

Presentation by Father-Con with the WFWP Delegation
UNODC Constructive Dialogue on Human Trafficking
October 4, 2023, UN Vienna

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Thank you Mr chair and to the WFWP for inclusion in their delegation for this critically important conference.

What I have found in 12 years working on prevention strategies of human trafficking both of the supply and demand - I have been deeply impacted by the ease with which traffickers and predators can win sway over the hearts and minds of children through social media and online access to our homes 24 hours a day every day.

Children are responding to the deceptions and manipulation of exploiters often within hours or days of meeting in the bedrooms and livingrooms of their homes online. What has caused this lack of trust by children of their parents enabling sons and daughters to be lured from home to engage as victim or buyers? Increasingly the answer to that question is not having an engaged and intentionally present father. Father absence leads to a vulnerability to predators, and an anger that leads to an entitled justification to join in exploitation. Added to that there is the ubiquitous presence of hard core, violent and racist pornography. Very disturbing is that porn now is the source of "sexexpectations" of our youth - what they should expect through sex and relationships. We have found educating both parents and young people to navigate the brain impact and relationship expectation damage done by pornography has assisted both fathers and children to be safer in their online life and maintain an open dialog. The Human Trafficking Institute in its US Federal Human Trafficking Report 2021, 83% of active 2020 sex trafficking cases involved online solicitation. Cyber safety training has disrupted a number of attempts by traffickers to create secret relationships with children online.

When we educate fathers about their necessary role in the lives of children - incorporating human trafficking threats to already established father-centered support organizations - we enable children to thrive safely in a world of 21st century threats. Additionally, if we initiate programs that incentivize young boys to aspire to fatherhood and the unique human experience that fatherhood provides, while providing resources to support their success as fathers, we will choke off much of the available supply of children and the vulnerable to traffickers.

Data accumulated over the past 40 years on father absence shocks with its numbers, children are 5 times as likely to live in poverty, 20 times as likely to be incarcerated, more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior, drop out of school, all of which the United Nations has seen worthy of inclusion in the sustainable impact goals. Father engagement has been found to be the single greatest transmitter of empathy development in both boys and girls by several long studies and empathy directly influences behavior that leads to exploiting others and other criminal activities.

When we invest in father encouragement, education and incentivisation to remain active in the lives of their children, providing access to resources - we provide adult fathers to become positive influences specifically in the prevention of vulnerability to being exploited - we see the lies of traffickers falling on deaf ears as our children seek to become trustworthy and parents maintain intentional presence that benefits not only their families but also communities. We also

find as we inform, inspire and equip fathers and future fathers in their role, their spouses and partners benefit in numerous ways as well.

Thank you for your consideration to prioritize father education and support for the safety of those most vulnerable to the threats posed by human traffickers.