

“Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings: Challenges and Solutions”

OSCE, UNODC and the Government of Lithuania conference

25-26 October, Vilnius

Klara Skrivankova

Trafficking Programme Coordinator

Anti-Slavery International

Ladies and Gentlemen:,

Good afternoon. Let me start by thanking the organisers for inviting me to this event and giving me the opportunity to address you.

In the past ten years, a number of prevention campaigns was carried out in Europe. In fact, prevention was often considered to be THE solution to trafficking, lots of money, time and efforts was invested into production of materials.

However, as we know, the impact of prevention activities is very difficult to measure. The number of produced and/or distributed materials is often the only information to be found in evaluation protocols. Albeit, many professionals involved as well as international organisations tend to agree that these campaigns failed to achieve desired aims as their focus was predominantly on the symptoms of trafficking as opposed to addressing the root causes of the problem and underlying structural factors.

For instance, a UNICEF report published in 2006 showed a general non-effectiveness of prevention strategies against child trafficking. “The report found that awareness-raising campaigns are often way off mark, are unfocussed.]and not systematic. Some carry stereotypical images of men lurking in the shadows when traffickers are often family or friends; others ignore trafficking for purposes other than sexual exploitation, for example domestic work, begging or stealing; that most messages are tailored to adults and

therefore provide little or no information on how children might protect themselves, who to turn to, or where to go for help.”¹

Testing campaigns and materials on the target groups and involving trafficked persons in their production remains scarce experiments. The benefit of such testing brought about not only very different formulation on messages, but clinicians also confirmed that such participatory techniques have value as therapeutic methods.

From the number of recommendations that were elaborated became clear that what we need is a *new generation of prevention strategies*. Strategies that strive to learn a lesson of the ten years of the first generation of prevention measures and strategies that look for inspiration elsewhere, such as in the area of victimology, participatory empowerment as well as crime prevention. The overall perspective is to shift to more targeted responses that function in both pro-active and re-active manner at the same time, thus moving from sole focus on the symptoms to dealing with the underlying causes of trafficking.

Some of the recommendations on which the new generation of prevention strategies should build include:

- ILO suggests that prevention should be seen from the perspective of migration, socio-economic rights and labour market.
- Anti- Slavery International suggest participatory approach to development of prevention measures, including target groups and trafficked persons in the process.
- A multi-stakeholder international workshop in convened in Thailand in 2006 recommended:
 1. Data and key field information from the trafficked persons needs to be collected to ascertain who the audience for prevention is. Most urgent hubs and hotspots should be identified.

¹ *Action to Prevent Child Trafficking in South Eastern Europe – A Preliminary Assessment*. UNICEF, 2006

2. Exploitation should be prevented where it happens, through enhancing safe legal migration channels and by provision of information to migrants who might be potential victims of trafficking at points of origin and destination
 3. Trafficking occurs against a background of social tolerance and exploitation. Attitudes of the communities and the social contexts that permit exploitative treatment of migrants.
 4. Enforcement of robust measures to confiscate assets to reduce the profits of traffickers and also to influence consumer and corporate behaviour.
 5. Traffickers and exploitative employers are opportunistic, creative and flexible. Any effective prevention strategy needs to be too.
- Several months ago, the Council of Europe organised a seminar in Strasbourg that focused on misuse of internet for the recruitment of trafficked persons. This seminar was one of the examples of new approach that examined how MIT can be utilised in an innovative and flexible way to channel preventative messages utilising gateways where traffickers recruit on-line. In that sense it is important to gather information about recruitment via internet from key places of origin.

Traffickers are in chat-rooms as well as on the social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace.

New generation prevention strategy combines focus on the immediate problem, i.e. the situation of exploitation = reactive measures, with a focus on the root causes = pro-active and reactive measures. It should be an end-to-end comprehensive concept that brings together prevention, prosecution and protection aspects that relate to, impact on and reinforce prevention endeavours. Innovation in methods and measures applied flexibly in adjusting to changes in trends and patterns based on research, information and involvement of trafficked persons and use of modern information technologies make such a strategy more effective in preventing of exploitation through trafficking from occurring. Impact assessment tools and mechanisms to evaluate effectiveness should be an intrinsic part of such a strategy.

Many disciplines work according to the motto think globally, act locally. I believe this rule would be very useful to internalise for new prevention strategies. While addressing a global problem, specificity is a prerequisite of effectiveness. The measures and activities need to address the local reality or needs of a given target group. What works in one country or community might not be completely replicable elsewhere. Furthermore, the aspect of access to information and obstacles to access information must be taken into account. Prevention programmes should be locally oriented in order to reach also people outside of bigger towns, in remote areas where it might be difficult to gain information.

Focus on demand established itself as an intrinsic part of the new prevention vocabulary. While I think it is important to include the aspects of demand in prevention strategies, I would discourage from doing so hastily at any costs. Adverse effects created through messages and language that was not based on thorough research and assessment might result in closing channels for communication.

Question that we have to ask ourselves at the outset is: What demand, or rather demand for what do we want to tackle? In general demand that is considered to be underlying cause of trafficking is the demand for services or products created by trafficked persons. Usually, we speak about demand for sexual services and demand for cheap labour driven by the demand for cheap goods and services. Here again, in-depth research is needed to fully understand and describe the problem of demand. In the area of sex business, alternative approaches need to be applied in the varying setting, as there are countries where prostitution is abolished and countries that regulate the offer of sexual services. Tackling demand from the preventative perspective requires also the process be carried out at three stages, on primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Research is needed to gain understanding of the demand can be further utilised for awareness raising.

Furthermore, demand is not an isolated phenomenon that is attached only to particular groups of people that we can easily depict. It is a social phenomena, connected to societal

evolution, culture, education and behaviour of people. In that sense, each one of us plays their roles in it.

Elaine Pearson (Pearson, Human Trafficking: Redefining Demand. ILO, 2005) defines demand as a desire or preference by people for a particular kind of person or service.

There are three levels of demand in the context of trafficking:

- Employer demand (employers, owners, managers or subcontractors)
- Consumer demand (clients (sex industry)), corporate buyers (manufacturing), household members (domestic work.)
- Third parties involved in the process (recruiters, agents, transporters and those who participate knowingly in human trafficking at any stage of the process).

The demand is demonstrated in practice in any of these or by their combination. In order to be able to reduce such demand, we need to gather knowledge and understanding of all the three levels and find an answer to the question why the demand is met by trafficked persons. Looking at all these factors together then refers to demand side or destination factors, which mean both the demand per se plus environment that creates or influences demand: the economic, cultural, social, legal and policy factors affecting employers, consumers and third parties.

While it is clear that the economic profit is one of the main reasons why traffickers turn to exploitation of women, men and children, it is not the sole reason. They are only able to exploit because they can get away with such activities, preying on disadvantaged and vulnerable situation of migrants. Studies have shown that employers prefer migrant workers because they are less willing to speak out for labour rights while accepting low wages in a demanding work environment.

To raise awareness and to address demand, sensitisation and motivation proved to be useful instruments. Rather than repeating myself about the various aspects of strategy development, I would mention examples of projects tackling the demand side. In several countries, such as Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands or the Czech Republic,

campaigns have been carried out to sensitise and inform clients of sex-workers about trafficking in human being. As we speak, a campaign is underway in the Czech Republic organised by IOM, La Strada and the Czech police. Use of hot-lines, internet and provision of indicators for recognising trafficked women proved to be a good way how to get clients involved in assistance to trafficked women. In terms of tackling demand for cheap labour (cheap goods) connected to forced labour other than sexual exploitation, little best practice is available so far. One practical example is the setting up of a Rugmark brand. A product with this brand gives customers assurance that no illegal child labour was used in its production.

Like in the prevention of trafficking in general, also when tackling demand it is key to apply human-rights and non-discriminatory approach. Consumers and customers should not be condemned for their ignorance. Rather we should strive to sensitise them, motivate them and empower them to take action and offer possibilities how they can play an active role in preventing and combating trafficking. Initiatives such as Fair and Ethical Trading can serve as conduits in enhancing responsible corporate and consumer behaviour that takes into account the whole of supply chains.

In conclusions I would like to bring up a suggestion for debate – should not we try to redefine demand as use the expression destination factors instead? I believe this might be helpful to concentrate our focus on the root causes of trafficking