

# **Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada**

**Symposium: Human Trafficking  
Think Globally, Act Locally  
National Victims Week**

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# Key Definitions

- ▶ **Sex Industry**
- ▶ **Sexual Exploitation**
- ▶ **Experiential women and girls/Survivors**
- ▶ **Indigenous**
- ▶ **Migrant**
- ▶ **Traffickers**
- ▶ **Demand/Buyers**
- ▶ **Offenders**

# Definition of Human Trafficking

- ▶ **Recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring, or receiving women and girls by:**
  - Deception, fraud, coercion, abuse of power or
  - Giving or receiving payments or benefits or
  - Threatening or using force or abduction
- ▶ **For the purpose of:**
  - Sexual exploitation or forced labour or
  - Servitude or practices similar to slavery or
  - Slavery

**3 Elements: The ACT / MEANS / Purpose of exploitation**

**Canadian Police Knowledge Network: Human Trafficking Training:**  
[http://www.cpkn.ca/course\\_human\\_trafficking](http://www.cpkn.ca/course_human_trafficking)

# Common Myths about Human Trafficking

- ▶ Human trafficking happens only with people coming into Canada
- ▶ Human trafficking is about movement - over borders
- ▶ Human trafficking is the same as human smuggling.

# National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada...

- Since 2011 we have.....
  - National Task Force: January 2013-May 2014, 24 Experts
  - Site Visits: 10-cities across Canada
  - Consultations: over 260 organizations and 160 Survivors
  - National Roundtable with Service Providers
  - National Roundtable with Survivors
  - National on-line survey
  - National Angus Reid public opinion poll
  - Commissioned Research
  - Grant Making: \$800,000+
- **Results in 34 recommendations to end sex trafficking in Canada**

# What does sex trafficking look like in Canada

## Who is being trafficked?

- Domestic: Women and girls are Canadian citizens
- International: Women and girls from other countries

## Sex Trafficking Criminals:

There are two distinct groups involved in sex trafficking:

**Supply and Demand principles:**

- Business: Pimps or Managers
- Consumer: Johns or “the demand”

# How does this happen?

## Recruited and lured:

- Very organized, methodical and targeted
- Most often targeted to children and teens

## Controlled:

- The Goal for control is to: keep her small so she is powerless, invisible and alone
- Trauma Bonded with Trafficker

## Escape/Rescue:

- Help of others
- Kicked out
- Suicide, missing or murdered
- Self

# What we learned:

- ▶ The biggest risk factor to sex trafficking is **being a girl**
- ▶ The most common **recruitment age is 13**
- ▶ Traffickers **financially gain \$280,800** from trafficking one woman or girl per year in Canada
- ▶ Girls and women who are bought and sold from inside Canada are **most often marginalized young girls and women** (Aboriginal, racialized, immigrant and abuse survivors)
- ▶ **Root causes:** Gender inequality and violence against women, poverty, emergence of organized crime/gang involvement and networks and Racism / Sexism / Classism
- ▶ Survivors told us that the systems they **interacted with the most** while being trafficked as a child were:
  1. School
  2. Child Welfare
  3. Community Org



# What we learned:

- ▶ **Survivor-led initiatives** are essential - including services, public awareness and advocacy
- ▶ RCMP: 164 human trafficking cases since 2005
- ▶ 266 service providers served = 22,037 women and girls
- ▶ Estimated cost of pain and suffering per women/girl = \$552,964
- ▶ Estimated value of lost earnings and personal costs per girl = \$205,739
- ▶ Poll - **67% of Canadians agree** that Canadian girls **under the age of 16** are being recruited/trafficked to work in prostitution **against their will**
- ▶ **Inconsistent** provincial child protection policies

# Indigenous Women and Girls:

- ▶ **First Nation, Metis, Non-status and Inuit**
- ▶ **Timeline exercise**
  - ▶ First contact
  - ▶ Indian Act
  - ▶ Residential School
  - ▶ Vote
  - ▶ Sterilization
  - ▶ Experiments
  - ▶ 60's scoop
  - ▶ Today
- ▶ **Violence against Aboriginal women**
  - ▶ Root causes
  - ▶ Risk factors

# Why are Aboriginal Women and Girls targeted?

- Canadian Aboriginal women between 25 - 44 years of age are 5-times more likely than other women to die as a result of violence.
- The most severe, life threatening violence (sexual assault, beaten or choked or attacked with a knife or gun) that requires medical attention and time away from daily activities, fearing for their lives and experiencing 10 or more violent episodes from the same perpetrator;
- The highest rates of stalking (twice the rate from other women) and spousal homicide (8-times higher from other women).
- There are more than 1,100 murdered and missing Aboriginal women in Canada.

# NWAC On-line Survey Monkey with 13-Survivors (does not represent of the target population)

- ▶ Over half answered they were 14 years and younger
- ▶ 75% had on average 6 to 12 paid sexual contacts per day
- ▶ 90% were asked to do things they were not comfortable doing
- ▶ 55% often or always tried to resist and leave their situation
- ▶ 81% have a history of sexual abuse and sexual violence before trafficked
- ▶ 63% were sexually exploited or trafficked for 3-years or longer

# NWAC: Literature Review

## findings: (from 1998-2013)

- ▶ Recruitment occurs by traffickers posing as boyfriends, gang members and familial
- ▶ 68% meet the criteria for PTSD
- ▶ What are women/girl's immediate needs in order of priority:
  - ▶ drug or alcohol treatment
  - ▶ job training
  - ▶ individual counselling
  - ▶ Home/safe place
- ▶ Strong link between sex trafficking and prostitution
- ▶ Over policed and under-protected

# National Task Force Learnings

- ▶ Aboriginal women are overrepresented in BC, Prairie Provinces, areas of Ontario and the north
- ▶ There are specific markets “Authentic Indian Experience” “Real Indian Rez Girls” and extremely vulnerable girls
- ▶ Recruitment and control is based on ‘relationships’
- ▶ Violence by ‘the demand’ is more extreme
- ▶ Criminalized more often
- ▶ Systemic racism contributes to creating vulnerability and increase risk

# A Growing Problem

- ▶ Girls are first trafficked at a young age
- ▶ Traffickers have become more subtle
- ▶ Trafficking is less visible
- ▶ Trafficking is becoming more profitable for more people

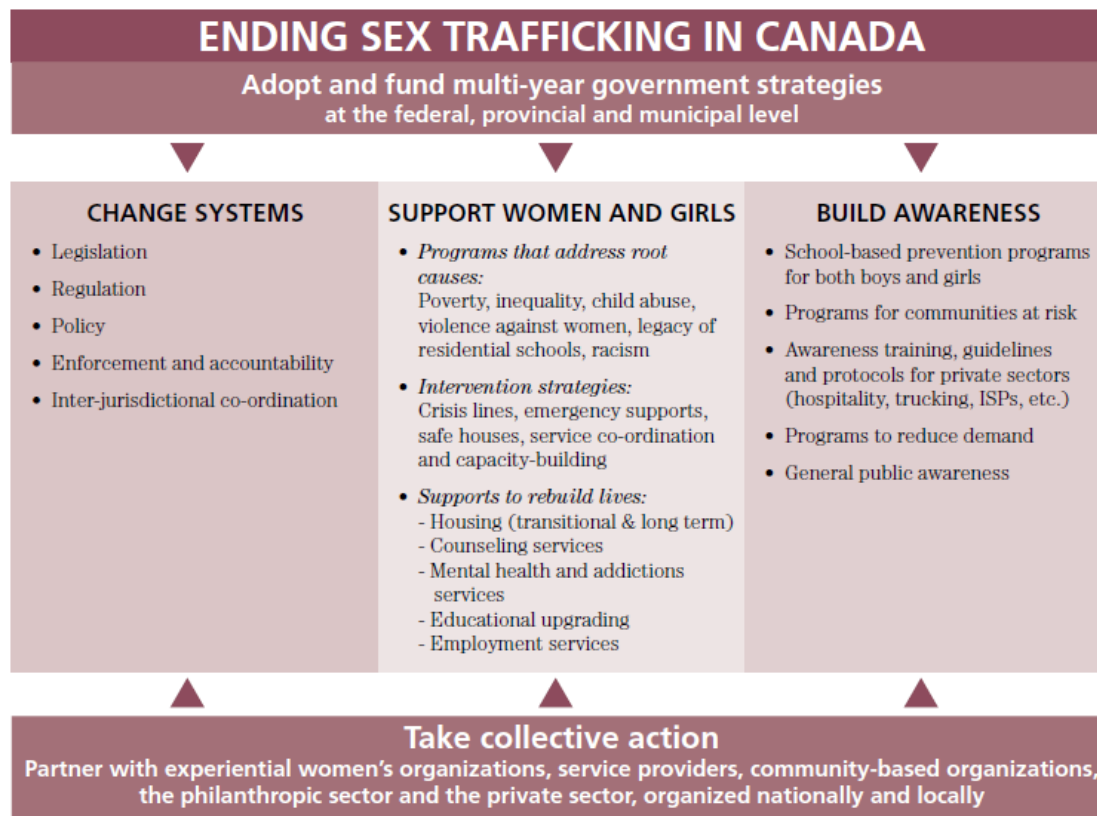
# Survivor Voice



# National Task Force concluded.....

“True equality for women and girls will not be achieved until all forms of violence, including sexual exploitation and sex trafficking are eradicated.”

# National Anti-Trafficking Strategy



# 34 Recommendations to END Sex Trafficking in Canada

## **Change Systems:**

- ▶ Laws that stop trafficking in its tracks
- ▶ A trafficking proof child welfare system

## **Support Women and Girls:**

- ▶ An instant response
- ▶ Stable platform for a life without exploitation
- ▶ Opportunities to heal

## **Build Awareness:**

- ▶ Confident Girls. Respectful Boys

## **Collective Action:**

- ▶ Canada-wide action
- ▶ Sustained funding to support services

# Inspiration Moving Forward

- The innocence, wisdom, resilience of girls and women and their ability, against all odds. to rebuild their lives
- The courage and leadership of Aboriginal women - their healing programs, grandmother's councils, the families of missing and murdered Aboriginal women
- The remarkable strength of young women who are trafficked into Canada and the immigrant and refugee organizations who are creating awareness and advocating for change
- The emergence of coalitions, businesses, and faith-led groups
- The commitment of all of you in this room today
- Building partnerships with other leading Foundations to support the work across the country

# What can you do....

- ▶ Learn about it.
- ▶ Speak up about it.
- ▶ Challenge it.
- ▶ Stop it.
- ▶ Change it.

# In their voices.....

*“.....just try hard not to give up on us like everyone else in the world has.”*

Thank you!

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