

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS: INFORMATION AS PREVENTION

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Good morning, my name is Jyothi Kanics and I am the Adviser on Anti-Trafficking Issues at the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

I would like to thank the conference organizers for their initiative to address the problem of trafficking in human beings on the regional level and for bringing us all together to exchange information on the situation in each Central Asian country, as well as to begin to discuss regional strategies to combat trafficking in Central Asia.

This morning I have been asked to speak about the international experience in holding information campaigns to increase awareness about trafficking. I am often asked --- what makes an information campaign to raise awareness about trafficking successful? I would like to take this opportunity to share with you all briefly my answer to that question.

The first step in designing a successful information campaign is to clearly define your objectives and the desired target audience of your awareness raising efforts. This is because raising awareness should clearly aim to:

- Affect decision-making
- Change attitude and behavior
- Or to promote co-operation and reform that will further anti-trafficking efforts.

For example, information campaigns often target potential migrants. In this case, from a human rights perspective, it is important to stress that awareness raising activities are not designed to stop migration, but rather the focus should be on helping potential migrants to make informed choices and to raise their awareness about the serious risks of trafficking in human beings.

Information campaigns have also been designed to target potential clients and employers of trafficking victims. Such campaigns both sensitize people on the demand side in counties of destination to the plight of trafficking victims and also serve to warn them of the penalties if they are involved in further exploiting a victim.

Another very important potential outcome of an anti-trafficking information campaign is to promote a dialogue with relevant governmental authorities on specific issues such as the need for legislative reform to protect victims and to prosecute traffickers.

Secondly, in order to be successful, an information campaign must be based on solid research.

Of course, research to develop an information campaign must focus on the situation of trafficking in a given region and provide some statistics on the phenomenon, as well as an analysis of current methods and trends in trafficking in human beings.

However, a well-prepared information campaign should also include research on the proposed audience---be they potential migrants, at-risk groups, state authorities or other professionals.

Research may also be carried out to assess the best medium for the information campaign since good information alone is not enough to ensure a good campaign. One must also keep in mind the question of access to information and how best to reach the desired target audience.

Finally, the last component of research is testing the campaign's message with a select audience before launching a large-scale campaign.

Thus far, I have mentioned two key elements of an information campaign:

- The need for reliable information based on sound research
- And making sure that you reach/hit your target audience in order to accomplish your objectives.

The last vital component that I would like to highlight is that information campaigns should promote co-operation and should link to or compliment other on-going anti-trafficking efforts.

For instance, one example of co-operative efforts can be seen in the case of Ukraine where the non-governmental organization La Strada has produced anti-trafficking materials and where state agencies assist in disseminating the information --- for example by allowing it to be printed on train tickets or distributed with newly issued passports.

Of course, both non-governmental and governmental actors should aim to develop close working relations with the mass media --- since they play a significant role in influencing public opinion and have the potential to reach the largest audience.

Especially when information is disseminated to the public at large and not through face-to-face seminars, it is recommended to set up a mechanism that can provide more detailed and updated information --- such as an information hotline or a counseling center.

In closing, I would like to say a few words about measuring the impact of information campaigns to combat trafficking. While it may be difficult to gauge an immediate impact on trafficking or migrant statistics, if an information campaign is well-designed, there will be clear indicators of how successful it is.

Such indicators could include:

- Measuring the recall of target audiences. Here, it is interesting to note that audiences have had the highest recall with TV and radio campaigns. This again stresses the need to increase co-operation with journalists and media.
- Audience's response to a hotline, counseling center or web site.
- Finally, if there are clear aims to affect government policy --- such as promoting legislative reform or institutional change --- then these desired results can be clearly measured as well.

I hope that those of you who will be involved with information campaigns to combat trafficking in human beings will find these suggestions useful and keep them in mind as you develop your activities. I wish you all success in raising awareness about this serious and complex problem. And I look forward to working with you on our joint efforts to combat trafficking and to assist its victims. Thank you very much for your attention.