizations that address trafficking in the United States and the Northeast in particular. Some commented on the fact they didn't realize how much human trafficking existed in developed countries, noting the alarms and crime were truly alarming and others didn't know there were so many types of trafficking, especially organs and the issues with migrants. One user commented that the blog section was their favorite section as it was "fascinating giving different perspective and stories on aspects

of human trafficking such as the role of Truck drivers/Truck stops and exploitation of youth for sports were not things I had previously considered or related to HT.”

Others commented on getting involved. “Really really really like how you explained how to help and stay involved in simple steps which everyone can follow. I think this could really help people realize they can make a difference when it comes to BIG issues which often seem difficult or impossible – by taking it one step at a time! Great site!” Another commented on this section, “I also thought the ‘how you can help’ page was a great resource as trying out how to best become involved can be overwhelming.” A participant noted they used the resource to write a letter to congress, and others didn’t realize how powerful social media activism really could be.

### **Discussion**

There were several limitations in this project. As a student from the United States and not a trafficking victim, I have given one perspective of the issue and I can only learn from what I read and observe. Although I have done extensive research in advocacy, human trafficking and general public knowledge, I have not worked in the field interviewing trafficking victims. The subject is incredibly complex and the data is not concrete, which provides large challenges for educating the public. Another limitations with this intervention was time, expertise, and resources. I have no background in web design or marketing. Therefore I learned everything from self-teaching and reading blogs and how to guides.

Overall the evaluation of the site was positive and the feedback was extremely beneficial for the site. Some other comments noted some editing issues and broken links, which were corrected immediately. A limitation however was that the evaluations were

from only a select group of people. Although others shared the page on their own pages, the site was shared in my personal and professional network, which included friends, family, colleagues and non-profit contacts that I met at different conferences and asked the site to be shared with them. The site is still in its beginning stages, yet it is already reaching people of different backgrounds and the numbers are still growing, so I am confident that in the future the site will have more well rounded evaluations. Based on the initial survey results, the site's original mission was to educate, inspire and move people to action, and the evaluations and statistics prove it has done just that.

There are many future goals and steps for the site's success. To engage the largest number of people, it is important for me to keep the website active and to encourage others to share it. Another goal is to connect not just individuals, but also engage the organizations that are highlighted on the site. By supporting these organizations, it encourages them to support and share the site which will hopefully help them build their own network and the public can see more collaboration.

### **Conclusion and Further Research and Recommendations**

Countless times it has been stated by politicians, activists and leaders that human trafficking is a cause that we, the public, can address and stop. It is our time to end slavery. One does not need to be an expert in a field such as law enforcement, psychology, law or public policy; everyone can still make a difference. As this is something that affects everyone in his or her daily life, this is a platform for everyone to get involved. One of the biggest actions that needs to be taken is the action of the public. This is also where the future of the research is. More research, especially in the area of social media advocacy, needs to be conducted on how people are engaged in advocacy

issues and whether it makes a difference.

**Appendix A: About/Homepage of [www.TraffickACTS.org](http://www.TraffickACTS.org). All website page appendixes includes live links and have adapted to compromise with Microsoft word.**

### TraffickACTS

Acquaint yourself with the issues

Connect with others

Transform Society

Stop Human Trafficking

*“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world” – Anne Frank*

In today’s society we are constantly being bombarded with images of devastation, depression and destruction, whether it be by human hands or by biological fate or natural disaster it can be incredibly overwhelming. And as the images and stories pile up, it’s hard not to wonder if there is anything you can do. But time and time again we are proven wrong; there are indeed many ways one can help and there are many doing that exact thing. **You just have to look for the helpers.**

It’s no secret that people have what we can call “fad causes”, meaning they are revved up about breast cancer this week, gun control the next and lunch programs by the end of the month. All of these causes are very important but as we jump to the next cause we leave the last one in our wake. People want to help but they don’t know where to apply their passion and in today’s society people are wary of non-profits and how much their donation or efforts will help the desired population. This is why I came up with my **Master’s Thesis** to develop this site.

The site will serve as a one-stop shop for people new to the cause of combating human trafficking and to seasoned veterans.

How To Use The Site

The first step is to **Educate**:

Did you know if you Google human trafficking you get almost nine million hits? Well all in one place you can find the background of human trafficking (what, where, how, why, etc.). To learn more check out the **BLOG** for emerging trends and challenges in the advocacy field, the **NEWS** section for current trafficking news stories and **RESOURCES** for more information than you can ever imagine.

The next step is show people there is **hope** and there is a place for them to plug in their passion. Once again you hit Google and type in “human trafficking organizations” you are given almost 4.5 million hits! Therefore I have provided an ever-growing list of organizations that are doing amazing work for the cause and people affected. Click the organization tab and choose from a list of “foundational motives” that inspire you. In those sub tabs will be organizations working with those causes or motives. **Each organization’s page will feature a bio, their wish-list, and direct links to their website & social media sites.** One of the incredible things about the internet is being able to connect to different places across the globe. My goal was to empower organizations that are already doing going good that you may not be aware of. One of my favorite parts of the site is the **STARFISH** to see what makes some organizations extra unique!

**How You Can Help** gives you the opportunity to both be an advocate as well as taken action! Check out the best practices for **social media advocacy** to engage your networks. But go old school and take action **offline**, like writing a letter to your congress (learn how). Remember your voice is worth then your dollar!

Don’t get caught up in “**slacktivism**”. Make your online advocacy take action!

Make sure to stop by the **Talk To Me** tab and let me know about any organizations you recommend or think should go on this site!

**Appendix B: Small Selection of Organization Pages: Includes live links**

## Covenant House



**Covenant House** was founded in 1972 with the simple, profound mission to help homeless kids escape the streets. Today we are the largest privately funded charity in the Americas providing loving care and vital services to homeless, abandoned, abused, **trafficked, and exploited youth.**

All across America, Covenant House rescues thousands of young people from a life on the streets...often those subjected to abuse by pimps and predators. But unlike some organizations that only provide direct care to victims, Covenant House also advocates for laws that will ultimately put an end to child trafficking. We helped move both International Megan's Law and the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Victims Support Act of 2010 through the House. But we need your help to pass these and other major legislative initiatives.

**What They Do...**

**Housing:** Covenant House has "houses" in 27 cities throughout the United States, Canada, and Latin America.

**Outreach:** If homeless kids can't get to us, we go straight to them through our Outreach Program. Covenant House Outreach teams comb the most desolate streets, visit schools, and make connections within the community. We get to know local homeless youth, making sure they have something to eat and letting them know that we're here if they need us.

**Crisis Care:** Many of the homeless youth who come through our doors are coming from stressful situations and require immediate attention. Crisis Care is a program designed to quickly address these needs including, medical care, hot showers, clean clothes, nourishing meals and a safe bed. First we heal the body, and then we heal the person.



**Continuum of Care:** Homeless youth at Covenant House need more than charity and a place to stay. Many are survivors of domestic abuse, others have alcohol and substance abuse problems, and many still need to complete their education and develop job skills. Our programs address these needs – creating a continuum of care and tools for homeless youth to become self-sufficient.

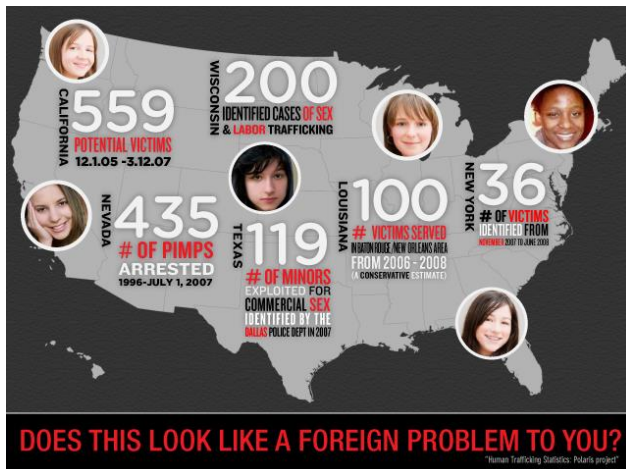
**Abolishing Child Trafficking....**

How Human Trafficking and Child Slavery Hurt Homeless Kids:

There is a grave misconception in this country that human trafficking is a trend relegated to foreign soil. But the painful truth is that human trafficking – one of the world’s fastest-growing criminal industries – is a monstrous issue in this country. **In fact, 85% of confirmed sex trafficking victims are U.S. citizens, mostly runaway children.**

Often disconnected from family and friends, homeless kids are particularly susceptible to traffickers who will lure them with the promise of food, warmth, and even false love. Once snatched from the streets without anyone noticing, they are sold for the highest price, their dignity and sense of self destroyed.

Covenant House receives many of these young people after they’ve found the courage to escape capture, have been freed by police raids, or have made contact with Covenant House outreach staff combing the streets day and night looking for kids in need and at risk.



## Urban Light



**Urban Light** is a grassroots organization made up of a community of individuals dedicated to making noise regarding boys who are victims of trafficking and exploitation. Based in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the Urban Light Youth Center rebuilds, restores & empowers the lives of boys who work in the red light district by providing education + health services + housing & emergency care.

### What They Do...

**The Urban Light Youth Center (ULYC)** is located just a few blocks from Chiang Mai's Red Light District. The Center is a place where boy's, ages 14-24, can seek 24 hour shelter and refuge from the many harsh realities that life on the street offers.

**Education & Empowerment:** Provide boys with English based services including but not limited to English, life skills, music lessons, professional development and vocational training.

**Health Services:** On site health clinics, HIV/STI testing center, medical check ups and pharmacy visits.

**Prevention and Awareness:** From educating the public in the U.S and Thailand about boys being a part of the story to empowerment youth camps. Awareness is a very important key to prevention in these boys and further exploitation.

### Their Wish List...

**Donate:** Your generous support is critical to the long-term presence of Urban Light within the Chiang Mai community.

**Get involved and volunteer:** check out the testimonials.

**Stay connected:**  

GEMS (Girls Educational & Mentoring Services)



**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.

GEMS has helped hundreds of young women and girls, ages 12–24, who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking to exit the commercial sex industry and to develop to their full potential. GEMS provides young women with empathetic, consistent support and viable opportunities for positive change.

Girls Educational and Mentoring Services' (GEMS) mission is to empower girls and young women, ages 12–24, who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking to exit the commercial sex industry and develop to their full potential. GEMS is committed to ending commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking of children by changing individual lives, transforming public perception, and revolutionizing the systems and policies that impact sexually exploited youth.

### What They Do...

**Prevention & Outreach** initiatives focus on educating youth about the risks and causes of commercial sexual exploitation. By spreading awareness, GEMS works to build safer, more productive communities and families while offering young survivors a space to both heal and reach their full potential.

**Direct Intervention:** GEMS' goal is to empower sexual exploitation survivors to become self sufficient, healthy, competent, and able to build a strong support system. For many CSEC survivors, healing is a long-term process developed through consistent support and an overall commitment to holistic care focused on youth development. It is unrealistic to expect survivors of trauma to be able to negotiate day-to-day independent living without first developing a clear sense of capabilities, autonomy, and readiness. Therefore we

provide [short-term and crisis care](#), [court advocacy](#), [transitional and supportive housing](#) and [holistic case management](#).

**Youth Development Program** addresses young women's developmental, social, and emotional needs through strengths-based programming. Commercially sexually exploited young women often need encouragement to become aware of their inherent value and innate potential. GEMS does not believe in treating youth simply as passive victims, but works to develop young women's sense of self as empowered and competent. Providing a strong sense of agency, structure and accountability is vital for young women's development into self-sufficient, independent young adults. GEMS sets high standards and expectations for its members, confident that youth will strive to develop their full potential when given the right resources and tools.

**Empowering Survivors** to express their experiences, observations, and desires for a better life and world is at the core of GEMS' program philosophy. Read the recent expressions that girls and young women participating in our programs have contributed [here](#).

[Their Wish List...](#)

**Get Involved:** Spread the word! Subscribe to our newsletter, TALK about commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking with friends and family.

**Watch** (and host a screening party) of the film Very Young Girls. Discussion guides and more info [here](#).

**Read** (and host a book club) Girls Like us. Discussion guides and more info [here](#).

**Shop!** By purchasing GEMS merchandise you are supporting an amazing cause and raising awareness.

**Volunteer** with us!

Stay Connected.    

### Appendix C: How You Can Help: Original Action

#### Original Action

Using both offline and online advocacy tools is a great way to help your cause. Here are some great offline actions that you can take to help end human trafficking.

- Write a letter to the editor.
- Write a letter to your congressperson or sign another campaign.
- Hold a fundraiser for one of these organizations or another.
- Hold workshops, presentations and discussions about the cause at your school, work, community center or place of worship.
- Volunteer with an organization
- Distribute materials
- And this one may be the most important: If you see something, say something! Don't know what you saw? That's okay! It's worth the call! 1-888-373-7888

#### Fundraisers

Here are some great fundraising ideas..

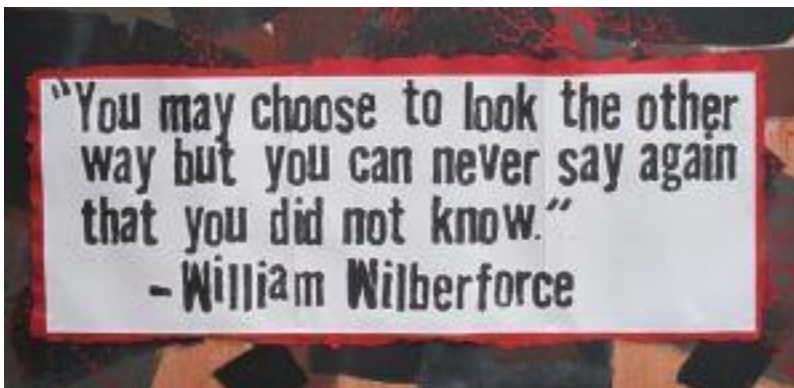
- Host a **house party fundraiser**
- **Garage Sale Fundraiser** where the proceeds go to an organization or campaign. Maximize your efforts by **getting the neighborhood involved** and provide information on the cause especially tips to identifying potential trafficking victims and hotlines.
- **Raffles** (50/50 work great at local sporting events) & **Silent Auctions**
- A-Thons! **Walk-A-Thon, Dance-A-Thon, Bowl-A-Thon!** The possibilities are endless! Pledge, engage, educate and take action!
- Many organizations have shelters so do toiletries and other supply drives. **Ask your local grocery store to set up a table and encourage customers while they are shopping to pick up an extra toothbrush, bar of soap or can of food.** Giving trees around the holidays are a great way to gather supplies.
- Car Wash, Cook Offs & Bake Sales. **Although these may not bring in a lot of revenue, never underestimate the power of talking to someone about the cause.**

- Hold a **benefit concert** or **coffee shop poetry slam**. Share songs and poems about **empowerment** and **overcoming challenges**.

Check out more fundraising ideas here!

#### Appendix D: How You Can Help: Identification

Tips for Identification



One of the most important things you can do help combat human trafficking is assisting in identification. Therefore if you **SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!**

### Make The Call:

- **911 Emergency**

For urgent situations, notify local law enforcement immediately by calling 911.

- **1-888-3737-888 National Human Trafficking Resource Center**

- 24/7 Toll-Free, multilingual anti-trafficking Hotline.
- Call to report a tip, connect with anti-trafficking services in your area; or request training and technical assistance, general information, or specific anti-trafficking resources.

- **1-888-428-7581 U.S. Department of Justice Worker Exploitation Complaint Line**

- Call the U.S. Department of Justice's dedicated human trafficking toll-free complaint line at (weekdays 9 AM – 5 PM EST) to report suspected instances of human trafficking or worker exploitation or contact the FBI field office nearest you.

### Tips For Recognizing Victims Of Trafficking

#### Adapted from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center

First understand the different forms of trafficking: labor, sex, child & organ.

#### Where?

- Where you could encounter a victim... **ANYWHERE**. But here are a few specifics:
  - Labor Trafficking
    - **Begging**- this is especially applicable for children.
    - Commercial **agricultural** situations (fields, processing plants, canneries)
    - **Domestic** situations (maids, nannies)
    - **Construction** sites (particularly if public access is denied)
    - **Restaurant, hotel** and **custodial** work.
    - **Sweatshops** (where abusive labor standards are present)
  - Sex Trafficking
    - **Massage** parlors
    - **Escort** services
    - **Modeling** studios
    - **Bars/strip** clubs

- **Visible indicators at place of establishment**
- Heavy **security** at the commercial establishment including **barred windows, locked doors, isolated location, electronic surveillance**. Women are never seen leaving the premises unless escorted.
- Victims **live at the same premises as the brothel or work site** or are driven between quarters and “work” by a guard. **For labor trafficking, victims are often prohibited from leaving the work site, which may look like a guarded compound from the outside.**
- Victims are kept **under surveillance** when taken to a doctor, hospital or clinic for treatment; trafficker may act as a translator.
- High foot traffic especially for brothels where there may be trafficked women indicated often by a stream of men arriving and leaving the premises.
- Although you want to act in the moment, **BE CAREFUL, You don’t want to put yourself or them in danger!** Remember this is not a simple issue, but very complex. Get the information and resources you need to help the person. **Build a relationship with them if you can.**

#### Profile of a Trafficked Person

Most trafficking victims **will not readily volunteer information about their status** because of **fear and abuse they have suffered at the hands of their trafficker**. They may also be reluctant to come forward with information from despair, discouragement, and a sense that there are no viable options to escape their situation. **Even if pressed, they may not identify themselves as someone held in bondage for fear of retribution to themselves or family members.** However, there are indicators that often point to a person held in a slavery condition. They include:

- **Health Characteristics of a Trafficked Person:**
- **Malnutrition**, dehydration or poor personal hygiene
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- **Signs of rape** or sexual abuse
- Bruising, broken bones, or other signs of untreated medical problems



- Critical illnesses including diabetes, cancer or heart disease
- **Post-traumatic stress** or psychological disorders
- **Other Important Signs:**
- Does not hold his/her own identity or travel documents
- Suffers from verbal or psychological abuse designed to intimidate, degrade and frighten the individual
- Has a trafficker or pimp who controls all the money, victim will have very little or no pocket money

#### **Questions To Ask If You Suspect You Are In The Presence Of A Trafficking Victim**

1. Is the person free to leave the work site?
2. Is the person physically, sexually or psychologically abused?
3. Does the person have a passport or valid I.D. card and is he/she in possession of such documents?
4. What is the pay and conditions of employment?
5. Does the person live at home or at/near the work site?
6. How did the individual arrive to this destination if the suspected victim is a foreign national?
7. Has the person or a family member of this person been threatened?
8. Does the person fear that something bad will happen to him or her, or to a family member, if he/she leaves the job?

**Anyone can report suspected trafficking cases. If the victim is under 18, U.S. professionals who work in law enforcement, healthcare, social care, mental health, and education are mandated to report such cases. Through a grass-roots community-wide effort and public awareness campaign, more professionals on the front line can readily identify the trafficking victim and have him/her treated accordingly.**

## Appendix E: Social Media: How To

### How to Use Social Media for Advocacy

Social media can have tremendous rewards for your advocacy aims, where you are an individual, a group or an organization. The most common platforms for advocacy include **Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram and blogging sites.**

### Create A Social Media Strategy

1. **Set up your objectives.** What are your goals and outcomes for your campaign or efforts? Are they narrow (publicizing an event) or broad (building a campaign, network or campaign)?
2. **Identify the audience you want to reach.** Are you communicating with your members or network or are you trying to build a new (or grow your) network?
3. **Select the social media platform you want to focus on.** It can be incredibly overwhelming to be completely connected with all the sites, especially if

you are new. So start with a few and get to know them really well. If you want to start with two, I recommend Facebook and Twitter.

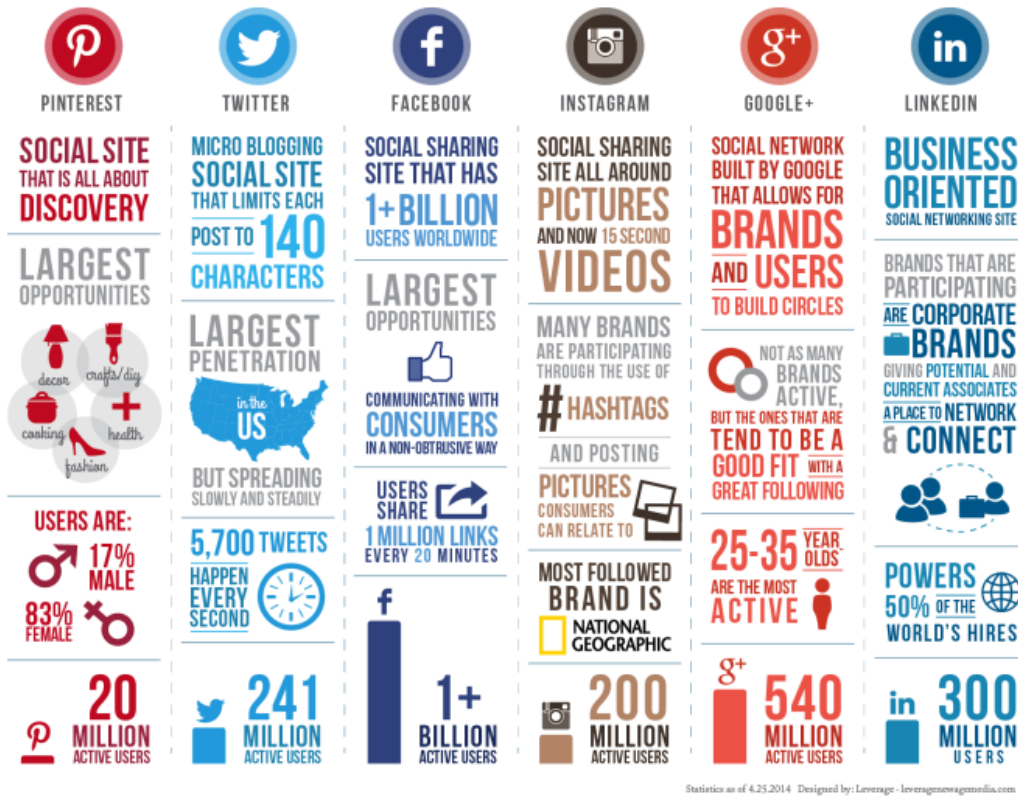
4. **Gather Resources and materials to share.**
5. **Delegate.** If you are part of a group or an organization, designate someone to manage the social media presence. Encourage them to do some research on current trends to feel comfortable.
6. **Go! Tweet! Post! Spread! Lead! Organize!**

#### Good Principles for Using Social Media

Reposted from AAUW

- **Be genuine.** Let your personality show, use humor, and be transparent about who is posting content. Try not to simply broadcast; rather, when possible, speak as an individual, to individuals. This will help grant you credibility as a trusted source.
- **Stay focused.** The people and organizations that follow you on social media have certain expectations about the type of content you post and the way in which you engage with them. If you stray too far from your objectives, you will lose the trust and attention of your community.
- **Be reliable.** Share quality content from trusted sources, and avoid amplifying erroneous messages from unreliable sources. Reliability also means posting to your social media services regularly. Frequently sharing reliable, meaningful content helps establish you as an important source of information and ideas for your community.
- **Get social.** Above all else, social media is about conversation. Share and comment on other people or organizations' posts to start new conversations, and join in the conversations that are occurring on your social media pages. The more you engage with your followers, the more they will understand that your priorities are their priorities too.

Check Out These Tips For [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#)



## Appendix F: Social Media: Facebook

### Tips for Social Media Advocacy on Facebook

- **How long?** Unlike Twitter where you can only have 140 characters in your tweets, Facebook you can have unlimited. **HOWEVER keep Facebook posts short, conversational, and include an image whenever possible.**
- **How often?** The most effective way to utilize your Facebook account is to post regularly. A general rule to follow could be to **post at least one Facebook post a day**, but the more you engage your audience, the better off you will be.
- [Learn here how to use Google Analytics to time your posts for the most potential of views.](#)

- And for those of us who want a simple answer good times to post, it's analyzed that **during lunch and after dinner are the most viewed times.**
- With a Facebook Page you can schedule your posts ahead of time!
- Learn how to **schedule your posts** ahead of time!
- Ask people to **share your content** through Facebook.
- Make sure your content (photos, videos, infographics etc.) is **branded with your logo** so that you can get credited when it's shared.
- Include links on Facebook to **direct people back to your website.**
- When hosting events, **utilize the Facebook Event Feature.** You can easily create events on your Facebook page and invite your Facebook friends, who can then invite their friends, and so on.
- Don't forget to utilize your **Facebook Page Insights**, they make it easy and personalized to analyze!

[Check out who uses Facebook!](#)

## **Appendix G: Social Media: Twitter**

### **Tips for Social Media Advocacy On Twitter**

- Share links, updates on campaigns, facts, images from events and other information in **140 characters or less.**
- **Twitter Feed:** The stream of tweets you see on your homepage. It's comprised of updates from users you follow.
- **Retweet (RT):** Re-sharing or giving credit to someone else's tweet.

- **Mention (@):** A way to reference another user by his username in a tweet (e.g. @TraffickACTS). Users are notified when @mentioned. It's a way a **great way connect and create discussions.**
- **Tweet directly** to members and other organization to encourage them engage in your efforts by using @TheirUsername.
- Tweet directly **to members of Congress** with the action you want them to take.
- Follow **other organizations** to keep up with their efforts.
- **Give** bloggers, members and other organizations **credit** by using the link and including **“via @TheirUsername”**
- Use **vine** to share not just photos but also **videos!**
- **Direct Message (DM):** A private, 140-character message between two people. You can decide whether to accept a Direct Message from any Twitter user, or only from users you are following. **You may only DM a user who follows you.**
- Follow **what is trending and try engage.** Trending topics are on the “discover” section or on the left side of the page.
- **Mashable** is a great resource for trends.
- **For more tips check these out!**

#### What Is A Hashtag and Tips To Use Them.

- Basically adding pound sign to a word or phrase makes it **pretty much magical!** You can then directly follow it into a **searchable link.** Which allows you to organize content and track discussion topics based on those keywords.
- **See what's trending around the world.**
- Hashtags are used across **many social media platforms** including Facebook, Instagram & Pinterest **expanding your network.**
- **Don't** use too many hashtags in one tweet.
- **Be specific.** If you're using a hashtag to join a conversation, make sure the hashtag is specific and relevant to your topic.
- Although hashtags are great in campaigns **make sure you connect your followers with somewhere (link) they can go to learn or do more.**

### **Appendix H: Sample of News Page**

#### News

This page will be updated weekly (and for breaking news stories). So I encourage you to set up your own news alert on Google. These are by far not the only stories about trafficking this week, just a preview. [You can do so here.](#)

Updated of May 11th, 2015

5/11: News 13: [Everyday Hero: Orlando student raising awareness about human trafficking](#)

5/11: BBC: ['Thousands' of Rohingya and Bangladeshi migrants stranded at sea](#)

5/10: The Globe and Mail: [EU asks UN to back operations against human trafficking rings from Libya](#)

5/8: NY Times: [Thailand: Urgent Plea Over Trafficking](#)

5/5: CNN: [Thai police find second human trafficking camp](#)

5/4: ABC: [Thailand Arrests 4, Vows Crackdown on Human Traffickers](#)

### **Appendix I: Survey attached to website for evaluation**

1. Thank you for viewing TraffickActs.org and taking the feedback survey! I am conducting feedback on the usefulness of my website being used for my Master's Thesis. Your feedback will not only help the improvement of the website but as well as my research in combating human trafficking through the mobilization of the general public. The survey should only take 5-10 minutes, and your responses are completely anonymous. If you have any questions about the survey, please email me: [traffickacts@gmail.com](mailto:traffickacts@gmail.com). We really appreciate your input! Do you hereby, freely and without compensation, agree to participate in this survey?



- a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Did you find this site easy to use?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I don't know
3. Did you take further action? (Select all that apply)
- a. Explore and organization's website or social media page
  - b. Take an offline action
  - c. Take an online action
  - d. Learn more (research, books, film etc.)
  - e. Share traffickacts.org on your social media page
  - f. Suggest an organization to be added to the site
4. Any recommendations for improvement for the site?
- a. Blank Space
5. Any other organizations you would like to see on this site?
6. How knowledgeable about human trafficking did you consider yourself BEFORE viewing traffickacts.org?
- a. 1. I knew nothing about human trafficking
  - b. 2.
  - c. 3. I knew an average amount.
  - d. 4.
  - e. 5. I considered myself very knowledgeable about human trafficking.
  - f. N/A
7. After viewing traffickacts.org do you consider yourself more knowledgeable about human trafficking?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I don't know

8. Please write something you learned from the site or found interesting (about human trafficking, activism, an organization etc.)
  - a. Blank space
9. Thank you for your feedback.

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