Stop Human Trafficking Before it Starts

How can we stop victimization before it happens? It turns out there are key risk factors that can increase an individual's chance of falling victim to trafficking. Let us take a look at these factors and also examine the key role technology plays in prevention.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING FAST FACTS

Roughly 1 in 8 individuals in forced labor are children*

6 million

6 million of those who are forced into forced labor in economic industries are women and girls*

*International Labor Organization, n.d.

- 20.9 million victims of forced labor globally*
- 4.5 million victims of forced sexual exploitation*
- $150-billion-a-year criminal industry*

*Shandro, 2016

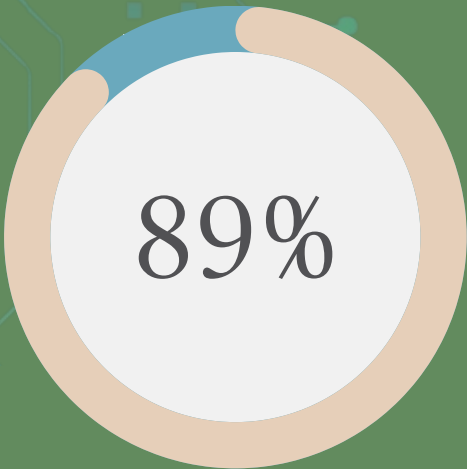# Human Trafficking and the Role of Technology in Prevention

As technology continues to evolve, understanding perpetrators' methodology becomes increasingly critical.

Companies like Google, Microsoft, and JP Morgan Chase have all implemented new technologies to detect perpetrators, monitor predatory chatrooms, and catch money laundering schemes. Federal funds have been allocated to develop these technologies and combat human trafficking. The problem is that measures remain primarily reactionary.

"Traffickers look for newer technologies to stay a step ahead of law enforcement."*

While investments have been made to combat trafficking once it has occurred, more prevention efforts must be made to stay on top of perpetrators. To create impactful prevention efforts, investments must be made into technologies that can detect victim demographics and implement outreach strategies before individuals fall into traps.

LOOKING AT THE DATA

89%

Worldwide, research suggests that 89% of pornographic web pages are produced in the United States*.

This begs the question, what role does the internet and lose policy play in human trafficking and the consumption of explicit material?

30%

At least 30% of human trafficking victims are recruited through the internet*.

Human trafficking takes many forms and it is critical to understand how individuals fall, victim, in order to create effective prevention measures.

*Dixon, 2013

FUTURE INITIVATES: THE UNITED STATES' ROLE IN PREVENTION

Moving forward, understanding the central role the United States plays in online trafficking is crucial in order to pass preventative policies. When illegally sourced online explicit content is largely produced within the United States' own borders, it is the duty of our lawmakers to implement preventative legislation.

PREVENTATIVE POLICIES: AREAS OF REFORM

TAKING A DEEPER LOOK INTO DOMAINS OF PREVENTION AND REFORM MEASURES

Fostercare Reform

Simply being placed within the foster care system is a risk factor for sex trafficking. This correlation is important to understand and address in order to decrease risk factors related to human trafficking, (Chohaney, 2016).

To decrease the likelihood of foster care involvement, improving foster care standards that strive for reunification with biological parents is critical. Implementing policies that focus on limiting foster care involvement for juveniles can aid in reducing human trafficking victimization.

Housing Rights Initiatives

Homelessness is another risk factor for sex trafficking and because of this, having access to safe and affordable housing decreases an individual's likelihood of falling victim to forms of trafficking, (Chohaney, 2016).

By implementing policies that invest in affordable housing for all, the prevalence of homelessness decreases. When individuals have access to safe living environments their likelihood of victimization will decrease as well.

School Improvement Programs

Akin to the school-to-prison pipeline, a similar pathway exists when examining the relationship between school performance and human trafficking victimization. Poor performance in school has been shown to be a risk factor, (Chohaney, 2016).

Because of this relationship, it should be a goal for policymakers invest to in legislation that aims to improve school standards and create better opportunities for struggling students. The efforts have the ability to decrease the likelihood of sex trafficking victimization for students.

Mental Health Investments

Personally having a mental health disorder or having a parent with a mental health disorder are both risk factors for sex trafficking involvement, (Chohaney, 2016).

This relationship between mental health and human trafficking is a cause for improvements in our current mental health systems and the implementation of health care for all. Advancements in both school mental health programs and affordable options are necessary to improve mental health outcomes overall.

Training Standards for Healthcare Professionals

"28% to 50% of trafficking victims in the United States encountered health care professionals while in captivity, but were not identified and recognized," (Grace, 2014).

While implementing standard training practices across healthcare fields does not necessarily catch trafficking before it begins, trained professionals are more equipped to recognize signs of trafficking among their clients and intervene before situations become more severe.

References

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