



STOP THE DEMAND

FOR TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN & CHILDREN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS¹

1. What is “trafficking in persons”?

The United Nations defines “trafficking in persons” as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of 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. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Note: According to this definition, the consent of the victim is irrelevant.

According to the United Nations, each year 4 million people are trafficked and 2 million girls between age 5 and 15 brought into the sex industry.² The vast majority of trafficking victims, as many as 80%, are women and girls. Trafficking is facilitated by the Internet. Because trafficking is a hidden crime, it is difficult to have accurate statistics and different numbers are given in different sources.

2. What is meant by the demand for trafficking in human beings?

By demand we mean those who pay money for sex or labour. Our campaign focuses primarily on trafficking for sexual exploitation. According to studies, the majority of those who exploit for sex are men. The U.N. Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Women states that “demand must be understood expansively, as any act that fosters any form of exploitation that, in turn, leads to trafficking.”

3. Why should UNANIMA International focus on the *Demand* side of trafficking?

Persons working with victims of trafficking point out that, once a woman has been trafficked, the trauma she experiences makes it almost impossible for her to be reintegrated into a normal social life. Stopping trafficking protects victims better than trying to treat them afterward. Since trafficking is very profitable, we believe that eliminating the profit will decrease this form of exploitation.

4. Wouldn't legalising prostitution be a better way to stop trafficking and stop the exploitation of women and children?

Contrary to claims that legalisation will protect those exploited in prostitution, it has actually expanded the sex industry in the Netherlands and other places where it is legal. These locations have also seen an expansion of the sex industry to tabletop dancing, bondage, sadomasochist centres, peep shows, phone sex and pornography.

Sweden, however, has adopted a law that recognizes that without male demand there would be no female supply. Recognising prostitution as a form of male violence against women and children, it has criminalized the purchase of sexual services. Because it has become more dangerous and less profitable, the trafficking of women and children for sexual purposes is on the decline there.

5. What about those women who freely choose prostitution?

Studies indicate that most women in prostitution did not “choose” it. Most prostituted women find it the only viable solution they perceive among very limited options for survival.

6. Who should be the focus of a campaign to stop the demand?

A pilot study done by the International Organization for Migration, “Is Trafficking in Human Beings Demand Driven?,” found that 78% of the respondents first purchased sex when they were 21 or younger, and the later the age of first purchase, the less likely the men were to continue patronising prostitutes. The importance of focusing prevention strategies on teenage boys can’t be overemphasized. There is, however, no one profile of a male who will seek pleasure by buying sex. He is “every man”: rich or poor, happily or unhappily married, single, a good or bad father, employed or unemployed, and can be from any walk of life.

7. Is there a relationship between pornography and trafficking?

Researchers have found a link between pornography and prostitution, with men who solicit sex acts twice as likely to have viewed pornography as men in general.

8. What about child sex tourism and the trafficking of girls?

The demand seems to be increasing as travel across borders becomes cheaper and easier, and as the Internet normalizes deviant sexual practices and allows traffickers, pimps and purchasers to locate each other. Nicholas Kristof, a *New York Times* columnist, states: “organized crime, increased mobility and the rise of markets have turned pubescent flesh into a tradable international commodity. Moreover, fear of AIDS has nurtured markets for virgins and younger children who customers think are less likely to have HIV.” Men who would not dream of having sex with children in their own culture travel to other countries where they believe it is acceptable behaviour.

1. Many of the responses in this FAQ sheet were adapted from *Primer on the Male Demand for Prostitution*, Ilvi Jõe-Cannon, editor, and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, N. Amherst, Mass, 2006.

2. (U.N.). Because of the difficulty in determining the number of trafficked persons, there is a wide discrepancy in the estimates. The U.S. State Department Trafficking in persons report estimates between 700,000 and 2 million persons.

9. Why do Catholic sisters, brothers and priests want to be involved in this issue?

Religious congregations everywhere along with all of the congregations of UNANIMA International are deeply committed to working for the full development of the human person — of all human persons. Like religious congregations throughout history, we act to serve needs that are not being met in the society of our times.

We believe that the sexual exploitation of women and girls because they are female is one of the most serious ways in which women experience violence and is symptomatic of many other forms of discrimination against women and girls. We also believe that because our members are active in education, health care, social work and development we have an effective place from which to work against human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

10. Does this campaign have any real hope of success?

Any attempt at changing social behaviour is a long-term task and social attitudes toward women and sex certainly have a long tradition. However, there are many current examples of successful social change: the fall of apartheid in South Africa, the decrease in the social acceptance of smoking, the use of a designated driver to eliminate driving under the influence of alcohol, public condemnation of domestic violence and child abuse. In each of these cases, the behaviour mentioned was treated with either silence or social acceptance 50 years ago. Today this is no longer the case.

We can make social change.



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