



Addressing Tomorrow's Slavery Today Delta 8.7, The National Survivor Network's Response

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- 1. We consider current trends and dynamics in contemporary forms of human trafficking. Looking at current prevalence estimates and patterns, modelling of risks and vulnerabilities, to better understand major risk factors for modern slavery, and analysis of how slavery is being impacted by major socioeconomic, technological and political developments:**

Current Prevalence Analysis and errors within human trafficking data collection.

Biases in data strategies:

There is perfunctory analysis of the prevalence of trafficking across the globe; with data being self-reported by NGOs that only accept a specific sub-sect of victims into services, institutional biases around arrests and complex intersections, and dominant populace mythologies. I would argue that we should reconsider and reflect upon societal mores, methodological errors, as well as a weighted scale of probable prevalence within marginalized populations.

Let's reflect for a moment on the U.S. specific intricacies within marginalization. The U.S. most often preforms well on assessment of the overall population and potential victims of trafficking because the measurement is on readiness and legislation. However, lets reflect briefly on a known list of indicators for data assessment for number of potential victims—the Global Slavery Index brackets:

1. Political Rights
2. Civil Rights
3. Financial Inclusion—Received Wages
4. Literacy
5. Child Mortality
6. Corruption
7. Alternative Social Safety Net measures
8. GDP
9. Government Effectiveness
10. Gender Inequality Index
11. Environmental Performance Index
12. Financial Inclusion—Ability to Borrow Money
13. Financial Inclusion—Ability to Obtain Emergency Funds
14. Cell Phone Users
15. Social Safety Nets
16. Undernourishment
17. Access to Clean Water
18. Tuberculosis
19. Confidence in Judicial System
20. Political Instability
21. Impact of Terrorism



22. Internal Conflicts Fought
23. Violent Crime
24. Women's Physical Security
25. Weapons Access
26. Gini Coefficient
27. Same Sex Rights
28. Disabled Rights
29. Acceptance of Immigrants
30. Acceptance of Minorities
31. Global Slavery Index Government Response
32. Alternative Political Rights measures
33. Regulatory Quality
34. Internally Displaced Persons
35. Refugees

This list of possible indicators is complex and challenging. The majority of Americans respond well to most of the specifications. Hence, the prevalence of high marks on the global index scores. What about marginalized populations that do not meet these normalized standards? I would argue that these indicators do not apply to People of Color (POC), Transgender Persons or even other marginalized groups within the United States. LGBTQ+ persons have the right to marry but still can be fired in 28 states, while transgender persons fight for the simple right to use a public bathroom. The high incidence of injustice along racial lines within policing, police brutality and broken window policies directly impact POC and leave them at a loss for justice. When you add in income inequality the implications become more frightening.

Poverty is a major predicator of trafficking victimization. Examine rural communities and the prevalence of hook worm, increased HIV rates, and lack of access to clean and/or running water? The U.S. is a complex overlap of multiple groups inadequately reflected within the dominant narrative. The over sweeping representations reduce marginalized populations to a second-class status whom traffickers continue to exploit without consequence. Broader society cannot turn a blind eye to legislation targeting racial groups, voter suppression and clear attacks on minority groups all of which leave these subjects uniquely vulnerable to exploitation. Quality of life in Rhode Island for instance is not the same as quality of life in Alabama; specific and complex political biases affect regions of the country differently.

Statistical analysis of gender-based violence is missing high rates of spousal abuse or domestic partner abuse within LGBTQ+ relationships that are seen as power dynamics and not gender-based violence. The under-reporting of crimes against men and the stigma that male victims face indicates there is an unknown number of males being exploited, particularly when that exploitation is of a sexual nature. Data on exploited children show a near 50/50 gender split. The assumption that abuse ends simply because boys turn eighteen is irrational. The fundamental failure to acknowledge



biases continues to permeate statistical models of dominant cultures, wherein the most susceptible persons are erased from strategic analysis in prevalence studies.

I would challenge researchers, who want to accurately depict the complex nature of human trafficking, first examine their own bias and then address the overreaching assumptions within the dominant narrative that erase the experiences of the most vulnerable. Weighted measurements that accurately reflected compounded indicators would paint a more accurate picture of trafficking with the U.S.

As far as modeling that can offset these core methodological errors, there are options showing promise. Longitudinal Migration Tracking to collect data directly from the persons through detection of their status via mobile phones. Network Scale Up Method estimating the size of hard-to-reach populations via network-based questions of the general population, extrapolating an individual's social network and producing population estimates for hidden groups. Predictive Modeling using technology to skim data records to reveal sub-contracted labor in export supply chains and estimate prevalence of forced labor. As well as, Respondent Sampling within a peer group of impacted persons shared broadly through mobile devices.

2. Taking stock of the current human trafficking movement at the national, regional and global level, we analyze what this tells us about which aspects of tomorrow's potential trafficking might be tackled and/or prevented by today's anti-trafficking strategies, and which aspects may require new strategies:

Legislative initiatives and politically forced migration are exacerbating the global impact of human trafficking and forced marginalization through preventable conditions and economic instability. Although these are things that could be addressed through human interventions, instead they are made worse by biases and systemic targeting of the most vulnerable within these paradigms. Specifically, in the United States, grant solicitations are disproportionately focused on trafficking within commercial sex due to preconceived bias that it is more severe and traumatic and deserving of greater focus. The dialogue around hierarchy of trauma is pervasive in the way we approach anti-trafficking work. The United States has 26 pieces of passed legislation to address human trafficking. Of these six are inclusive of human trafficking in all forms, 20 are specific to sex trafficking, one is specific to sex trafficking of women and girls but there are none specific only to labor trafficking.

Specific to the United States, the language that frames human trafficking under an umbrella of modern slavery is problematic at its base. Both indigenous and African American persons have publicly opined that using the term slavery for human trafficking minimizes the history of the transatlantic slave trade and whitewashes the culpability of modern Caucasians who continue to hold wealth and benefit in a capitalist economy founded upon chattel slavery. In the same revisionist mindset, the narrative of the current anti-trafficking movement is that all persons are equally vulnerable to being trafficked and more vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation than forced labor. The data we are able to collect from prosecutions, hotline reports and programs



directly contradicts this. Labor trafficking is much more prevalent than sex trafficking and persons of color and youth involved in the child welfare systems are trafficked at significantly higher rates than other demographics. Despite that, most services for victims of trafficking are geared at single females and are disproportionately ran by white administrators. Therefore, in asking what is working best in the response to human trafficking, when the reality is that the response is based upon a statistically disproven framework, is problematic. The entire approach to human trafficking within the U.S. has to be dismantled and rebuilt with a foundation of human rights and utilization of a public health approach to service provision.

The United States primary focus is on prosecution and prevention through stings, arrests and awareness campaigns whilst not funding programs that assist individuals identified in these initiatives. The U.S. does not direct much effort into prevention beyond prosecutions. They have not raised the minimum wage, do not address inequitable housing, do not address generational poverty and income inequality and their responses perpetuate vulnerability during natural disasters. Although it is acknowledged that poverty is a predictor to trafficking vulnerability, there are little to no efforts to end man-made poverty, and legislative contempt is exhibited toward those with inherited poverty. The U.S. promotes global gag rules to destabilize programs that promote family planning and provide access to appropriate healthcare and holds contempt for persons living with HIV viewing them as deserving of their condition rather than victims of systemic failures to address vulnerabilities.

The United States funds monitoring and tracking of trafficking and exploitation of vulnerable children and individuals within supply chains but does little to penalize or halt these practices by the guilty industries. In fact, the population is heavily dependent on coffee and chocolate. They do not engage in sufficient efforts to curtail the opiate epidemic, and there is prevalent use of such medicines by individuals being trafficked in fisheries, sweatshops, and other forced labor arenas. The U.S. touts its position as a gatekeeper of human rights and holds the world accountable for responses to trafficking. Yet when the failed wars on drugs and terror destabilize vast regions of South America and the Middle East, those seeking to migrate or be granted asylum are denied entry, separated from their children, and imprisoned. U.S. immigration responses put undue burdens on border towns in Mexico, where refugees have to be housed, fed and provided with medical care. The United States incarcerates 25% of the world's population although they comprise only 5% of overall population; and those imprisoned are disproportionately persons of color. The Constitutional exception to the ban on slavery was the prison population. Instead of stopping the enslavement of persons of color, the U.S. created a loop hole to their dependence on free and forced labor. The hubris in how human trafficking is addressed only exacerbates the forced marginalization of persons we do not see as deserving of basic human rights.

In order to effectively address human trafficking, the global community must address the systemic failures that allow forced marginalization of those deemed second class citizens. They are seen as unworthy of basic human rights and left vulnerable to natural disasters as our changing world deals with the economic vulnerabilities. This is illustrated through climate change in desert regions, war



torn areas, and refugees fleeing genocide such as apartheid in Gaza and the Rakhine conflicts in Myanmar. Our prioritization of military intervention over international diplomacy must end. Additionally, we overuse monetary sanctions weighted against individuals already fighting economic instability. The governing bodies in these regions are the last to feel the burden of tariffs. We produce an abundance of food but throw away the excess rather than utilizing a system that would sustainably feed the entire population. We have more houses per capita than ever before but also unprecedented rates of homelessness. We have historically low unemployment rates but continue to expand the numbers of people living in poverty. The corporate focus of our economic system is not sustainable; statistically one percent of the population holds over half of the world's total wealth.

3. Exploring how the anti-slavery movement can adapt to effectively tackle current and future drivers of modern human trafficking, including new technologies, methods and partnerships:

The tools with the most promise for addressing gaps in knowledge, addressing vulnerability and measuring prevalence of the issue are Longitudinal Migration Tracking, Network Scale Up Method, Predictive Modeling, and Respondent Driven Sampling. An ethical, holistic approach that includes wrap-around support for those identified as victims of trafficking must be developed. We also need to create dialogue around climate related migration as more individuals struggle to meet basic survival needs of themselves and their families.

While new technologies and innovative research approaches that deal with transient and marginalized populations need to be developed and implemented, what is most needed to combat modern day human trafficking are the utilization of existing programs and creation of policy initiatives to develop a public health based, system of care model that is grounded in best practices, and is survivor and trauma informed. We need prevention programs that address systemic racism, mass incarceration, generational poverty, hate crimes, gender-based exclusion and violence, child welfare and school systems that disproportionately institutionalize brown and black children and politicized immigration policies. The reality is there is not adequate funding or infrastructure to competently respond to human trafficking in the same way that has been done for the last nineteen years. We are pushing most dollars toward awareness and prosecution, without enough services for those who are victimized and identified by these efforts. Through utilization of survivor consultation networks, research and practice advances, we could equip our existing infrastructure to respond to the needs of identified victims and create prevention programs that provide financial, educational and psychosocial support to those most at risk of being targeted by traffickers.