

AAUW-MA State Conference, 2011

HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Notes from the Community Action Plan session with panelists:  
Anita Coco, Not For Sale; Susanne Sullivan, Asst. US Atty., District of MA;  
Dr. Margaret Chalupowski, AAUW-MA

The conversation was fast and wide ranging. While notes may read as a series of *non sequiturs*, valuable information, opinions and suggestions for individual and community action are all included. *S. Robinson, session scribe*

Not For Sale works to recruit, educate and mobilize smart activists who can address issues surrounding human trafficking. Their work is focused in 5 countries: Peru, Thailand, Romania, Cambodia and one other. Eighty per cent of funds they raise go directly to work in these countries.

One person can make a difference! Human trafficking does occur, even in Massachusetts.

Consuming Fair Trade products help sustain vulnerable and marginalized populations and can be an effective way to reduce human trafficking. Free2Work is an app for Fair Trade info and can become a part of your purchasing decisions. AmirahBoston.org is a resource to help educate people on these issues.

Examples of Not For Sale fundraising include artist nights, donations tied to athletic accomplishments, and NFS tee shirts, which provide jobs in Cambodia. The shirts can be made for your organization, team or for family events, helping NFS efforts globally. See [www.notforsalecampaign.org](http://www.notforsalecampaign.org); [www.slaverymap.org](http://www.slaverymap.org); [www.free2work.org](http://www.free2work.org); or contact Anita Coco, Not For Sale Co-state Director, MA, [anitac@notforsalecampaign.org](mailto:anitac@notforsalecampaign.org).

Tough penalties for child recruitment at schools, into prostitution and slavery should exist, as those developed for selling drugs at and near to schools, within so-called "school zones."

Recruitment organizations are like a pyramid, just as in the drug trade. And, in MA, there are currently no minimum penalties in place, for someone found guilty of human trafficking.

An effective way to get the word out about human trafficking and resources available is to educate as was done for domestic violence: at beauty shops, nail spas, PTAs, hospitals, mammography clinics and other "female" venues. Plymouth County had an effective education campaign that targeted similar locations. Susanne Sullivan can be contacted to see the materials that were developed there. Participants suggested that Victoria's Secret and retailers of UGG boots might be good sites also.

One woman declared that since girls are recruited from every single race, class, and ethnicity, we should speak with girls directly and quit pussyfooting around. Girls as young as age 11 should be made aware of the dangers, be able to identify 'recruiting' behavior and so avoid it and raise a red flag to appropriate adults.

There was thought that it has to be made a Social Studies conversation, rather than a Sex Ed. conversation, or a School Committee presentation/conversation before it is nixed in the actual curriculum by parents in denial. Mass. Superintendents' Association, as in bullying legislation and development of school procedures to deal with bullying, might also be a good route to get recruitment and trafficking info to young girls.

Regardless of actions and routes of educational efforts, it was agreed there MUST be better collaboration and communication if parental objections are to be calmed and dealt with effectively, and if marginalized recruitment targets are ever to be offered the tremendous support needed to work back into mainstream society.

There is a huge gap in coordination of services for those "Exiting." Where can someone go for help, and how likely is it they will be taken seriously and supported as they work to change their own life? (No answer to this question was proposed.)

Cheri (Jiminez) got out...how to get to young girls who are captive? These issues have to be brought into play in schools, as captive girls may yet be enrolled and participating at middle and high schools. There is an urgent need for peer to adult or victim to adult interactions.

There is a video called *Very Young Girls*, a documentary of girls enslaved and the pimps that recruited them. See more info in the list of handouts to view it. The pimps actually discuss how they manipulate girls initially to get them into the sex trade. Threats against girls' family members, coercion and oppression happen locally with the girls, regardless of where/how far away their actual family members may be living. These young girls have no sense or ability to check whether or not the pimps have the ability to carry out the threats against their family, and so the threats are effective in getting their compliance with the pimps' demands.

Even when child protective services are involved with girls identified as human trafficking principals, they cannot always overcome a child's initial choice to earn some money...an opportunity they have probably never before had.

FORCE/FRAUD/COERCIAN...words from the US anti-trafficking legislation that are salient to the recruitment and continued enslavement of women and girls.

Trafficking is a misnomer, as there is not always movement, of trafficked women and girls, from their home location, although there may be. Trafficking is always about the money, as distinct from cases of rape or domestic abuse, which are about power and control. In trafficking, money is the issue.

We, as individuals, can write articles for and letters to their local paper to help educate their community.

In cases where things look abnormal...why is that girl next door always wearing the same clothing? How come I see that aunt always taking out the garbage by the garage but never coming out of the house for any other reason? What does that older man think he is doing...holding on so tightly to that girl's arm in the seats in front of me (on a plane/bus/train)?...you can always call local police, state police, the FBI, Polaris....  
**JUST DO IT.**

What is the incidence of human trafficking in Massachusetts? There are no good (reliable) state statistics. However, MA has a much lower incidence than do some international border states, like Maine or Texas. That said, any human trafficking is too much.

There should be some human trafficking statistics out soon; these will include forced labor, as well as sex trade data. There are patterns that are recognizable when recruitment is going on. Yet, this occurs EVERYWHERE...cities and suburbs; underserved and wealthy communities.

Additional information will be posted on the ([www.AAUW-MA.org](http://www.AAUW-MA.org)) website, as it becomes available.