



BRIEF SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME DIALOGUE ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

11 October 2023

TOPIC: Trafficking in Persons Brief - in Follow Up to the 3-4 October Dialogue on TIP

Submitted by:

BRAVE Education Foundation - Fondation pour l'éducation BRAVE (BRAVE Education for Trafficking Prevention/BRAVE Education)

300, 1550 5 Street SW Calgary AB, Canada T2R 1K3

Observations from the Dialogue - Kelly Schuler, Executive Director of BRAVE Education and Team

We are grateful for this opportunity to submit a Brief regarding our observations, research and recommendations on preventing trafficking in persons, with thanks to the people making the UNODC, Dialogue on Trafficking in Persons possible. The purpose of this brief is to share information and also to encourage collaborations. BRAVE Education, its academic and community partners have been awarded the largest funding to date in the area of social innovation by Mitacs, funded by provincial and federal governments of Canada. This Brief serves to share preliminary findings from our five year plan and team members. We invite participation in this Community-based Participatory Action Research, Education and Collaborations.

Who Are We?

BRAVE Education is founded on the three pillars of research, education and collaboration. The BRAVE Team is committed to collaborating with community organizations, youth-serving leaders and policy-influencers with a vision to ensure every child in Canada has access to age-appropriate and culturally-relevant human trafficking prevention education. The embodiment of BRAVE's approach is 'nothing about us without us' and is foundational to BRAVE's success in serving communities to help protect children.

Introduction:

BRAVE Education submits this brief in the interest of all those affected by the crime of human trafficking in Canada and internationally, with particular attention to equity-seeking communities including Indigenous women and children, newcomer communities, gender diverse populations, and young boys, men, women, girls, and those in the 2SLGBTQ+ (Two-spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer plus) community in both rural and urban areas who are being, have been, or are at risk of being trafficked. In follow up to the UNODC Dialogue on the Trafficking in Persons held on October 3rd and October 4th, 2023, we offer the following insights and recommendations:

Human Trafficking is an increasingly pressing and prevalent issue within Canada and internationally. Given our nationwide work on prevention education, we highlight a variety of statistics and research in the Canadian context.

Further to a 2021 report by the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking, from 2019-2020, the vast majority of human trafficking victims/survivors in Canada were Canadian citizens; only 14 percent of victims/survivors were foreign nationals.¹ According to the Trafficking in Persons in Canada 2021 Report by Statistics Canada, there were 3,541 police-reported incidents of human trafficking in Canada between 2011 and 2021.² Given the complex and hidden nature of this crime, we acknowledge that this figure represents only a small portion of the human trafficking in Canada and particularly, only those incidents reported to police. According to the same report, 96% of these (police-reported) trafficked persons were women and girls.³ We know that women and girls are deeply affected by the crime of human trafficking in Canada.

An example of the hidden nature of the crime is that trafficking incidences of males are underreported and thus underrepresented in statistics. There is an inherent need to focus our efforts on raising healthy boys, conducting research on the victimization of young boys and men in sexual crimes, and healthy masculinity. This will be discussed throughout this brief.

Geographic Scope of the Issue

As a nation-wide organization with team members in eight provinces and territories in Canada, and with crucial prevention education available for every province and territory across the country, we bring special attention to the following statistics:

- In 2020, Statistics Canada identified Nova Scotia as having the highest per capita rate of human trafficking in the country: one case for every 100,000 people compared to the national average of 0.5 cases per 100,000.⁴

¹ Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking. (2021, February 22). *Human Trafficking Corridors in Canada - Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking*.

https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Human-Trafficking-Corridors-in-Canada-Report.pdf?mc_cid=4e78b00aa1&mc_eid=1827d2f4d4

² Conroy, S. ((2022, December 6). *Trafficking in Persons in Canada, 2021*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00010-eng.htm>

³ Conroy, S. ((2022, December 6). *Trafficking in Persons in Canada, 2021*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00010-eng.htm>

⁴ Conroy, S., & Sutton, D. (2022, June 9). *Trafficking in Persons in Canada, 2020*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada.

- Between 2011 and 2021, the large majority (83%) of human trafficking incidents were reported to police in census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and this was consistent in 2021 specifically (82%).⁵

Human trafficking is happening from coast to coast across Canada and the globe, and below we will highlight the importance of protecting young boys, men, women, girls and gender diverse peoples in Canada from human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Women and Girls

Anyone can be trafficked. But the evidence overwhelmingly suggests the biggest risk factors for sex trafficking are being a girl, and being young.⁶ In 2019-2020, 71% of all trafficking reported by the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking was sex trafficking.⁷ Of the police-reported incidents of human trafficking in 2021, 24% of trafficked persons were girls under the age of 18, and 45% of those trafficked were women aged 18-24.⁸ According to a 2014 Report by the Canadian Women's Foundation, not all trafficked girls come from unstable homes, troubled pasts or are entrenched in high-risk lifestyles.⁹ According to the RCMP, an increasing number come from reasonably stable homes and are in school or have jobs.¹⁰ The five risk factors for young women and girls being trafficked include simply being a girl as number one, alongside being poor, a history of violence and/or neglect, a history of child sexual abuse, and a low level of education. Others included a lack of employment opportunities, being a migrant or new migrant, low levels of social support, not having a masculine parental figure, being homeless, living in provincial care (the child welfare system) and being Indigenous.¹¹

Indigenous Women and Girls

Indigenous people are overrepresented in sex trafficking cases in Canada. Indigenous children are also overrepresented in the child welfare system. We know that 51% of girls who were (reported as being) trafficked in 2019-2020 had been or were currently in the child welfare system. 50% of trafficked girls were Indigenous, and 50% of trafficked women were Indigenous - yet Indigenous women and girls make up roughly 3% of the Canadian population.¹² It is important to recognize Canada's colonial history of violence and trauma against Indigenous women and girls. Colonial forces taught men (and others) that it was okay for women to be physically and sexually abused. Women were denied the opportunity to take up traditional roles and responsibilities; trans-generational family and community bonds were disrupted; and

5 Conroy, S., & Sutton, D. (2022, June 9). *Trafficking in Persons in Canada, 2020*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00010-eng.htm>

6 Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking. (2021, February 22). *Human Trafficking Corridors in Canada*.

https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Human-Trafficking-Corridors-in-Canada-Report.pdf?mc_cid=4e78b00aa1&mc_eid=1827d2f4d4

7 Conroy, S. ((2022, December 6). *Trafficking in Persons in Canada, 2021*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00010-eng.htm>

8 Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking. (2021, February 22). *Human Trafficking Corridors in Canada*.

https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Human-Trafficking-Corridors-in-Canada-Report.pdf?mc_cid=4e78b00aa1&mc_eid=1827d2f4d4

9 Conroy, S. ((2022, December 6). *Trafficking in Persons in Canada, 2021*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00010-eng.htm>

10 Canadian Women's Foundation. (2014). *"No More": Ending Sex Trafficking in Canada. Report of the National Task Force on the Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada*.

<https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/No-More-Ending-Sex-Trafficking-in-Canada.pdf>

11 Froutan, A. (2022, September 26). *Human Trafficking Trends in Canada (2019-2020)*. The Canadian Centre To End Human Trafficking.

<https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/human-trafficking-trends-in-canada-2019-2020/>

12 Conroy, S. ((2022, December 6). *Trafficking in Persons in Canada, 2021*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00010-eng.htm>

survivors of residential school suffered complex traumas, in addition to a host of related social ills that result from inequality, injustice, and oppression within social and political norms and institutions.¹³ On reserves, colonialism brought gendered violence and imposed European gender roles that devalued Indigenous women.¹⁴ The level of violence that Indigenous women and girls experience is a continuation of the colonial violence of the past that has not truly ceased but has taken a new form of dehumanizing and threatening Indigenous peoples.¹⁵ A 2015 Report from the Canadian Women's Foundation identified that the discriminatory systems, policies and practices of residential schools have had intergenerational effects that have led to family violence, childhood abuse, poverty, homelessness, lack of basic survival necessities, race and gender-based discrimination, lack of education and substance misuse - all factors that lead to increased risk of Indigenous women and girls being trafficked for sexual exploitation.¹⁶

Gender Diverse Peoples

Gender diverse peoples, including 2SLGBTQ+ (Two-spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer plus) populations in Canada are often not mentioned enough in the work to fight human trafficking across Canada. Approximately 75,000 people living in Canada are transgender or gender diverse, representing 0.24% of the Canadian population aged 15 and older.¹⁷ According to a report by the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking, from 2019-2020, 2% of victims/survivors [calling in to report human trafficking] were transgender women and men, and gender nonconforming individuals, a rate that significantly exceeds their relative share of the population (0.24%).¹⁸ According to Statistics Canada's 2017 Report on Gender-based Violence, transgender and gender diverse people were more likely than cisgender people to have experienced online harassment in the year preceding the survey (42% versus 16%).¹⁹ In a recent study on sex buyers attitudes as represented on online review boards, research shows that there is a culture amongst buyers that normalizes transphobic views.²⁰ BRAVE Education highlights the importance of recognizing gender diverse peoples in all research on human trafficking and recognizes that they are often overlooked in current research studies. According to an article by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, gender diverse and transgendered people around the world are subjected to high levels of violence and discrimination, which create marginalization, exclusion, human rights violations, stigma, harassment, prejudice and particularly, gender-based violence. Many gender diverse peoples are rejected by their families and communities, pushed out onto the streets, denied access to employment, face violence in health care, face forced sterilization, and other discriminatory practices.²¹ All of the above can increase the likelihood of an individual being trafficked, especially when a lack of community and resources prevents an individual from speaking out about any potentially dangerous situations they may be facing. If an individual feels a lack of a sense of belonging, this creates target factors that traffickers prey on. Further, a report by Status of Women Canada stated that

13 "No more" Ending sex-trafficking in Canada: report of the National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada. Canadian Women's Foundation, 2015.

14 RCMP, Project Safekeeping: Domestic Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation in Canada, 2013, 14

15 "No more" Ending sex-trafficking in Canada: report of the National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada. Canadian Women's Foundation, 2015.

16 "No more" Ending sex-trafficking in Canada: report of the National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada. Canadian Women's Foundation, 2015.

17 Froutan, A. (2022, September 26). *Human Trafficking Trends in Canada (2019-2020)*. The Canadian Centre To End Human Trafficking.

<https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/human-trafficking-trends-in-canada-2019-2020/>

18 Hargreaves, Allison. "*Violence against indigenous women: literature, activism, resistance.*" Wilfred Laurier Press, 2017. Page 12.

19 Snyder, Emily, Napoleon, Val and Borrows, John. "*Gender and Violence: Drawing on Indigenous Legal Resources.*" UBC Law Review, Volume 48, Number 2, July 2015. Page 609.

20 Leung, R., & Gray-Beerman, M. . (2023). Sex buyers' attitudes: A study of Toronto's online "Escort Review Board". *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 8(1), 18–22.

<https://doi.org/10.35502/jeswb.272>

21 Johnson, Cassidy. "*Willing Victims: The Prevalence of Violence and Public Discourse Against Indigenous Women and Girls.*" *Invoke*, Volume 5, 2020. Page 28.

one of the key steps in moving forward in the fight against gender-based violence was promoting a justice system that is safe, inclusive and anti-oppressive, addressing fears related to reporting violence to police.²² It is vital that frontline service providers from all sectors - healthcare, law enforcement, social services and many more - receive adequate training to provide a safe space for gender diverse populations to report the violence they experience, including sex trafficking.

Boys and Men - Ena Lucia Mariaca Pacheco

Ena Lucia Mariaca Pacheco is a human security expert, specialized in child sexual abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. She is a researcher, educator, and expert in human trafficking with BRAVE Education. She has two bachelor's degrees from the University of Ottawa, Canada, and a master's degree in human security from Royal Roads University, Canada. For over a decade, she has worked with the Government of Canada, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, law enforcement, and survivors on research, policy writing, human rights advocacy work, and global projects focused on supporting victims and survivors. Ena Lucia's research was used to support the Canadian Bill S-224, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Trafficking in Persons) before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, presented by BRAVE Education. She has recently published research on male exploitation and familial trafficking which provides great insight into the realities of sexual exploitation against young boys and men.

Human trafficking and exploitation can affect anyone, not just women and girls. Child sexual abuse and exploitation of boys has been mostly ignored and deliberately unacknowledged by society²³. Child sexual exploitation through human trafficking has focused primarily on female victimization and male perpetration²⁴. According to the research human trafficking has a gender-bias, which has been reinforced by the social narrative that males are perpetrators and females are victims thus, creating preconceptions against males that are sexually victimized, and a socially established 'blinder' for female perpetrators that are abusers, traffickers, and buyers²⁵.

According to Ena Lucia's research "The Needs and Stories of Male Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Human Trafficking" (2022), there can be several reasons why men or boys may be hesitant to seek support after being trafficked or exploited. Societal expectations place emphasis on men being strong and tough, and to suppress their emotions, therefore, many men and boys may feel pressure to not show fear, vulnerability, weakness, or failure. They may believe that expressing fear or vulnerability is not productive or helpful and may choose to internalize their emotions to maintain a sense of control, or to try to forget about their trauma. Male victims may experience feeling shame, embarrassment, judgment, or stigmatization if they show that they are fearful or unable to protect themselves from their male or female perpetrator. The male participants in her study reported having difficulty disclosing their exploitation to frontline professionals as disclosing made them feel paralyzed and unable to speak about their experience, especially if they thought they would not be believed. It is vital to listen to male survivors in order to better support them, to learn from them and to understand the different forms of human trafficking modus operandi. Ethical and trauma-informed survivor data is

22 Women and Gender Equality Canada (2022, February 7). *What is gender-based violence?*

<https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-violence/about-gender-based-violence.html#trans>

23 Desai, N. (2001). See the Evil - Tourism related Paedophilia in Goa. Mumbai: Vikas Adhyayan Kendra. p.4 ; Mariaca Pacheco, E. L. (2022). The needs and stories of male survivors of child sexual abuse, exploitation and human trafficking. Royal Roads University . <https://vuirrspace.ca/handle/10613/26077> p.25

24 Mariaca Pacheco, E. L. (2022); Mitchell, K., Moynihan, M., Pitcher, C., Francis, A., English, A., & Saewyc, E. (2017). Rethinking research on sexual exploitation of boys: Methodological challenges and recommendations to optimize future knowledge generation. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 66, 142–151. <https://bit.ly/3xMpCHI> ; Nasjleti, M. (1980). Suffering in silence: The male incest victim. *Child Welfare*, 59(5), 269–279. <https://bit.ly/3qvCmOj> ; Procopio, S. (2018). Big boys don't cry: the sexual victimization of males. Human Trafficking Task Force.

25 Mariaca Pacheco, E. L. (2022), p.26.

critical to inform anti-trafficking professionals in their fight against human trafficking and child sexual exploitation²⁶.

The sexual exploitation and trafficking of boys is still misunderstood by society²⁷ and underreported²⁸, and demands a different approach that is tailored to their specific needs. For example, Ena Lucia's research show similarities with the data from the International Organization for Migration and Polaris in the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative, as both show that the largest number of boys exploited is below the age of eleven²⁹. This underscores the need to advance our understanding of male child sexual exploitation and how service providers may better identify, understand and support male victims, particularly those victimized by their families.

Interfamilial Trafficking

Additionally, according to Ena Lucia, there is a need to further understand the growing trend of Intrafamilial exploitation and trafficking; this is when the child is abused, exploited, and trafficked by family members. Due to close access to the child from birth, grooming using trauma bonds begins at infancy, causing the child to think of themselves as objects to be used, and trauma-bound to their exploiters. In interviews conducted by Ena Lucia and documented in "She was willing to send me there: Intrafamilial child sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking of boys"³⁰ Ena Lucia was told by numerous survivors of the barriers to disclosure, the visual indicators of abuse and exploitation that they portrayed, as well as perpetrator profiles of those who were trafficking them, with the most common being the boy victim's own mother, as their sexual abuser and traffickers. These data points disrupt traditional victimization and perpetration paradigms and must be considered when assessing a case of child sexual exploitation through trafficking³¹.

Therefore, it is important to approach all anti-human trafficking efforts with empathy and understanding, recognizing that other responses to trauma are shaped by a complex interplay of personal, cultural, and societal factors which are only made more difficult if the individual is already facing various adverse childhood experiences. In addition to being aware of our own personal biases, we need to also be aware of the impact of trauma, dissociation, and complex post trauma stress disorder which many victims face.

There have been too many victims that have not been properly assisted or believed, and it is time for the anti-trafficking movement to be a non-gendered issue - where anyone can be a victim, and anyone can be a perpetrator. In order to better support victims and survivors of any gender, ethnicity, age, or religion, we must actively listen and show kindness, regardless of our own personal ideologies or beliefs.

Truth and Reconciliation: Calls to Action and Calls to Justice

BRAVE Education works together with Indigenous community leaders and survivors of sex trafficking who are Indigenous. More needs to be done by the Provincial, Territorial and Federal Governments of Canada. We highlight the importance of The Truth and Reconciliation Report and Calls to Action, which

26 Mariaca Pacheco, E. L. (2022).

27 McNaughton Nicholls, C., Harvey, S., & Paskell, C. (2014). Gendered perceptions: What professionals say about the sexual exploitation of boys and young men in the UK. *Essex*. pp.32-33.

28 Cockbain, E., Ashby, M., & Brayley, H. (2017). Immaterial boys? A large-scale exploration of gender-based differences in child sexual exploitation service users. *Sexual Abuse*, 29(7),

658-684. <https://bit.ly/3zRhHKX>. P.661 ; Hill, L. & Diaz, C. (2021). An exploration of how gender stereotypes influence how practitioners identify and respond to victims (or those at risk) of

child sexual exploitation. *Child & Family Social Work*, 26(4), 642-651. <https://bit.ly/3tytIXi> p.664 ; Hlavka, H. R. (2017). Speaking of stigma and the silence of shame: Young men and sexual

victimization. *Men and Masculinities*. SAGE Publications, 20(4), 482-505. <https://bit.ly/3xr3SzN> p.486.

29 CTDC. (2022) Men and boys trafficked into sexual exploitation. <https://bit.ly/3mGMEJZ> ; Mariaca Pacheco, E. L. (2022) pp.92-93.

30 Mariaca Pacheco, E. L., Buenaventura, A. E., Miles, G. M. (2023). "She was willing to send me there": Intrafamilial child sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking of boys. *Child Abuse &*

Neglect. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213422003830?via%3Dihub>

31 Mariaca Pacheco, E. L., Buenaventura, A. E., Miles, G. M. (2023) p. 10.

was preceded by UNDRIP. True reconciliation requires all 94 Calls to Action under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (The TRC) to be fulfilled in a timely manner. We note that six of the 94 Calls to Action are related to education. Specifically, Call to Action number seven seeks to eliminate educational and employment gaps; Call to Action number eight seeks to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding between on-reserve and off-reserve students; Call to Action number nine asks for the Federal Government to publish annual reports on education funding and educational and income attainments; Call to Action number ten seeks the drafting of new Aboriginal education legislation; and Call to Action number twelve asks the Federal Government to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs. We note that Call to Action number nine has not yet been started while Calls to Action numbers seven, eight, ten and twelve are in progress with projects underway. BRAVE asks that the UNODC include these Calls to Action in future research studies and propose solutions for how to accelerate these projects to ensure they are completed in a timely manner.³²

Importance of Research

BRAVE recognizes and appreciates the efforts put forth by all levels of Government in the fight against human trafficking in Canada. In 2019, the Government of Canada introduced its National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking, supported by \$75 million in funding. This includes dedicated funding to create and maintain the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline.³³ The Canadian Human Trafficking hotline and subsequently, the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking provide vital services to victims/survivors of human trafficking, and their annual reports help inform service providers, organizations and coalitions on the current state of human trafficking in communities across Canada. BRAVE Education supports all research on the state of human trafficking in Canada. However, we believe that more research is needed on the risk factors of young boys and men, women, girls and particularly, gender diverse peoples in Canada as well as Indigenous women and children and newcomer communities. BRAVE Education urges the Canadian government to support conducting more research and to provide insights on any gaps in literature and research through the study they are currently conducting so that such research can be conducted in the future. This research must include tangible steps and action items for how to work towards prevention and eradication of human trafficking in all forms.

Importance of Intersectional, Trauma-Informed and Survivor-Led Responses

BRAVE Education seeks to highlight the importance of intersectional, trauma-informed and survivor-led responses/insights to sex trafficking against young boys, men, women, girls and gender diverse peoples. We believe that the experiences of survivors are invaluable and can help protect our youth from being trafficked and others from engaging as exploiters. We urge the UNODC to amplify survivors' voices, and to approach all research, interviews, and reporting with a trauma-informed approach.

Observations from the Dialogue - Mikhaela Gray-Beerman

Mikhaela Gray-Beerman is a PhD student in the Social and Political Thought Program at York University, where her research focuses on sex trafficking in Canada. Mikhaela is the host and community

³² Froutan, A. (2022, September 26). *Human Trafficking Trends in Canada (2019-2020)*. The Canadian Centre To End Human Trafficking.

<https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/human-trafficking-trends-in-canada-2019-2020/>

³³ Women and Gender Equality Canada (2022, February 7). *What is gender-based violence?* <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-violence/about-gender-based-violence.html#trans>

producer of a RogersTV television program and podcast on human trafficking called Freedom Fighters: Code. She currently serves on the advisory team for Defend Dignity, a nationwide charity focused on ending sexual exploitation in Canada, and she serves on the Board of Bridgenorth, a survivor-led organization. Mikhaela is a researcher at BRAVE Education for Trafficking Prevention. She is the Development Associate at Dance Awareness: No Child Exploited. Mikhaela conducted her Master of Education thesis research on the trafficking of women and girls in West Bengal, India. Mikhaela is published in the Journal for Teaching & Learning, the Journal of Community Safety & Well-being, and the University of Toronto Press.

As I reflect on the perspectives that have been included in this dialogue I ask: whose voices are missing?

Researcher Helmut Sax, amongst others, shared in their remarks that we need to seek the input of children and integrate their perspectives related to the trafficking of children. Where is the representation of youth voices?

As we look at root causes and historical contexts that have shaped the issue of human trafficking globally, colonialism continues to impact and fuel the notion of commodifying a human body. In Canada, like many other countries, Indigenous peoples are overrepresented in situations of trafficking. Where are the decolonized and de-centered perspectives on addressing this issue?

Comments have been made throughout the sessions on the need for the voices of people who have experienced trafficking to be engaged in this dialogue. I am grateful for several individuals who have actively participated in the online chat discussion and Q&A who identify as survivors, but I have wondered why there has not been more dialogue centered and led from the perspective of those who have experienced trafficking. I hope that one day it will be the voices of trafficked persons who will be leading the discussion in this space.

During October 3rd's preparatory session, a recommendation was made to strategically invite groups of individuals, specifically those who have experienced trafficking, as the current self-nomination process may limit who is aware of how, where, and when to participate. BRAVE Education supports this recommendation and would ask folks to continue to consider the following questions: how can we make engagement in this dialogue a more equitable, inclusive, and accessible process? How can we continue to think about whose voice is missing from this dialogue and remove barriers to their participation?

Lastly, as a researcher and doctoral student with a decade of experience working and volunteering with various civil society groups to address human trafficking, there continues to be a gap between academic institutions, research, and non-profit organizations. Human trafficking is a complex issue, where systems of oppression continue to exploit and degrade humans every day at an increasing level. How can bridges be built between academia and non-profit organizations to mobilize knowledge, support empirical evidence, and conduct interdisciplinary evidence-informed research from this group of global actors? Collaboratively addressing this question would help to prevent and disrupt the trafficking of persons.

Observations from Participating in the Dialogue - Holly Wood

Holly Wood is a Masters of Legal Studies student at Carleton University, currently writing her MA Thesis on police responses to sex trafficking and sex work in Ontario, Canada. Holly is a researcher and educator with BRAVE Education. She is also the Vice Chair of the Ottawa Coalition to End Human

Trafficking, where she also Chairs the Advocacy Committee. Holly has experience with criminal justice system responses to sex trafficking in Canada, particularly within police institutions and from the perspective of criminal defence lawyers. Holly has also worked with women who were criminalized as a result of being trafficked, and has worked closely with youth in Ontario who were trafficked as a result of being in the child welfare system. Holly has worked in nonprofit and government spaces, and has extensive experience advising on and drafting legislation in Canada.

Throughout the UNODC Dialogue on Trafficking in Persons, several issues came to the forefront that I wish to highlight and provide insight on within the Canadian context: 1) youth in the child welfare system, 2) policy and legislation that aims to prevent and end human trafficking in Canada, 3) law enforcement approaches to fighting human trafficking, and 4) terminology used when referring to trafficked persons.

1. Youth in the Child Welfare System

In Canada, the child welfare system continues to see an increase in at-risk and trafficked youth. From my previous work and research in and around the child welfare system, Canada's child welfare system is lacking the foundation to prevent trafficking and provide wrap-around support and services for youth in care and those transitioning out of it. While I commend the efforts of provincial ministries across Canada in their approaches in identifying and responding to child welfare youth who are at risk of or actively being trafficked, more can be done in this regard. First and foremost, youth in the child welfare system oftentimes become a number in a database that is later translated into a statistic for annual reports. While it is important to record this data, more action needs to be taken to aid child welfare youth who are at risk of or actively being trafficked. Provincial ministries must go beyond collecting data and labeling a child as "at-risk" in their computer system. Once a child in care has been identified as 'at-risk' or 'actively being trafficked', tangible action should be taken. This must include providing further resources and funding to child welfare agencies across Canada. In particular, resources in the following areas are needed: prevention education, substance use counseling, mental health counseling, financial literacy education, safe housing options for those transitioning out of care, employment supports, secondary and post-secondary education supports, and a community of practice guideline that highlights the resources available in a youth's community for when they eventually age out of care.

There is also an inherent need for increased funding for all agencies that work with youth in the child welfare system. This may include but is not limited to: funding for extracurricular activities, funding for human trafficking-specific programming for agency staff, and funding for other initiatives that help their youth clients as they transition into adulthood. This funding must be in place consistently and renewed in a timely manner to prevent gaps in care and services.

Finally, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many child welfare agencies such as foster care and group homes experienced an influx of youth that they were unable to provide a bed and shelter for. It is therefore important to provide additional funding to build more safe homes in communities nationwide for youth in care. Specifically, these homes must be in communities that are safe and located near community resources such as community centers (ie YMCA), gyms, sports/activity centers, and other places where youth can connect with community and engage in meaningful skills-building programming (ie sports, recreation, mentorship etc.) This cannot come in the form of hotel rooms, as we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many youth in care were transferred to hotels, where they were at increased risk of

being trafficked, or where many were actively being trafficked. This is unacceptable. Furthermore, I draw attention to the need for more dynamic planning for youth transitioning out of care. Again, this must include adequate financial literacy training so that youth in care know how to manage money once they age out of care; access to further education (ie post-secondary school) and education supports; assistance with employment opportunities, including life skills training and other necessary education to improve access to gainful employment opportunities once out of care; and finally, additional funding and resources focused on providing safe housing opportunities for child welfare youth as they transition into adulthood.

2. Legislation and Policy

Canada's legal approaches to fighting human trafficking are growing, but there is still much work to do in this area. I draw attention to the need for criminal record expungement for trafficking survivors who were criminalized as a result of being trafficked; in-depth research into why 52% of all human trafficking cases in Canada end in lesser charges (and subsequent legislation that seeks to remedy this); more human trafficking-specific training for all Criminal Justice System actors; the implementation of the National Survivor Advisory Committee (as per the National Human Trafficking Strategy); nationwide policy on mandatory human trafficking prevention education in every school and community across Canada; and legislation that eases the burden for trafficked persons who seek to proceed with criminal charges against their traffickers. While this is only a short list of some initiatives that should be implemented, there is, in general, an increased need to actively review, amend and introduce provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada that focus on increasing disclosures and convictions.

3. Law Enforcement Approaches to Fighting Human Trafficking

Canada has seen an increase in arrests and convictions of human traffickers in the realm of law enforcement, but research suggests that more steps can be taken to improve law enforcement responses. This would include increased training for law enforcement; more CARE (Children at Risk of Exploitation) Teams across Canada (comprised of law enforcement, indigenous child support workers, and specialized child support workers who are trained in identifying and responding to potential and active trafficking situations; Increased funding for all law enforcement services nationwide, specifically within human trafficking departments; and increased collaboration across all provinces and communities. Currently, many law enforcement agencies with human trafficking departments are in competition with one another for adequate funding and resources. This creates an environment where law enforcement agencies are working in silos. It is important to increase knowledge-sharing and collaborative efforts on a national scale so that all law enforcement agencies are working together.

4. Terminology for Trafficked Persons

Throughout the dialogue, there was debate about the terminology used when referring to trafficked persons. Research suggests that the terms "survivor", "victim", "victim-survivor" etc. all have a place in the work we do, however, and as noted by my colleague Mikhaela Gray-Beerman, if we are to use any of the above terminology, we must do so using a trauma-informed and survivor-led response. When using any of the above terminology, it is important to consider a trafficked person's identity. For instance, "victim" can be validating for some trafficked persons, and "survivor" can be validating for others. It is important to approach terminology with a trafficked person's autonomy at the heart of what we do. We

cannot place trafficked persons on a timeline, where they are a “victim” one day and a “survivor” upon exiting, for example. A trafficked person's healing journey is theirs and theirs alone, and I do not believe that agencies and organizations have a place in deciding what a trafficked person should be referred to - that is a choice that a trafficked person must make on their own timeline. That being said, it is important to engage and amplify trafficked persons' voices to ensure that the terminology used on paper or in practice is terminology that they chose and are comfortable with. To do so, you must have trafficked persons' voices at the centre of everything you do as a country or as an organization, and I therefore highlight the importance of not taking away a trafficked person's choice to identify with certain terminology as they see fit. We must also recognize that as trafficked persons heal, the terminology they choose to identify with may change – and we must be willing to change our own language as they grow throughout their healing journey.

Importance of Prevention Education

BRAVE Education uses an upstream approach in the fight against human trafficking. As such, we stress the importance of age-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and interactive prevention education for children and youth of all ages, especially prior to the average age of recruitment in Canada of 12-14 years old. This includes addressing vulnerabilities in inspiring and creative ways. We also advocate for professional development education for youth-serving caregivers including: health service providers, educators, support staff, law enforcement, hospitality staff and others who may unknowingly come in contact with incidents of human trafficking and provide a safety net of support for youth. We commend the Province of Ontario for their recent anti-trafficking protocol and subsequent policy/memorandum that seeks to ensure that every child in Ontario has access to human trafficking prevention education in the Province.³⁴

Recommendations:

Human trafficking in Canada is a growing issue that needs to be addressed from all sectors - political, legal, economic and social. In line with BRAVE Education's three pillars (Research, Education and Collaboration), we offer the following recommendations:

RESEARCH

- BRAVE Education recommends increased research on how to effectively prevent sexual exploitation in Canada, including human trafficking prevention education.
- BRAVE recommends increased research on the human trafficking/sexual exploitation of gender-diverse populations and young boys and men that is survivor-informed, trauma-informed, and intersectional in approach.³⁵

EDUCATION

³⁴ Government of Ontario. (2021, July 6). *Ontario Acts to Protect Students from Sex Trafficking*. Ontario newsroom. Retrieved April 8, 2023, from <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000467/ontario-acts-to-protect-students-from-sex-trafficking>

³⁵ Mariaca Pacheco, E. L. (2022); Mitchell, K., Moynihan, M., Pitcher, C., Francis, A., English, A., & Saewyc, E. (2017). Rethinking research on sexual exploitation of boys: Methodological challenges and recommendations to optimize future knowledge generation. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 66, 142–151. <https://bit.ly/3xMpCHJ> ; Nasjleti, M. (1980). Suffering in silence: The male incest victim. *Child Welfare*, 59(5), 269–279. <https://bit.ly/3qvCmQj> ; Procopio, S. (2018). Big boys don't cry: the sexual victimization of males. Human Trafficking Task Force.

- BRAVE Education recommends increased funding for human trafficking prevention education across Canada including healthy relationship and strength-based training to increase protective factors for Grades K-12
- BRAVE Education recommends education for caregiver adults and community leaders who form their community network of support.
- BRAVE recommends increased access to professional development education for all caregivers and frontline professionals, including service providers who interact with children, youth and individuals. The purpose of this training should be to equip them to form safety nets for children and youth, prevent them from being recruited into sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, and advise them on how to respond to disclosures within the context of their legal framework. Training should be provided to many stakeholders including, but not limited to, coaches, educators, health care workers, youth leaders, hospitality staff, bus drivers, law enforcement etc..

COLLABORATION

- BRAVE Education recommends increased multi-disciplinary collaborations from all sectors to share knowledge on prevention strategies amongst frontline staff, including health professionals, educators, social workers, service providers, and other organizations that support trafficked persons. It is suggested that a knowledge hub be developed to share rapidly changing dynamic and evolving knowledge and data for prevention purposes.
- BRAVE recommends more collaborative efforts from law enforcement and social service agencies to handle disclosures with trauma-informed wrap-around care, to prevent further exploitation and to end human trafficking across Canada.
- BRAVE recommends mapping of the existing primary prevention education.
- BRAVE recommends increased resources and funding for prevention education, inclusive of all genders, delivered from a strengths-based approach, to encourage all youth to become anti-trafficking advocates. Delivering programming in the right way can help to shift to a new cultural and social norm, where children grow up believing it is unacceptable to buy and sell people. It is crucial to address the demand which fuels the sex industry, as buyers of sex represent the majority of participants in sex trafficking.
- BRAVE is seeking collaborations and partnerships to bring the above findings and recommendations to fruition as outlined in our Mitacs-funded plan. More information is available upon request of: Kelly.Schuler@BRAVEeducation.org

Thank you for this opportunity to share and we look forward to continued collaboration to develop innovative and effective solutions to combat human trafficking on a global scale, together.