

# FRONTLINE RESPONSES TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN CANADA:

## COORDINATING SER- VICES FOR VICTIMS

Research Report by **Alexandra Ricard-Guay** and **Jill Hanley**  
McGill University School of Social Work for the Committee of Action against  
Human Trafficking National and International (CATHII)

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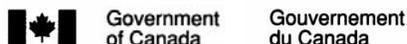
## COORDINATION

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## PREFACE

Since it was founded in 2004, the *Committee of Action against Human Trafficking National and International (CATHII)* has believed that the needs of trafficking victims should be addressed through coordination of existing expertise and resources.

Over the past years, CATHII has initiated regional consultations and played an important mobilizing role within several coordinating forums. During these consultations, many organizations highlighted a lack of resources to help victims and a need to improve collaboration among the various frontline workers. These failings had already been identified at a day-long seminar organized by CATHII in 2006 which brought together the main players from community, government, police and university sectors to identify victim needs. The same needs were reiterated at a consultation with members of *Comité inter-ministériel sur la traite des femmes immigrantes du Québec* (Quebec Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Trafficking of Immigrant Women), organized by CATHII in 2007.

CATHII's work has deepened its understanding of the issues and cemented its ties with numerous partners and organizations working against human trafficking. In June 2011, on CATHII's initiative, organizations working on the issue of human trafficking formed a coordinating body in Montreal. During the initial meeting, fifteen organizations from the greater Montreal region which help people who have been trafficked agreed on the need for a coordinating body. The primary objective was to develop coordinated service provision for trafficking victims. In 2012, the coalition was enlarged to include other organizations in the province and in April 2013, the *Coalition québécoise contre la traite des personnes* (Quebec Coalition against Human Trafficking) was launched. The Coalition currently includes public, para-public, community and non-governmental organizations in Quebec concerned with trafficking or providing support to victims.

In this context, this report aims to support actions by frontline workers, facilitate coordination and collaboration among them, and encourage service provision that adequately meets the specific needs of trafficking victims. Jill Hanley and Alexandra Ricard-Guay analyze issues for collaboration which arise in the context of an intangible phenomenon of indeterminate scale and a constantly evolving nature.

The fight against human trafficking in Canada relies mainly on individuals working to end this intolerable violence against the most vulnerable members of society. This study is dedicated to them and aims to highlight their commitment.

**Louise Dionne**  
CATHII Coordinator



# INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking, both for sexual exploitation and forced labour, has been of growing concern in Canada, as elsewhere, particularly over the last ten years. In fact, since 2005 there has been a flurry of activity to combat human trafficking in Canada, involving federal and provincial governments as well as by community, public, policing and legal sector organizations and institutions.

Legislative progress has been made in the fight against human trafficking and the prosecution of traffickers; a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking was adopted in June 2012; and coordinated local action has developed. This study aims to review practices and expertise that have developed over these past ten years of government and community action against human trafficking in Canada. In particular, it examines victim access to appropriate psycho-social and socio-economic support.

While the existing body of Canadian and international research helps us understand the phenomenon of trafficking, its dynamics and scale, as well as the profile of victims, a more thorough examination of services and intervention practices for this population is now needed. What have the various players learned? Despite the ground covered in recent years, what difficulties are encountered? Trafficking poses huge challenges for all players and frontline workers, in each phase of victim support. This study will address these ques-

tions, paying particular attention to intersectorial collaborative bodies and initiatives and to local, regional and provincial partnerships.

Trafficking poses huge challenges for all players and frontline workers, in each phase of victim support.

This report offers a portrait of existing practices in Canada to support and protect victims of human trafficking. The study is based on a broad definition of human trafficking encompassing exploitation for forced labour and sexual and/or family exploitation, domestic and international trafficking involving minors and adults (for example, forced marriage, domestic servitude of children and women, adop-

tion). Trafficking is understood here as a process and part of a continuum of exploitation in which it is often difficult to know where to draw the line designating severe forms of exploitation as trafficking<sup>1</sup>. The report relies heavily on testimonies from interview respondents; the voices and words of these frontline workers are thus given a central place.

This text is divided into four sections. The first provides an overview of the political and legal context of trafficking in Canada, and then of the realities and dynamics of trafficking in this country. The second part examines support and protection services<sup>2</sup> for victims of trafficking. It presents the range of services available to trafficking victims, and discusses gaps, challenges and good practices. It then provides a more in-depth analysis of three intervention and service sectors identified by respondents as particularly important: housing, immigration, and police investigations. The third part of the report describes and analyzes intersectorial collaboration and coordination of these services in different cities in Canada. The final part presents the conclusions. It discusses the research results and makes recommendations for better protecting the dignity, security, and rights of people who have been trafficked.

# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This study is undertaken in the context of the Canadian campaign against human trafficking and draws on a pan-Canadian study carried out almost ten years ago, “*Victims of Trafficking in Persons: Perspectives from the Canadian Community Sector*” (Oxman-Martinez, Lacroix & Hanley, 2005). It takes stock of the work accomplished over the past years, the progress and gains, and the development of intervention practices and expertise with trafficking victims. The study examines all forms of trafficking of persons: both domestic and international, for sexual exploitation and forced labour, of minors and adults.

The study is part of a larger project undertaken by the the *Committee of Action against Human Trafficking National and International (CATHI)*, and financed by Justice Canada. The general objective of this project is to contribute – through research and the mobilization of actors – to a coordinated response to the needs of human trafficking victims in Quebec. Thus, the launch of this research was accompanied by the establishment of the *Quebec Coalition Against Human Trafficking* in 2013. It is hoped that this research can help orient and feed the efforts of this coalition and other organizations and coalitions across Canada.

## Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to obtain a better knowledge of services to protect and support victims of trafficking in Canada, including coordination and inter-sectorial collaboration. This study attempts to understand both progress and challenges in service provision to this population and to identify promising practices. It also helps develop recommendations for promising practices that can be strengthened or reproduced in Quebec.

### Research Objectives:

- Obtain a better knowledge of existing services and intervention approaches;
- Document and obtain a better knowledge of local responses and coalition experiences; and
- Identify promising practices.

### Research Questions:

- 1) What services, resources, and intervention models are currently in place to support people who have been victims of trafficking in Canada?
- 2) What are the needs of people who have been subject to human trafficking? Are available services adapted to these needs?
- 3) What are the main challenges and barriers to service provision and

protection of people who have been victims of trafficking and what practices and intervention models are promising?

## Methodology

This qualitative research is based on semi-structured, individual interviews with frontline workers with experience in this field. In addition, information shared during interviews was enriched by presentations, trainings, and talks given by these frontline workers. Finally, the research also drew on the work of different forums, working groups and pan-Canadian networks on issues relating to trafficking, sexual exploitation and labour conditions of migrant workers. This allowed research results and interview contents to be validated.

## Sample and Recruitment of Participating Organizations

Between 2012 and December 2013, 79 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 90 frontline workers from different sectors: community, police, health, social services, and legal. The interviews were carried out in 16 Canadian cities from every province except PEI and excluding the territories.<sup>3</sup>

This study looks at cities considered to be hot spots in human trafficking in Canada and urban centres where initiatives against human trafficking have been set up. It doesn't claim to include all Canadian cities where there are specific initiatives against human trafficking. Indeed, since the research began, new projects have emerged. We have, however, attempted to ensure that the various sectors involved in providing services to human trafficking victims are represented.

Invitations to participate in the study were made by email and telephone. Organizations with direct experience working with victims of human trafficking and/or organizations attempting to facilitate the coordination of services and which have implemented joint projects were approached to participate in this study. We targeted frontline workers who work directly with people at risk or people who have been victims of trafficking as well as professionals who work in service coordination.

The following kinds of organizations were approached: shelters for women who are victims of violence or who are in difficulty, for youth, and for other vulnerable populations; youth centres; community organizations working with youth in difficulty; services to help victims of crime; municipal police; lawyers (prosecutors, legal aid lawyers, and immigration lawyers); organizations supporting the integration of immigrants and refugees; youth protection; and organizations supporting victims of sexual assault. Organizations working exclusively on awareness-raising or overseas were not included in the sample. Particular attention was given to intersectorial joint action projects and initiatives, especially networks and coalitions. We focused heavily on housing resources.

The sample of organizations participating in the study was drawn from a pre-existing list of organizations across Canada working or likely to work with trafficking victims. While organizations with a mandate, programme or project specifically related to human trafficking were prioritized, organizations with mandates unrelated to human trafficking who are nevertheless likely to encounter victims of trafficking in the course of their work were also contacted. The sample thus consists of a broad range of organizations and services which could be involved in the trajectory of services for a trafficking victim.

**TABLE 1: ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY BY CATEGORIES OF ORGANIZATIONAL MANDATE**

<b>Mandate</b>	<b>Total</b>
Housing	16
• Women in Difficulty and Homeless People (6)	
• Conjugal Violence (3)	
• Youth in Difficulty (2)	
• Human trafficking Victims (2)	
• People leaving Prostitution (2)	
• Migrants (1)	
Police (local, regional, RCMP)	14
Coalition, Network or Task-force specific to Trafficking	7
Accompaniment, Support and Rights of Immigrants and Refugees	5
People in the Sex Industry	7
Youth (Youth Centre, Drop-in, other Accompaniment Programmes)	5
Organizations specific to Trafficking (Prevention, Awareness)	5
Legal Aid	3
Youth Protection Agencies	3
Sexual Assault	3
Labour Rights Organizations	3
Women's Organizations	2
Assistance for Victims of Crime	2
Healthcare	2
Indigenous and First Nations Organisations	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>

## Ethics and Confidentiality

This research obtained an ethics certificate from McGill University. Participants signed a consent form. Given the sensitivity of the issue, data confidentiality is important. For this reason, participants are not named in this report and interview extracts are identified by the number of the interview and the category of the service and population served or the type of mandate.

## Data Collection and Analysis

Most interviews took place in person; ten were held by phone. Conducting the interviews in person meant that intervention sites and cities where participating organizations worked were visited. This allowed a better grasp of local realities.

Given the diversity of mandates and services offered by the different participating organizations and frontline workers, the interview guide was adapted slightly according to sectors. The interview questions addressed the experiences of frontline workers in responding and providing help to victims, their knowledge of the difficulties and challenges of service provision, and their recommendations for improving support, accompaniment and protection for trafficking victims in Canada. Audio recorded interviews were transcribed and subject to thematic analysis.

## Research Limitations

Given the large number of services, frontline workers and sectors involved with trafficking victims, the great disparity in provincial and local contexts, and the differences in the organization of public and social services across Canada, not to mention the challenges posed by the clandestine nature of trafficking, it was not possible to provide an exhaustive and complete portrait of services offered to trafficking victims in Canada. Trafficking affects many groups and vulnerable populations – women involved in prostitution or in a situation of conjugal violence, youth in difficulty, migrants, members of First Nations – who appeal to various aid and support networks, often informal and clandestine.

# SECTION 1

## CONTEXT OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN CANADA

The Canadian government's actions to fight human trafficking are based on the approach outlined in the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*. Since the beginning of the 2000's, Canada has strengthened its response. The main criticism of the government's response is that it is security-centric (prosecution of traffickers and fighting irregular migration) and

weak on the protection and support of victims. There is currently no national system to collect data on the number of victims in Canada, no specific government programme to offer assistance to trafficking victims, and no government referral system to ensure that victims are referred to adequate services. Support service is coordinated through local, regional and provincial initiatives, mainly non-governmental.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Canada ratified the UN *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (Palermo Protocol) and has conformed to its minimal obligations by introducing legal measures to make acts of trafficking an offence (Criminal Code in 2005; Immigration Act (IRPA) in 2002)<sup>4</sup>. In 2012, it adopted a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking.

Trafficking provisions were added to the Criminal Code in 2005. According to the Canadian Criminal Code, anyone who recruits, transports, holds, harbours or exercises control or influence over the movements of a victim for the purpose of exploiting her or facilitating her exploitation commits a trafficking offence.

Exploitation is obviously the key element, and determinant for trafficking. Exploitation means inducing someone to provide or offer work or services out of fear that refusal will endanger one's security or that of a loved one (Criminal Code, Art. 279.01).

Trafficking provisions were added to the Criminal Code in 2005.

Several other offences in the Criminal Code are connected and can be applied to human trafficking; notably, abduction, confinement, threats, extortion, assault, sexual assault, and offences relating to prostitution and criminal organizations. In fact, human

trafficking charges are generally accompanied by charges for other offences, especially those relating to procurement in cases of sex trafficking. From a penal perspective, the line between trafficking and procurement is sometimes very fine. In a study of procurement and human trafficking in Quebec, the *Service du renseignement criminel du Québec* (Criminal Intelligence Service Quebec – SRCQ) outlines the distinction: while procurement means inducing someone to prostitute themselves (the idea of persuasion is determinant), a victim of trafficking is not only induced but *forced*, by violence, threats or other means of coercion. Again according to the SRCQ, a third of procurement charges are accompanied by other charges such as threats, confinement and abduction. However, “a finding of acts of threat and violence in a procurement file is not sufficient for determining human trafficking” (SRCQ, 2013: 6).

In numerous criminal prosecutions, human trafficking charges were withdrawn in favour of other charges<sup>5</sup>. As we will see in the section on investigations and prosecutions, many prosecutors remain reluctant to press human trafficking charges.

Contrary to a common misconception of trafficking, the transfer of people is not a determinant factor in trafficking. Movement – regional or international – is not essential to exploitation nor therefore to trafficking. Also, victims cannot consent to their own exploitation; their consent is invalidated by misrepresentation or coercion. Finally, even when migrants are the victims of trafficking, if the crimes of exploitation are committed on Canadian soil, Criminal Code provisions apply. IRPA provisions only apply to the organization of cross-border trafficking; that is, entry into the country leading to exploitation.

Other measures have been introduced by the federal government to strengthen the legal framework of human trafficking. In response to the trafficking of people who are neither citizens nor residents of Canada, a Temporary Resident Permit (TRP) specifically for victims of trafficking was introduced in 2006. In response to concerns expressed by numerous Canadian organizations about the absence of measures allowing foreign victims to remain in Canada, temporarily or permanently, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration established provisional directives on a temporary resident permit for victims of trafficking in 2006. First set for 120 days, the visa was extended to 180 days in June 2007. Along with this extension, the government allowed victims to apply for a work permit without the usual administrative fees. Immigration agents can grant the TRP, renewable for a maximum of three years. TRP holders have access to healthcare covered by the Interim Federal Healthcare Programme (IFHP) as well as therapeutic services. This is a positive move towards better protection of international trafficking victims and an acknowledgement of the need to offer them protection. However, there are many barriers to accessing the TRP and this protective tool remains under-used (the shortcomings of the TRP will be discussed in more detail in Section 3).

Since 2005, three parliamentary bills modifying the Criminal Code on human trafficking have been adopted. Bill C-268, which entered into force in June 2010, imposes a minimum 5-years prison sentence for trafficking offences involving a minor as a victim. The Criminal Code had already provided for maximum sentences of 14 years and life for this kind of offence (Article 279.01), but this bill created a mandatory minimum sentence for cases involving minors. In 2012, Bill C-310 introduced two further changes to the Criminal Code. Human trafficking was added to the list of extra-territorial offences; this means that criminal offences committed outside Canada by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident can be prosecuted in Canada. This measure was aimed at sexual tourism. In addition, this bill modified the Criminal Code definition of exploita-

tion in the context of human trafficking (article 279.04). This modification sought to clarify factors for the courts to take into consideration when determining what constitutes exploitation, namely the fact of having used or threatened to use (i) violence, (ii) force or any other form of constraint, or otherwise (iii) having made false declarations or used other fraudulent means. These clarifications of the definition of exploitation are expected to facilitate the prosecution of trafficking charges. These two private member's bills, C-268 and C-310, were introduced by Conservative MP Joy Smith<sup>6</sup>.

## POLITICAL CONTEXT AND NATIONAL COORDINATION

In parallel to these legislative measures, the Canadian government set up the Interdepartmental Working Group on Trafficking in Persons (IWGTIP) in 1999. Initially created as an ad hoc initiative, the working group's mandate was revised in 2004 to include the development of a pan-Canadian strategy for action. It wasn't until 2012 that the National Action Plan was adopted and this strategy

It wasn't until 2012 that the National Action Plan was adopted and this strategy formally developed.

formally developed. The Action Plan, which will be discussed in more detail below, modified the working group's mandate. Formerly co-chaired by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the working group was brought under the authority of the Ministry of Public Safety of Canada, which is responsible for implementing the National Action Plan and coordinating the Canadian government's measures to combat human trafficking. The working group is composed of ten key ministries and relies on two sub-committees: (i) prevention and partnership; and (ii) prosecution and protection.

In 2005, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) established a Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre (HTNCC). With the HTNCC, the RCMP was assigned a specific mandate in the fight against human trafficking: a liaison role among law enforcement organizations in the country, coordination of criminal intelligence, and coordination of national prevention and awareness initiatives. A significant part of the Canadian government's involvement in awareness-raising has been accomplished through the HTNCC and the creation of six regional trafficking awareness coordinators (recently reduced to three). Since 2008, the RCMP has provided training and awareness sessions about trafficking to around 39,000 law enforcement officers, border and immigration agents, prosecutors, bureaucrats, NGO staff, and the broader public (National Action Plan, page 30). The RCMP has also developed a national awareness campaign called, "I'm Not for Sale," and, more recently, an awareness campaign targeting youth<sup>7</sup>.

Despite these achievements, the government's response should not be restricted to awareness-raising. The role of the Working Group and of the HTNCC remains limited. Moreover, beyond the development of legislative measures to facilitate the prosecution of traffickers, little is done to strengthen resources to help victims or support the organizations which offer services.

## The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking

The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking adopted by Canada in June 2012 aims to pursue and strengthen government action. The National Action Plan was adopted in response to many demands, from many forums, that the Canadian government respect its international commitments under the Palermo Protocol and implement a global, coordinated, national response to fight human trafficking (Barrett, 2010; Perrin, 2010; Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2007)<sup>8</sup>.

On the level of prevention, the Action Plan provided for continued support of existing initiatives. In a positive step, training programmes no longer uniquely targeted police forces but henceforth included front-line workers and the legal system (prosecutors and judges). The government also supported the development of targeted awareness campaigns (youth, indigenous people, and the transport industry with its “TruckSTOP campaign”). The Plan also supported an update of an online training programme developed by the British Columbia Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons<sup>9</sup>.

On the level of partnership, Public Safety organized regional consultations with frontline workers in 2012<sup>10</sup>. One of the stated aims of these consultations was to help orient future government involvement and projects. Some actions were also undertaken to improve communication among frontline workers and others concerned and to encourage an exchange of information (e.g. news bulletins and online forums, a national forum). Research projects about forced labour and indigenous realities related to trafficking were also funded. These steps have certainly allowed non-governmental organizations to participate in discussions and express concerns and recommendations. However, their role remains consultative. Priority was instead accorded to strengthening partnership among law enforcement organizations (CATHII, 2012).

With respect to forced labour, several preventive measures and measures to facilitate identification have been undertaken. Notably, an information guide for temporary foreign workers was updated and, in collaboration with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), awareness workshops given to provincial labour standard inspectors. It is too early to assess impact, but these steps appear hesitant in light of the scale of the problem.

On the level of suppressing and prosecuting traffickers, the Plan provided for the establishment of a specialized and integrated investigative unit, bringing together RCMP, local police forces and the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA). This had been requested by law enforcement agencies for several years. In December 2013, Public Safety announced the creation of the unit, to be based in Montreal. At the time of publication of this report, it was too early to assess impact.

The concrete results of the Action Plan have elicited many critiques. In general, the funding allocation set out by the Plan is a good illustration of government priorities. Government law enforcement agencies, along with several prevention, awareness, and research initiatives, receive the bulk of funding. The relevance of funding such efforts is not in question; but the funding imbalance should be highlighted. Considering that the majority of trafficking cases identified are domestic rather than international, the emphasis on the role of the CBSA

## The Plan does not accord a central place to victim protection.

raises questions about government priorities. Is the goal to strengthen state tools to control irregular migration or to protect potential victims?

Services to help trafficking victims remain marginal. The Plan does not accord a central place to victim protection. From a total budget of almost \$8 million, a maximum of \$500,000 – even including the Victims Fund of Justice Canada – was designated for projects

and services specifically targetting trafficking victims, starting in April 2013 (Action Plan, 2012: 11). This is clearly insufficient. One of our respondents perfectly sums up the type of critique expressed during interviews,

*Victim response is the most important thing. And the biggest hole that I've found in the National Action Plan was victim response. I mean, there's not enough money for law enforcement, that's a given. There's not enough money for the other stuff. But \$500,000 a year for victim response just does not cut it. Unless we can support the victims, you know, we're not really doing it. The victims are not getting the kind of support they need. The federal government is letting them down. (Interview 11, Law Enforcement)<sup>11</sup>*

While the government is proclaiming a renewed and even strengthened commitment with the adoption of its action plan, its commitments have not been accompanied by financial resources. On the contrary, several cuts have been made. Notably, the number of HTNCC regional coordinators was reduced to three, one for each of the following regions: British Columbia, Quebec and Nova Scotia. Non-governmental organizations are also facing significant budget cuts which greatly limit their capacity to continue providing services to the various vulnerable populations they serve.

An action plan is only one component of a coordinated national strategy of action and, at this point, the other pieces are missing. Without adequate resources, without an organizational and institutional structure specifically mandated to protect victims, actions will have little impact. To be effective, such a plan should establish clear institutional responsibilities within the government and provide for coordination mechanisms. In an assessment of promising practices for a Canadian response, published in 2010 (Barrett, 2010), it was proposed that an action plan be part of a global response, involving the establishment of a national rapporteur and a national referral mechanism. A mechanism to refer victims to resources they require seems necessary.

The commitment and measures adopted by provincial governments differ from province to province.

In conclusion, in the context of Canadian federalism, social and health service provision falls largely within provincial jurisdictions. This obviously creates significant complexity that needs to be taken into account in the development of any national response. The commitment and measures adopted by provincial governments differ from province to province. However, the Action Plan neither proposed nor provided for any direction or recommendation to develop a coordinated response at the provincial level, nor any steps to strengthen interprovincial collaboration.

## Victim Services: Role of the Provinces

The context of Canadian federalism explains in part the difficulties of mounting a coordinated and integrated response. Multiple levels of legislative bodies and jurisdictions are involved (Barrett, 2010). For example, immigration falls within the federal jurisdiction, with federal-provincial agreements in the case of Quebec and, increasingly, other provinces. Labour standards are provincial jurisdiction, while foreign worker programmes are federal. Assistance for the victims of crime is a shared jurisdiction, which explains why some provinces have specific victim protection programmes. Finally, youth protection is a matter of provincial jurisdiction<sup>12</sup>.

The leadership of provincial and territorial governments is primordial for any effective strategy or action in the fight against human trafficking. Many provinces have already taken action. For example, the government of British Columbia established the Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons (OCTIP) in 2007 and recently adopted a provincial action plan (2013 to 2016). Alberta has the Action Coalition on Human Trafficking in Alberta (ACT Alberta) which brings together frontline workers from the community sector, government, and law enforcement. The government of Manitoba has shown its commitment for

more than a decade in its strategy against sexual exploitation, which has significant funding. These initiatives will be discussed in greater detail in Section 4 on models of intersectorial collaboration.

In the absence of adequate government programmes and financial support, front-line workers and organisations from different sectors have mobilized and developed initiatives or succeeded in pushing their institutions to view trafficking a priority. In fact, numerous initiatives have been launched, often on the initiative of individuals and frontline workers. These initiatives try to provide a more effective, local response to trafficking situations and ensure victim access to protection and services. In most provinces, these efforts are undertaken without government financial support and without additional human resources. Organizations now exist which are dedicated exclusively to the prevention and fight against human trafficking. Many organizations have developed programmes, services and activities specific to trafficking. Local, regional and provincial networks, partnerships, collaborations and coalitions have been created to increase intersectorial coordination. Since 2005, each province has seen the growth at the local or provincial level of a coordinated body or action strategy taking the form of a coalition, government office dedicated to this issue, or an informal network of frontline workers. We will return to this in Section 3.

This context speaks to a change of perception and collective awakening to the issue of human trafficking. We note a development in the understanding of human trafficking and an increase in the number of organizations which now view this issue as important or even as a priority.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN CANADA

Given the clandestine nature of human trafficking and its links to organized crime, the difficulties of identifying victims, and their reluctance to press charges, there is little or no data to assess the rate and scale of the problem in Quebec and Canada. The main source of data on trafficking currently comes from police forces or criminal intelligence services (SRCQ, 2013; RCMP, 2010, 2013). In 2010, the RCMP carried out a study of criminal investigations linked to trafficking between 2005 and 2009. This project, called Seclusion, was the first government evaluation of the threat of trafficking in Canada. Following this report, the RCMP published a second report in 2014, this time exclusively about domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation. This report didn't examine cross-border trafficking or trafficking for forced labour. This report defined characteristics of victims and traffickers and their modes of operating. This recent report drew the same conclusions as the first: the majority of victims are white Canadians between 14 and 22<sup>13</sup>. Almost 40% are minors.

It is estimated that the profits generated by trafficking for sexual exploitation, for the most part kept by the traffickers, range from \$500 to \$1000 per day per per-

son forced to provide sexual services; that is, between \$168,000 and \$336,000 per year (RCMP, 2013: 10).

## Situations that community organizations encounter, for example, are not systematically documented across the country.

This data only provides a partial portrait of the situation, based on cases reported to the police. Situations that community organizations encounter, for example, are not systematically documented across the country. However, some organizations have begun to collect information about trafficking in their regions. Many cases identified by frontline workers are not investigated because of lack of evidence or because the situation doesn't meet the precise legal definition of human trafficking.

For several reasons, our research results do not allow us to estimate the number of trafficking cases identified by our respondents. First, they had different definitions of what constitutes trafficking. An organization which considers all forms of prostitution to be trafficking obviously has a significantly different way of identifying trafficking than organizations with a more restricted view of trafficking. Moreover, the same case was discussed by more than one respondent.

## Jurisprudence

The number of charges and prosecutions for human trafficking in Canada is still low, and there are even fewer convictions. In addition, as noted in the preceding section, many cases brought before the courts which involve charges of human trafficking are dropped in favour of convictions for procurement or other criminal offences. However, despite the low number of prosecutions, since the first human trafficking charges were laid in 2005 (under IRPA)<sup>14</sup> and the first conviction obtained in 2008 (under criminal law) in the Peel region, Canada has seen an acceleration of the number of trafficking cases brought before the courts and of the number of convictions for human trafficking. In fact, the number of domestic trafficking cases for sexual exploitation has grown since 2008: from 8 in 2008, to 27 in 2009, to 33 in 2012, and 14 in 2013.

According to the most recent data provided by the Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre (HTNCC), in December 2013, there have been 50 cases of trafficking or related offences leading to convictions, and 97 people have been found guilty of human trafficking or related offences (e.g. confinement, sexual assault, procurement, conspiracy, participation in the activities of a criminal organization) (RCMP, December 2013)<sup>15</sup>. The problem with available data is that charges for human trafficking and related offences are often amalgamated. According to the RCMP, in spring 2013, of a total of 132 cases of domestic traf-

ficking for sexual exploitation, 43 had been settled and 71 were still before the courts. Of the 43 cases settled, only 13 had resulted in human trafficking charges while the other 30 led to charges for offences linked to trafficking (RCMP, 2013: p. 45-46).

The human trafficking provisions of the Criminal Code were interpreted by the courts for the first time in *R. v. Urizar*. In its decision, the Court of Appeal of Quebec re-examined the provisions of Article 279.01 and reiterated that transport or “forced movement” was not a necessary element of “exploitation”. Exploitation was recognized as the central element and this judgement clarified the diverse modes of coercion involved in exploitation. The importance of understanding the “gradation” of influence used in trafficking was highlighted. A relationship based on seduction develops and control assumes numerous forms, both physical and psychological (*Urizar v. R.*, 2013: p. 19). This judgement recognized the importance of the psychological dimension of constraint and control in exploitation.

The biggest case of forced labour trafficking involved a Hungarian family exploiting many other Hungarians in the construction sector in Ontario (*R. v. Domotor*, ONSC, 2011). The police investigation, called Operation Opapa, involved ten suspects, including four charged with human trafficking and other offences, and 19 victims (the majority men). The Domotor file was a first, both on the level of jurisprudence and coordination of victim services. From a criminal justice perspective, it documents several offences related to human trafficking and many key aspects of exploitation in a forced labour context. In addition to having been forced to work for little or no wages in construction sites, the victims lived in very poor conditions. Their identity documents had been confiscated and their movements were tightly controlled. The victims were subjected to personal threats and violence as well as threats against their families in Hungary. They were induced to make refugee claims on the basis of false statements and to apply for welfare, which was then pocketed by the traffickers. The victims were also compelled to commit theft. This case illustrates multiple forms of control and compulsion and closely conforms to the common image of labour trafficking, involving organized crime, threats and violence. The victims agreed to testify and prosecution was also facilitated by the availability of physical evidence (Kaye, 2013). The two main accused were given sentences of 7 and 9 years in prison. However, it is noteworthy that the trafficking victims who testified in the case were not protected after the trial. For example, Tibor Baranyai, a key witness in the trial, explained in detail how family members in Hungary feared for their security and even their lives. The CBSA nevertheless proceeded to deport his wife and step-daughter shortly after the trial because their refugee claims had been refused.

The first conviction for forced labour trafficking under IRPA was in 2013 in British Columbia, in the case of a domestic worker (*R. v. Orr*, BCSC, 2013)<sup>16</sup>. All previous convictions in Canada were obtained under criminal law. Other cases

## The first conviction for forced labour trafficking under IRPA was in 2013 in British Columbia.

of forced labour did not lead to trafficking charges; for example, Kihew Energy Services Ltd was charged with exploiting up to 60 migrant workers from Poland and Hungary but trafficking charges were dropped and the company pled guilty to other charges, including organizing illegal entry into Canada (IRPA, article 117).

Apart from these few mediatized cases of forced labour trafficking, attention remains focused on sexual exploitation.

In conclusion, offences related to trafficking are relatively recent and for this reason the jurisprudence is limited. However, we can affirm that the cases brought before the courts are just the tip of the iceberg of the complex phenomena of human trafficking. Moreover, the data is almost exclusively about trafficking for sexual exploitation. The issue of forced labour remains less visible and less identifiable.

*I don't think we're – I think we're at the tip of the iceberg. I think the cases we have are those women so far who have already made, in some way, a decision to come forward. So, for us to say we're dealing with this issue effectively, we haven't had a labor case, and I guarantee you we have labor, forced-labor cases. The fact that none of them are on our radar means we're not looking for them. (Interview 62, Law Enforcement)*

## TRAFFICKING DYNAMICS

Government studies and Canadian research projects have created a better understanding of the phenomena of human trafficking in Canada; its dynamics and dimensions, the recruitment methods used by traffickers, coercive measures employed, the “routes” taken to Canada, as well as the general characteristics of victims (Barnett, 2011; McDonald & Tiroshimina, 2007, McDonald et al., 2000; Kaye, 2013; Perrin, 2010; Oxman-Martinez et al, 2005; RCMP, 2010, 2013; SRCQ, 2013). The situations of exploitation described by respondents who participated in our study largely correspond to the dynamics and realities of trafficking depicted in existing Canadian studies, confirming these results (SRCQ, 2013; RCMP, 2010, 2013; Perrin, 2010; Kaye, 2013). Despite the diversity of local, regional and provincial contexts, there were numerous similarities in the situations of exploitation encountered our study participants. Beyond the similarities in trafficking dynamics (recruitment, forms of exploitation, control mechanisms, etc.), it is difficult to create a typical profile of a “victim” or a “trafficking situation”. Each situation has specific dimensions and follows its own, often complex, course.

Canada is simultaneously a country of origin, a transit country and a destination for human trafficking. The main forms of exploitation in Canada are sexual exploitation in the sex industry (prostitution, exotic dancing, erotic massage) and forced labour, notably in agriculture, construction, restaurant and hotel business, and domestic work. Often wrongly confused with smuggling migrants – organizing or facilitating the illegal entry of migrants – cross-border human trafficking does not automatically involve illegal entry into the country. Entry can be legal, notably through Canada's temporary immigration programmes. Nor, as already noted and contrary to the image popularly portrayed, does trafficking in Canada always involve crossing borders. In fact, most cases currently identified by police involve the exploitation of Canadians for sex trafficking. This is partly corroborated by our study; the majority of cases described and identified by the respondents relate to sexual exploitation or include elements of sexual exploitation. However, as we shall see, this finding is nuanced by the fact that sexual exploitation is precisely the focus of state resources and intervention. The number of situations of forced labour that are identified is growing as community groups encourage migrants and workers to recognize exploitation.

Human trafficking is often associated with organized crime and especially street gangs. However, according to the accounts of trafficking shared by respondents participating in this study, links to organized crime and street gangs do not appear to be very common. Big criminal organizations like the mafia and criminalized motorcycle gangs were not, with very few exceptions, ever mentioned by our respondents. It is more difficult for frontline workers to establish with any certainty whether or not a street gang was involved. While trafficking is sometimes associated with street gangs, the organization of prostitution does not seem to be a gang undertaking so much as the work of one or several individuals. These findings must be used with caution because some service workers – from community and public sectors – may not have had access to information about the traffickers' criminal record. However, this general finding about the links between trafficking and organized crime was also documented by the RCMP in its latest report (2013). According to this report, almost half of the domestic trafficking cases for sexual exploitation involved traffickers associated with street gangs. However, despite the strong involvement and presence of street gangs in the sex industry – considering the significant profits – “human trafficking is not considered a street gang activity” (p. 12) because the profits are kept by the traffickers and do not go to the entire gang.

According to this same 2013 RCMP report, the majority of cases in which sex trafficking charges were laid (132 cases) took place in Ontario and Quebec. In addition to these two provinces, Alberta and British Columbia are also considered hubs (RCMP, 2013, p. 25-26). This said, frontline workers from other provinces also see trafficking cases and the distribution of charges may in fact reflect the amount of resources put into investigations rather than the actual existence of cases..

While available data indicates that urban centres and big cities are the principal sites of trafficking, it is important not to lose sight of municipalities surrounding the big centres and rural regions. Many of the cases we were told of took place outside the big centres and were not reported to police. This is true both for sexual exploitation and forced labour. Isolated rural areas are well suited to keeping an individual away from support services, whether in a situation of arranged or forced marriage, forced labour, or sexual exploitation. The presence of the sex industry in areas of rapid economic development based on resource exploitation, notably oil, is a well recognized phenomenon and the growth of trafficking is observable in such areas.

## Recruitment Methods

Recruitment methods identified by participants in our study are similar to those documented in the literature. They vary greatly. Recruitment for sexual exploitation of adolescents and young adults happens through social media (facebook), during evenings and parties, in metro stations, around schools, and near housing resources for youth in difficulty. In short, the places of recruitment are as numerous as the places frequented by the people targeted. Social media and the internet are now playing an increasingly important role in the recruitment of teenagers and young women.

Moreover, many situations involving minors and young adults involve a false love affair with the pimp or trafficker. Using a process described by frontline workers as grooming or love bombing, the trafficker develops a relationship of trust and affection with the victim and then progressively subjects them to psychological or physical control, exploiting them in the sex industry and pocketing the revenues.

The two groups most vulnerable to domestic sex trafficking targeted by the RCMP are minors and people who are already involved in the sex industry (RCMP, 2013: 14). Our interviews confirm that women and teenagers, whether Canadian or not, may originally have consented to work in the sex industry. However, they are often deceived about working conditions.

When trafficking involves foreign nationals, placement agencies often play a role in recruitment, luring them with false promises of work in Canada. International trafficking may involve close or distant family members and criminal networks. Promises of marriage or job offers may be made.

many situations involving minors and young adults involve a false love affair with the pimp or trafficker.

## Modes of Coercion and Realities of Exploitation

Many studies have documented modes of coercion and control used by traffickers (Logan & Hunt, 2009; Oxman-Martinez & Hanley, 2007; Perrin, 2010). Psychological means are used as much, if not more, than physical means. Victims may be subjected to different forms of violence: confined, raped or forced by other physical violence into prostitution or other work. Cases of torture, repeated rape, and even cases of attempted murder were recounted, as well as situations in which the victim witnessed violence against other victims<sup>17</sup>.

Constraint and coercion are often primarily psychological. Beyond physical violence, “psychological confinement”, fear, and threats, while more insidious and less visible, are just as powerful a means of keeping people in situations of exploitation (Logan & Hunt, 2009).

Victims' movements are frequently controlled, including through the confiscation of identity documents (passports or Canadian identity cards). It is well known that traffickers move victims from city to city or even from province to province, as a tactic to isolate them from loved ones and from networks of support. Traffickers also control victims' communications with loved ones and everyone else. Traffickers in fact often minutely regulate communications, dress, and activities of the people under their control; strict rules govern many aspects of their daily lives. In a situation of forced labour, a domestic worker explained how she was only allowed to speak to her family once a month and then only in the presence of her “employer”. This made it difficult for her to ask for help (Globe and Mail, 27 June 2013). Among other forms of control, the trafficker may force victims to witness violence against others. This makes the victim fear that the same violence could be used against her if she refuses to obey the trafficker. The psychological dimension of coercion involves threats of force and violence against victims and their loved ones. For example, a death threat towards a loved one may be used to force a younger sister into prostitution. Traffickers have also staged a kind of performance to make the victim believe that they have used violence against others in order to instill fear.

Denunciation is another lever of control. Given the shame and stigma of sexual exploitation, traffickers can also threaten to expose the victims' actions to their families, publish compromising photos on social media, etc. When the person has a child, the trafficker can use this relationship by threatening to report the situation to youth protection services. Migrants with irregular status are frequently subject to threats of denunciation to immigration officials or to police for criminal offences they have committed.

Psychological control also includes a financial dimension; such as debt and keeping people in precarity while holding out the promise of lucrative future returns.

Another, more insidious, form of control identified by respondents is the practice of inciting victims to participate in criminal activities such as fraud, drug trafficking, and theft and then wielding the threat of informing on them.

In all situations described by respondents, luring was used. The methods of control and coercion employed create an atmosphere of “unpredictability” and precarity in which victims feel destabilized and anxious about their security or the security of loved ones (Zimmerman, 2006: 10).

On a final note, some frontline workers noticed a change in tactics as traffickers adapt to legislative changes and develop strategies to evade new mechanisms to identify human trafficking. For example, the confiscation of identity documents is replaced by new methods of control.

## Leaving Situations of Exploitation

People leave situations of exploitation and make contact with frontline workers in diverse ways, using diverse strategies. Our participants gave different examples of contact situations: a meeting in a park or on public transit; after fleeing a situation of extreme violence; after abandonment by the trafficker (because they have lost their “market value” due to poor physical state or health); when a client of someone in prostitution calls the police; during a police intervention or at a border crossing; during imprisonment; following a text or facebook message seeking help; during a hospital emergency; the return of a runaway in the case of minors, etc. As we can see, to a large extent, it is often a question of luck.

Other factors can also lead a victim to leave an abusive relationship with a trafficker: pregnancy, health problems, etc. The person may also simply stop believing her exploiter's lies: “I love you”; “I will help you regularize your immigration papers”; “I will pay you as soon as I can”.

## BEYOND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: EMERGING AND LESS VISIBLE TRENDS

We identified some common trends and characteristics in the cases encountered by our respondents which are less visible because they are not reported to the police. While sexual exploitation was involved in the majority of cases described in the interviews, other, less recognized, patterns of exploitation are on the increase. What is immediately obvious is not only the complexity of the situations but the fact that they involve many, interlocking forms of exploitation. We will now briefly sketch the realities of trafficking situations encountered by our respondents, as they perceive them.

## Trends in Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation

### Main Vulnerable Groups

The main social groups vulnerable to trafficking for sexual exploitation are youth, mainly girls, and people already involved in the sex industry (RCMP, 2013). The testimony from our respondents corroborates the fact that these groups are most vulnerable. Several respondents even stated that pimps and traffickers are recruiting teenagers at an ever younger age.

This study exposes the fact that data available from criminal intelligence completely obscures the existence of another vulnerable group: migrants, particularly women, with precarious status. These women are sexually exploited outside the sex industry; for example, a domestic worker exploited by her employer, or a woman in a forced marriage.

The majority of respondents believed that indigenous people are most vulnerable to trafficking, particularly in Western Canada. However, very few of these cases were directly reported to us. The trafficking of indigenous women and youth is rarely brought to light and remains almost invisible, with the exception of Manitoba and British Columbia where community groups and indigenous organizations have successfully brought media and political attention to bear on the issue, given the extremely serious situation in those provinces.

### Geography of Sex Trafficking: Main Sites of Activity and Routes

In relation to trafficking for sexual exploitation, the main sites of activity identified by respondents were private locations (for example, the private apartment of the trafficker or client, or a private business). Street prostitution, with very few exceptions, has been replaced by prostitution in private spaces, hotels and motels.

The main routes identified in other studies (RCMP, 2010, 2013) link Ontario and Quebec, notably a circuit between Ottawa, Montreal and the greater Toronto region, or link British Columbia and Alberta (RCMP, 2013). This qualitative study does not give us a precise portrait of interprovincial and municipal routes but several tendencies can be identified from our interviews:

- Exploitation routes develop and change according to opportunity. There seems to be a route between Quebec and Alberta, with young women and teenagers from Quebec brought to Alberta, notably to Fort McMurray.
- Natural resource exploitation, especially oil and mining in remote regions, attracts the sex trade and encourages situations of exploitation and trafficking.
- Sex trafficking routes do not only link urban centres, but also run between countryside and cities.

## Trends in Forced Labour

The statements gathered in this study confirm that it remains very difficult to identify situations of abuse and exploitation as forced labour within the meaning of the law. Organizations working with migrants emphasized that the latter are very reluctant to identify abuse in their working and living conditions as trafficking because of their own vulnerability to detention and deportation. Nevertheless, we collected many examples of forced labour of people with precarious immigration status in sectors such as restaurant work, domestic work, light manufacturing, and agriculture. Forced labour within families was also identified, particularly involving women married by force or older people coming to Canada to take care of their grandchildren. Finally, the forced labour of youth with Canadian citizenship, linked to criminal activities of gangs or organized networks, was also identified as human trafficking.

We also noticed that individuals had very frequently travelled through many countries in search of work to meet their families' needs before arriving in Canada.

## Interlocking Forced Labour and Sexual Exploitation

Many organizations – housing resources, organizations working with migrants, and legal aid clinics – have noticed the growth of trafficking cases in which the problems of forced labour and sexual exploitation are interlocked. Here are some examples.

Women arriving in Canada through a sponsorship or arranged marriage with a resident or Canadian citizen whom they don't know or don't know very well before migrating may become victims of many forms of exploitation: forced labour in their husband's or in-law's business, sexual abuse by one or many members of their husband's family, confiscation of their identity documents, confinement and control of their movements, etc.

Domestic workers arriving in Canada through live-in caregiver programme, on a tourist or student visa, or accompanying a diplomat, may have their identity documents confiscated, their work conditions abused (some receiving no salary), and sometimes becoming victims of sexual abuse.

Women and teenagers who are victims of sex trafficking may also be forced to commit criminal acts (such as theft, fraud, and the trafficking or manufacturing of drugs); their identities may be stolen and used to buy goods or to borrow money, resulting in debts in their name.

## Exploitation of Migrant Minors

Another under-documented aspect of human trafficking is the phenomenon of minors arriving in Canada with the aid of an adult resident or citizen of Canada. Some of these minors are exploited by the foster or adopting family. Abuse can be economic, physical, and sexual at the same time. In Haiti, such exploited minors are called “restaveks”; there are also “petites bonnes” (little maids) from Morocco; and minors from other countries.

These lesser known aspects of trafficking remind us of the complexity of this phenomenon. A global and coordinated approach to the fight against trafficking, such as promoted by the International Bureau for Children's Rights (2009, 2007), would ensure that such situations do not remain invisible and under a seal of silence.

## DEFINING HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A CONTESTED CONCEPT

Human trafficking is a multidimensional phenomenon, encompassing questions of internal and international migration, human rights, gender equality and organized crime. Human trafficking can, depending on one's perspective, be an intersection for a number of social issues – particularly conjugal violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation and the multiple forms of abuse to which people with precarious immigration status are vulnerable. Whether it be for sexual exploitation or forced labour, human trafficking is on a continuum of exploitation and violence and it can often be difficult for frontline workers to clearly identify.

Ever since the issue of human trafficking has come into the public arena in Canada, the issue of how to define the phenomenon has been debated. Canada was highly involved in the development of the Palermo Protocol and subsequently adopted legal definitions of human trafficking in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and, subsequently, the Criminal Code in 2005. These legal definitions, however, have not ended the debate. While the formal definitions seem today to be familiar to a broad range of service providers, and widely adopted and applied by law enforcement, child protection and immigration officials; but even these formal definitions have contradictions.

Overall, service providers' understanding of human trafficking continues to evolve. In this section, we share the views of service providers who consider themselves to be working with victims of human trafficking. We begin by presenting and comparing their working definitions of human trafficking before reflecting on to what degree defining human trafficking offers advantages in

protecting victims and also reviewing the challenges posed in trying to apply a strict definition. We conclude this section with a discussion of a critical tension among those working on the issue of human trafficking: to what degree prostitution or other forms of sex work should be considered human trafficking or sexual exploitation.

As identified in other Canadian studies, the difficulties and confusion surrounding the definition of human trafficking are an important obstacle to the identification of victims, and consequently to their being offered an appropriate response (Quarteman, Kaye & Winterdyck, 2012; Kaye 2013). In fact, the way that trafficking is defined has major repercussions on approaches to intervention employed by the different actors involved.

## Human trafficking as understood by Canadian service providers

Most of those we interviewed were familiar with the broad strokes of the Palermo, Criminal Code and IRPA definitions, but there was often an effort to translate these definitions into terms more easily understood by community members:

*[The Palermo Protocol] is the most unfriendly, non-simple language I have ever seen. For any group I have ever presented the Palermo Protocol definition to, they're like, "What?"... It's just the ugliest definition ever. So I use our little mathematical equation: ...the action, means, and purpose... (Interview 8, Coalition)*

In our interviews, many groups had a working definition related to the specific population or issue they worked on, such as labour exploitation, sexual exploitation or youth at risk. Exploitation was at the centre of their understanding of human trafficking, with issues such as being transported from one place to other or there being a for-profit or commercial element to the exploitation seemingly less important to people's understanding of the issue than a decade ago (Oxman-Martinez et al, 2005). Sexual exploitation (its own definition debated, as we discuss below) was the more common vision had of trafficking.

The centrality of control as a concept comes out in this community service provider's definition of labour trafficking:

*It's because of the... restrictive control of the employers towards their employee that makes it really inhuman or to me ... To us, in our vision, in our perception, anything that has restriction beyond the norms of the Labour Code, to us it's exploitation. (Interview 46, Immigration)*

And this service provider provides a continuum of the different degrees of exploitation and control that can be found within the sex industry:

*There are three specific populations that I think about. When I use the term human traffic, or trafficking victim, I'm thinking of someone who has been forcibly coerced into the sex industry. When I talk about exploitation, I mean the population that has entered the sex industry, possibly for survival sex, possibly because of mental health issues, but they're technically there of their own volition – I would say pseudo-volition, because if you have a really intense trauma history, there's so much mis-wiring going on that it's hard to claim any kind of agency or volition in terms of decision making, right? ...And then there's a third population, which is people who are in the sex industry for money. So, it's calmer, and irrespective of whether or not they have a trauma history or whatever the story is, they do feel quite empowered. (Interview 51, HT specific)*

When asked to discuss the definition of human trafficking, however, a number of respondents expressed a fair bit of frustration. Several pointed out that “human trafficking” is just a new name for an old phenomenon:

*To me personally, I don't think there's much difference between what we call a pimp and what a human trafficker does. We've changed a word... that's all we've done, and we've made it so that it's that much worse, but it was always worse; it was always bad and these guys have always existed, right?... It's the same issue that's been going on forever. (Interview 2, Prostitution)*

And others argued that when a person came to them seeking help, they were pretty unconcerned about how to define the problem, especially in legal terms:

*Whether or not there are criminal charges doesn't change anything for me. It's not so much about that... From the moment she was victimized in one way or another, I'm going to evaluate the situation and offer her services to recover from that criminal act. So, the way that it's perceived or defined, is not so important to me. I don't waste my time on that. (Interview 41, Victim services)*

Working with a fixed definition of human trafficking is not a concern or an issue for the majority of the respondents we interviewed, as they work according to their clients' perception and understanding of their experiences and tackle the outcomes of the violence and abuse they have experienced – whether or not it is trafficking. However, many respondents felt that it was clear that human trafficking was a strong trend in terms of government priorities and government and foundation funding. In such a context, they felt compelled to assert the way in which their mandate was connected to human trafficking.

## **Advantages of defining human trafficking as a distinct phenomenon**

Many of the people we interviewed drew a parallel between the growing awareness of human trafficking as a form of violence in our society and the historical evolution of our understanding of domestic violence. They argued that the

progress that we have seen in the understanding of human trafficking traduces itself in a shift in the perception of what exploitation means: a person cannot consent to their exploitation, and therefore the responsibility no longer lies on some ‘bad choices’ of a person, but first and foremost on the perpetrator of the violence, not the victim. As mentioned by the community advocate in the quote above, the term “human trafficking” encourages an awareness of the seriousness of exploitation, especially sexual exploitation and especially of adults:

*There's the educational aspect. It's raised an awareness in society. Pimping, Prostitution. Human trafficking opened the door to a collective consciousness. Putting all of these things together has meant that people have finally woken up. They say, "Really? That's human trafficking. That's slavery. Yes, it's true. A girl who is forced into prostitution, who gives all her money, who is tortured, well, it's true that looks like slavery. That's right! It's human trafficking"... That's the main tool that it's offered. It has touched people's imagination. It has made our consciousness evolve. (Interview 73, Law enforcement)*

Those more connected to law enforcement, especially related to prostitution, see a number of advantages to having a legal definition of human trafficking. The major transformation underway is the shift away from seeing people engaged in the sex industry as automatically criminal. In this regard, the progress and evolution in the understanding of human trafficking is closely linked to the evolution of how prostitution is perceived – mainly within law enforcement:

*I think the results have been excellent... Law enforcement, I think, pretty much universally now sees human trafficking victims in a different light than they did 10, 15 years ago... Fifteen, 20 years ago, 10 years ago, we seen them as criminals. You know, they're breaking the law, they're prostitutes... But now we see them as a victim because we know a lot of them are not doing it by choice. (Interview 11, Law enforcement)*

A parallel can also be drawn in regard to sexual exploitation of minors, whereas there has been a shift in the terminology and language used. The terms juvenile prostitution is nowadays less used than before, which illustrated a change in the way we perceive and understand the youth involvement in prostitution:

*For me, it really comes down to our understanding. What is our understanding of the phenomenon and how do we look at it? Twenty years ago, we talked about juvenile prostitution. We saw girls as if they were putting themselves at risk, as if the girls were making poor choices. We don't hear the term juvenile prostitution so much any more. Instead we talk about the sexual exploitation of minors. And when we talk about choice, we talk about the lack of choice. Just that puts us in another frame of mind. (Interview 31, Youth protection).*

Some of the organizations interviewed reject that people involved in the sex industry should all be seen as victims, but overall, a move away from the systematic criminalization of people was seen as positive. Also seen as positive by

most is that a conviction of human trafficking results in more severe sentences (up to life) for what often amounts to the worst forms of pimping, a recognition of the harm inflicted on the victims.

It was nearly unanimous that respondents reported that identifying a case with the definition of human trafficking opens the door to more options and more resources, as we hear in this case where a community service provider was able to access funds when a person came forward who had experienced exploitation and wanted to return to their home province:

*Would we have gotten the airfare money for her to go back from anywhere else? No, right? Absolutely not... What changes is that saying someone is trafficked is kind of like a magic word to open a door to getting supports that they don't otherwise have. It's kind of a curious thing because you have this whole sort of group of people that I don't think want to own that label for themselves but if they did... they can actually access a lot more money and support. (Interview 7, Prostitution)*

In terms of service provision, we heard that the definition of human trafficking provided a tool to discuss people's experiences, helping practitioners to articulate the issues of choice, exploitation and control and check how the person with whom they are working understands their situation.

## Challenges in trying to define human trafficking

Despite the widespread exposure to the concept of human trafficking, many service providers find it very difficult to draw the line between trafficking and other forms of abuse or exploitation. Finding a common understanding of human trafficking remains one of the greatest challenges when organizations try to come together to coordinate services or advocate for improvements. And while a majority of the legal prosecutions of human trafficking in recent years have involved Canadian victims, members of the public often continue to associate human trafficking with something that occurs in other countries or, at the least, only to international victims. The confusion between smuggling and trafficking also endures.

The effort to define human trafficking was meant to clarify its existence and establish it as socially unacceptable, yet the very language of "trafficking" pushes away some of the people it is meant to help:

*You have potentially a group of people who might not be aware of their rights, they might not be aware that what's happening to them is abuse. So certainly words like victim, words like human trafficking do not resonate with them. Words like slave are ridiculous, in my opinion, to use... And there're real implications for people if that's the language that we're using to describe this then we're not reaching those people. (Interview 5, Coalition)*

The language of trafficking can sound so extreme that even service providers may not feel it applies to situations they encounter regularly, as we hear in this story of when an RCMP human trafficking educator approached a community youth centre to offer training:

*She said on the message, we don't have problems with human trafficking here... The worst case that happens is, she said, sometimes the girls are bought and sold to work in different bars but we don't have a human trafficking problem. And I thought, yeah, you know what I mean, I thought, okay, this is a problem. Because it's exactly what human trafficking is but she's not calling it the same thing. (Interview 29, Law enforcement)*

In regard to sexual exploitation of youth, many respondents highlighted the gap and discrepancy between the way they understand and perceive the youth's experiences as being sexual exploitation, and the way the adolescent or young adult perceive their involvement in the sex trade. This respondent argues that the moment to draw the line when the exploitation starts will differ from one person to another:

*She doesn't feel exploited. It's hard to know what it is that makes it feel like exploitation to them. For me, it's clear. But for them... That's the problem. And each person will have different limits in terms of what they can or can't tolerate depending on your level of self-esteem, depending on your reality, depending on the level of violence to which you've been exposed. (Interview 30, Youth shelter).*

Another challenge with the concept of human trafficking is that it is an umbrella term that includes such a broad range of types of exploitation and of populations. A fair number of respondents reported that they felt that some groups of people or some forms of trafficking received more public sympathy or more government resources than others (sexual exploitation versus forced labour)<sup>18</sup>. Many reported disappointment and disillusionment when cases of serious abuse and exploitation identified by the organization or the victim as human trafficking was not recognized as such by either law enforcement or immigration officials:

*There've been cases where there's been elements of human trafficking and the problem is that the definition of human trafficking when you look at the [Criminal Code] and the definition of human trafficking when a case goes before immigration [for a TRP] are two different things... And if you can't convict somebody of human trafficking then you can't push your case forward through the immigration. (Interview 3, Immigration)*

Along with the spread of the use of the definition of human trafficking comes other dangers. Several service providers cautioned against imposing labels on people:

*It's so important to let people name that experience. Because I think it can do damage if you impose those labels and you don't leave people the space to be*

*able to talk about what might actually be good about the situation, even though you and I know we're talking about what are generally horrible situations from an objective standpoint. But I think sometimes for the people in those situations it is serving some purpose, you know? And how people perceive their element of danger or fear about leaving the situation seems to be a little bit different, too. (Interview 7, Prostitution)*

There was a concern that attention and resources for human trafficking, a phenomenon which was of serious concern but which remained marginal in the work of most of the organizations we encountered, would take away from the support for crucial work on other social issues.

## **Sexual exploitation, sex work and human trafficking: debates and collaboration**

The most divisive issue related to the definition of human trafficking is, without a doubt, the degree to which sex work, sexual exploitation and human trafficking overlap:

*I think just talking to people in [our city], there seems to be such a diverse opinion on what trafficking means. I mean sometimes the last thing I hear come out of people's mouth is anything to do with labour trafficking right. It's exclusively about sex work as far as they're concerned and I have met people that consider anyone at all in sex work as exploited and as trafficked. So I think there isn't a lot of good public agreement on that. (Interview 7, Prostitution)*

In terms of sexual exploitation, there are a number of organizations whose mandate addresses this concern. The line between drawn between sexual exploitation and human trafficking is often blurred, however. For these organizations, the issue of trafficking is often addressed indirectly as something that is part of a larger issue of sexual exploitation.

In most of the cities we visited, differences around this question led to an inability of some groups to work together on trafficking issues. Groups on different sides of the debate expressed a sense of deep struggle to influence public perception of sexual exploitation, especially in the current political context in Canada since the Bedford case and the Supreme Court decision (“Canada (Attorney General) v. Bedford,” 2012).

*When we're looking at legislation or changing legislation what I see is that, you know, what gets all the air play are the sex workers who don't see this as a problem. What I don't hear is the voice of the trafficked woman. I don't. It's all about the rights of the sex workers, right? (Interview 13, Youth shelter)*

And while certain of those who equate prostitution with trafficking have invested time and resources into engaging with anti-trafficking groups in order to fur-

ther their viewpoint, other such organizations charge that attention on human trafficking makes the less extreme forms of prostitution seem banal:

*If trafficking is selling sex for money, well then, trafficking is basically prostitution. So, personally, I prefer to say 'prostitution' to make it clear. I never talk about 'sex work'. I say prostitution, with all the stigma attached. I think the stigma should stay so that we can fight against prostitution. Do you get the idea? (Interview 22, Prostitution)*

In several of the cities visited, sex work advocacy organizations also engage in the anti-trafficking efforts underway, making a distinction between sex work and exploitation, as we hear from this community worker:

*So with us not all sex work is exploitation but we do recognize that there is exploitation definitely in sex work. Really, for us, it's just about reflecting that back and saying, you know, you're telling me this and to me that sounds like you're not in control of your money right now, it sounds like you might not be safe... but at the end of the day we are a program that is sort of client focused and harm reduction, so we're not going to force our feelings about someone's situation onto them... When you have those external factors like extreme poverty or addiction dictating your need to work in sex work then to me that starts bordering on more the exploitation because you know you're kind of choosing the lesser of several evils I guess for a lot of people... (Interview 7, Prostitution)*

While it was common for anti-trafficking organizations to have a clear position as either pro-sex work or abolitionist in relation to prostitution, a large number of organizations – including many of the anti-trafficking coalitions – chose not to take a position. They preferred to remain accessible to either organizations (in the case of the coalitions) or individuals (in the case of service providers) with a range of opinions related to prostitution. Such service providers reported referring women who wanted to continue doing sex work to advocacy organizations for information and support related to safety and health, and referring those interested in leaving sex work to organizations specialized in supporting women transitioning out.

While we did hear of tensions between organizations on opposite sides of this debate leading to dramatic confrontations and an impossibility to collaborate, the majority of those we spoke with sought a common ground for collaboration. All groups were able to recognize that sexual exploitation exists (although the exact definition varied) and this served as a basis for collaboration on many coalitions.



## SECTION 2

### PROTECTING TRAFFICKING VICTIMS: SERVICES IN CANADA

Over the past ten years, programmes, services and initiatives addressing human trafficking have sprung up in Canada. Organizations to fight human trafficking, most with a mandate to educate the public, were created. These organizations were established by community members, religious congregations, student groups, local branches of international organizations, and other non-governmental organizations. This variegated anti-trafficking movement is not one of the focuses of this study, but it nevertheless forms the background and reflects a growing interest in the issue.

Very few organizations have a specific mandate to support and accompany trafficking victims.

On the level of service provision, however, very few organizations have a specific mandate to support and accompany trafficking victims. With very few exceptions, services and programmes to support trafficking victims are offered by organizations with broader or related mandates where trafficking victims might be encountered.

In parallel, networks, coalitions and task-forces against trafficking have been set up in all provinces and in many Canadian cities to improve coordination among frontline workers and organizations and to promote coordinated, intersectorial action. There has been a strong mobilization of frontline workers from many sectors: public, para-public, community, and police. However, respondents identified some gaps in the provision of support and accompaniment services for trafficking victims.

In this section, we will summarize the main needs of trafficking victims. We will then examine the state of resources and services throughout the different phases of intervention: emergency and immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term. Challenges and gaps encountered by frontline workers as well as promising practices will be reviewed. Three types of intervention will then be explored in more depth: housing; immigration services; and collaboration with police during investigations and prosecutions.

## THE MAIN NEEDS OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

Because of the complexity and heterogeneity of human trafficking, needs vary from situation to situation. Needs are numerous and require intervention by a multiplicity of actors. They may include immediate protection and security, emergency and transition housing, transportation (municipal, interprovincial or to country of origin), interpretation services, legal assistance, psycho-social assistance, detoxification services, and more. At the medium- and longer-term, more needs arise: including access to work, a stable source of income, return to studies, access to affordable housing, etc. Numerous services and organizations are necessary<sup>19</sup>.

Many organizations, networks and coalitions have developed tools identifying needs and the aid trajectory of trafficking victims. The tools consulted in Canada, the provinces and the US have many similarities and identify more or less the same needs. The table below summarizes these needs in three phases: (i) emergency; (ii) stabilization (short- and medium-term), and (iii) long-term and social re-integration.

EMERGENCY	SHORT- AND MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security and protection</li> <li>• Basic material needs: food, clothing, calling cards, basic hygiene kit, bus tickets</li> <li>• Immediate healthcare and screening (STD and pregnancy tests, etc.)</li> <li>• Information</li> <li>• Accompaniment</li> <li>• Emergency housing</li> <li>• Crisis intervention</li> <li>• Spiritual support</li> <li>• Legal aid</li> <li>• Youth protection</li> </ul> <p><i>International victims:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation and translation services</li> <li>• Legal and human rights support for detention and deportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security and protection</li> <li>• Continued medical aid</li> <li>• Legal aid</li> <li>• Mental health and psychotherapy</li> <li>• Psychosocial assistance</li> <li>• Accompaniment</li> <li>• Preparation for court</li> <li>• Transition housing</li> <li>• Studies/training</li> <li>• Advice and information</li> </ul> <p><i>International victims:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language courses</li> <li>• Work permit and/or immigration status</li> <li>• Family reunification</li> <li>• Assistance for protection and security of family in country of origin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return to studies, professional training</li> <li>• Employment support</li> <li>• Options and alternatives for stability</li> <li>• Independent, affordable housing</li> <li>• Continued security plan</li> </ul> <p><i>International victims:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language courses</li> <li>• Work permit and/or immigration status</li> <li>• Family reunification in Canada or assistance to return to country of origin (if desired)</li> <li>• Resolution and regularization of immigration status</li> </ul>

References: Aron, Zweig & Newmark, 2006, Caliber, 2007; Zimmerman, 2006; Clawson et al, 2008b; Oxman-Martinez, Lacroix & Hanley, 2006.

The needs of trafficking victims intersect with and may resemble the needs of other populations experiencing abuse and exploitation, such as migrants with precarious status working in abusive conditions and women subject to conjugal violence. While similar questions for intervention arise in these other settings, specific needs and challenges can also exist. Victims of trafficking often need stronger accompaniment and adapted services such as longer stays in housing facilities. Security issues can also be significant. We will return to these specific challenges later in this section. The circumstances of a victim's first contact with a frontline worker will be determinant: whether it takes place during a crisis, emergency or police intervention, or after they have left the exploitive situation.

## PROTECTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES: CONTINUUM OF AID

Many services to respond to the needs of trafficking victims already exist and are offered in the community. However, some services are lacking and some fail to meet the specific challenges of trafficking. Moreover, needs vary from situation to situation, as do the services required. One of the respondents sums up the fact that each new situation of trafficking poses new challenges. A common feature of support and accompaniment interventions is that frontline workers must often go beyond their mandate and face unanticipated and unprecedented situations:

*It is really difficult to come up with a typical idea of what we do in these files because there is always something we've never done before. This always leads us to work somewhat outside our mandate. (Interview 41, Victim Services)*

## IMMEDIATE PROTECTION

All respondents emphasized the importance of the first moments of intervention. The first 72-hours can be crucial in many ways, particularly in a crisis or during a police intervention. Many also identified as a fundamental challenge the necessity of responding rapidly, to avoid losing contact with the victim. Trafficking victims are reluctant to seek help and frontline workers feel that when victims do reach out, the opportunity must be seized without delay.

Frontline workers must be able to refer them to priority services without loss of time.

Common feature of support and accompaniment interventions is that frontline workers must often go beyond their mandate and face unanticipated and unprecedented situations.

During the first 72-hours of intervention, protection and housing for the victim must be secured. Essential material needs, such as food, clothes, bus tickets, and pocket money for personal needs, must also be met. Existing charitable organizations are generally able to fulfill these needs. Many frontline workers also highlighted the need for an emergency hygiene kit. It is fairly standard practice among organizations welcoming women who have worked in prostitution to offer this type of kit.

The majority of respondents emphasized the importance of a support network and of resources available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week for rapid referrals. Many municipal police forces across Canada have developed close ties with one or more organizations with whom they collaborate on trafficking cases.

This may involve, for example, close collaboration with aid services for victims of crime, housing resources, or community organizations who organize follow up among the various services or make a referral to a contact in a coalition or emergency team. There are a few more or less formalized emergency response mechanisms or models in Canada: memoranda of understanding or emergency teams. These can take the form of an agreement or informal partnerships among key partners, sometimes linked to a coordinating body of key frontline workers. The main actors involved in these emergency response mechanisms are police, health and emergency psycho-social support services, organizations to assist victims of crime, and centres providing housing and basic material needs. There are also intersectorial emergency teams set up by support organizations for victims of sexual assault which are also used for trafficking cases, notably around Toronto and in British Columbia.

The lack of 24-hour a day, 7-day a week services is an important gap in all sectors. To address this problem and help create a better referral system for trafficking victims, some groups have set up a 24/7 hotline which frontline workers, victims or community members can use to report a trafficking situation. Three different hotline strategies were identified. Some organizations and coalitions use and promote the Crime Stopper report line. Others have partnered with existing lines (e.g. a helpline for victims of crime in British Columbia; helplines for victims of sexual assault). Existing lines already have staff and infrastructure in place; it remains to train staff about human trafficking. Other coalitions, task-forces and organizations have set up a 24/7 emergency number staffed by one or more frontline workers. In Alberta, there is a distress line specifically for trafficking victims or for men and women in prostitution. It is impossible to evaluate the use and effectiveness of these emergency helplines at this time. Helplines initiated by coalitions will be addressed in Section 4 on intersectorial collaboration.

It is impossible to evaluate the use and effectiveness of these emergency helplines at this time.

## Security

The protection and security of victims is obviously essential, but it is not necessary in all trafficking cases. When criminal organizations are involved, increased security and protection measures are required; in such cases, secure housing is identified as a priority, as well as moving or transferring the victim to another city or province. Moreover, it was noted that current witness protection programmes are not well adapted to trafficking victims and need to be revised to offer them better protection. For international trafficking victims, the need for protection may extend to family in countries of origin. Even when it is possible to have contact with police forces in other countries, it is very difficult to ensure security of family members overseas.

Respondents were concerned with creating an environment in which victims could feel secure while addressing their needs. Frontline workers in housing resources observed that victims generally needed to recuperate. Victims are often exhausted by sleep deprivation and malnutrition. This respondent summarizes how she adapted her approach to better meet the needs of trafficking victims:

*In the beginning [...] we kept the secret. The other women thought that she [the trafficking victim] was another refugee ... They didn't know and they didn't want to know ... I see them every day, not only to gain their trust but also to make sure that they feel okay. [They] have more difficulty in taking care of their own health and there is also a tendency to depression. One of the scenarios we see is that as soon as they arrive in our shelter and they have their own room, they fall asleep and sleep for 24 hours. That means that their body is really tired of being constantly tense and in a state of alert: okay! We never discuss their situation the first day (Interview 15, Refugee Shelter)*

## Establishing Trust

The first contact is crucial to establishing trust with the victim. People in situations of exploitation are reluctant to seek help for many reasons: fear of reprisal, lack of trust in social services and officials, etc. While building trust is essential in any social intervention, it assumes a particular importance when people have experienced lies, deceit, excessive control, and violence. This is a known phenomenon (Surtees & Burnovski, 2007; Bjerkan, 2005; Raphale et al, 2010; Clawson and Dutch, 2008b) and it was highlighted by our respondents:

*Many trafficking victims won't accept services or aid the first or second [meetings] – maybe they won't take help for the first ten times. No problem. We have to continue to offer services and continue to push so that this person can receive the kind of appropriate support she needs. The reason they don't access the services the first time is often the same as in situations of conjugal violence, it's because they are assessing you just as much as you are assessing them. You know, they don't trust you. They don't trust, they've been fooled too often (Interview 2, Prostitution).*

The isolation in which the trafficker has kept them as well as language barriers and the absence of family and social networks make it difficult to establish trust.

In the case of people newly arrived in Canada, many do not know their rights and they may not be familiar with the federal and provincial systems. The isolation in which the trafficker has kept them as well as language barriers and the absence of family and social networks make it difficult to establish trust. How contact happens is also important; if it takes place during a police intervention or in prison, trust may be difficult or even impossible to establish (Caliber, 2007). Several frontline workers identified approaches and attitudes that can help create a bond of trust quickly; frankness and non-judgemental attitudes being among them:

*We must be honest and open with them. Yep ... they are pretty quick at seeing through bullshit. They have a radar for bullshit and they know if you really care about them. You can't work with this population, in this area, if you don't have passion. (Interview 18, Women's Shelter)*

## SHORT- AND MEDIUM-TERM PROTECTION AND SUPPORT

It is important to note that not all trafficking situations call for the kind of emergency intervention required during crises, rapid exits from situations of exploitation or police interventions. Apart from emergencies, many needs in the short- and medium-term were identified by respondents. Physical and mental health-care, legal aid, and transportation are considered necessary in the short- and medium-term.

## Mental Healthcare

The psychological consequences are numerous and sometimes last a very long time. Respondents identified some of the frequent mental health problems: post-traumatic stress syndrome, depression, borderline personality disorder, bipolarity, drug addiction, crushed self-esteem. Some of these mental health problems may have also pre-existed the exploitation.

*Everything about their esteem, to rebuild it; because even if they were told that they were beautiful, that they were cute, and all that, when they realize that they were used, there is a lot of damage. Those are the most serious consequences, I think (Interview 41, Victim Services)*

Mental health support was most frequently cited by respondents as an important need of trafficking victims, especially victims of sexual exploitation. However, access to mental health professionals (psychologists, psychiatrists) was also identified as problematic.

*Psychological aid is the biggest, largest piece missing ... enormous. Psychological aid is never funded by anyone. (Interview 2, Prostitution)*

Here the need for psycho-social support and assistance must be distinguished from the need for psycho-therapy or psychiatric treatment. Numerous community organizations and housing resources offer in-house psycho-social assistance as well as support and accompaniment services. Centres to help victims of sexual assault, for example, offer psycho-social assistance to address sexual violence; housing resources similarly offer support relating to conjugal violence; and organizations for youth in difficulty have in-house social workers or street workers. Resources rarely have access to a psychologist or psychiatrist. .

*We are talking about people who are in acute crisis and traumatic situations, I think that there is really a kind of minimum that you can do in psychological support or the well-being of their mental health ... When we work with people who have left a situation of exploitation, the question of mental health comes up for sure and we definitely see people who have needs beyond what we can offer. There are so many layers in these questions ... that you need an experienced professional clinician to address these type of difficulties (Interview 10, Trafficking shelter)*

Need for psychological support outstrips the existing capacity of community organizations. In cases of post-traumatic stress and when psychotherapy is needed, respondents highlighted the fact that they must refer to external resources to access professionals specialized in trauma. However, neither provincial healthcare programmes nor the Interim Federal Healthcare Programme cover this care.

*In our specific case we are in contact with a trauma psychologist and this service has to be paid for. It's really very expensive, and it's not something we have funding for, and we really have to do a lot of grant applications and fund-raisers to be able to provide this kind of support. (Interview 10, Trafficking Shelter)*

One option is to apply to crime victims' assistance funds or for crime victims' compensation to access counselling and have the fees covered. However, applications for compensation are not automatically accepted and can take a long time. In Quebec, for example, victims of crimes can apply to the Indemnisation pour les victimes d'actes criminels (Crime Victims' Compensation – IVAC) programme. Respondents from Quebec reported that the application was sometimes refused. Moreover, the Crime Victims' Compensation Act, which governs IVAC, does not cover procurement or human trafficking so victims must show that they were subjected to a related crime, such as sexual assault, assault or confinement.

To address this need, some organizations participating in the study created lists of psychologists and psychiatrists sensitive to the issue.

*When it gets into the more complicated issues like PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], they need professional help. So, we have some good counselors who have been screened and we have a list. (Interview 18, Women's Shelter)*

However, many respondents noted that there were few or no specialized services for post-traumatic stress also specialized in sexual exploitation and trafficking:

*There pretty much are no experts who've worked with victims of exploitation. There's few counselors who have worked in this area. There's a lot of trauma counselors, but that doesn't mean that they are prepared to handle the trauma that a trafficked victim has experienced. (Interview 68, Trafficking Shelter)*

Moreover, as this frontline worker stresses, the victim may require psychological support related to the experience of exploitation:

*But what she really wanted was counselling. So I originally thought that the counselling would be for sexual exploitation. What she actually wanted was counselling for the experience of trafficking itself. [She] was looking to talk with someone who was really well-versed in what that experience is. Like, the grooming process. So she really talked about wanting to have a counsellor that could really talk about what that process is — you know, being harboured by somebody. And there isn't anybody in the city that can really talk about that. Since then I've found one private counsellor ... But at the time I could only refer her to places, in individual stakeholders that deal with sexual assault or domestic violence. And I thought there was great overlap in both, but that's not what she wanted. She didn't want to talk about the actual physical sexual piece, she wanted to talk about the psychological ramifications and whatnot. So I wasn't able to help her. (Interview 38, Sexual Exploitation Shelter)*

International victims of trafficking have access to counselling once they have received the temporary resident permit (TRP) offered to trafficking victims.

*If you have a TRP, for the first six months you can see a psychologist based on the Interim Federal Health Program but after that six months, it's our understanding that in some cases there might be health care extended and in some cases not and that that's kind of discretionary. So in some of these cases we've been able to support the person to see a psychologist which is helpful. (Interview 68, Trafficking Shelter).*

In a crisis, frontline workers must often turn to hospital psychiatric departments or emergency units. However, these services are not adequate. Very few respondents said that they had used these crisis centres.

However, many respondents stressed the importance of respecting each individual's rhythm, even though mental health support is a necessary service for trafficking victims. Not all victims are ready to have psychological therapy. Many of them first want to get their life in order; finish legal proceedings, find work, and get custody of their children.

*So, a lot of them, it's usually too overwhelming, and it leaves them at the point where they either want to leave the program, or they want to maybe use a substance or escape in some other way, like, possibly have an unhealthy relationship or something like that... Some of them are just not ready to do counseling. (Interview 38, Sexual Exploitation Shelter)*

Some frontline workers stressed the fact that the need for psychotherapy wasn't always apparent in the first stage of recovery but only emerged after basic needs had been met and the person's situation was more stable. Sometimes a victim will only ask for therapy several years on, raising the issue of longer-term access to such services.

In conclusion, psycho-social services offered by community organizations are not sufficient to meet the psychological consequences of sexual exploitation and trafficking. The reported difficulties are: lack of post-traumatic stress services which also specialize in trafficking; lack of support to pay for services not covered by public healthcare systems; long waiting periods and overly short treatment (10 to 15 sessions). Participants emphasized the need for more resources accessible and adapted to the psychological needs of trafficking victims. Better referral mechanisms to professionals specialized in this field must also be developed.

## Physical Healthcare

Trafficking victims may have many physical health problems. Respondents identified healthcare as an important need that is sometimes difficult to access. This confirms results documented in previous studies (Clawson & Dutch, 2008b; Wil-

liamson, 2010). Health problems and physical impact, as well as the degree of urgency in accessing healthcare, will obviously vary greatly depending on the situation of exploitation. Some victims suffer malnutrition, many are sleep deprived, and they may have been subjected to physical and sexual abuse (Zimmerman, 2006). People working in prostitution will be at higher risk of sexually transmitted disease (STD) or unwanted pregnancy.

*Physically, many of our girls come back with untreated STDs ... We have one now, she has a pelvic inflammation, a PID. Her dream is to have children. Well, she will be sterile. ... Anyway, it is highly probable that she will never be able to have kids. You know, dreams are destroyed. STDs are pretty common. Often, more problems of drug consumption for youth who are forced to use drugs to be able to work. That's the main thing. (Interview 31, Youth Protection)*

The main health problems cited by respondents are extreme fatigue, effects of violence (various injuries and lesions, acute stomach pain), STDs, and problems related to drug use.

Frontline workers intervening with more marginalized and vulnerable communities identified community health clinics, sometimes mobile teams, as a good way of accessing healthcare. Moreover, mobile teams of nurses do outreach work that puts them in contact with these populations, particularly in the prostitution sector, in the locations where they work and live.

*We don't do any medical stuff onsite but we do have a service that does come in and do things like flu vaccines here and they can do some basic medical care here sometimes. There's also a health bus... that travels across the city so people can access some health services there as well. So there are health services that we can refer people to that are very easy to access, don't require you to have ID, don't require you to have an address or phone number. There's definitely services here that are tailored to people who might be street involved or might have a lot of other barriers to accessing healthcare. (Interview 7, Prostitution)*

Many frontline workers identified access to healthcare as problematic

Canada has various models of community health clinics aimed at youth and their sexual health. There are also partnerships between organizations working with people in prostitution and health services; for example, an arrangement for a nurse to pay a visit once a week or on a monthly to the organization and provide care. There are also anonymous clinics – requiring neither proof of identity nor immigration status – that offer care, sometimes limited, to migrants with precarious or no status.

However, these models and ways of accessing healthcare are not adapted to all situations of human trafficking; they are aimed at people marginalized by homelessness, street prostitution, youth and, more rarely, migration. Many frontline

workers identified access to healthcare as problematic, and recalled often having to accompany people to the hospital or emergency and wait for hours. Few respondents knew health professionals whom they trusted to take a non-judgmental approach. Another challenge cited was the absence of specialized services or a referral mechanism to health professionals well informed about the trafficking issue.

*Trafficked persons need to have services within the general healthcare system and beyond but that is trauma-informed. People need to be aware... All people should be treated with trauma-informed care, I believe, because you don't know who's been through what. They require specialized care and, unfortunately, the way our system works... when we don't recognize the specific needs of certain populations – this isn't just human trafficking, but other forms of violence – and we lump them in with the general population, their success rate of achieving health and happiness is not going to happen. (Interview 66, Health)*

Trafficking victims often have multiple health problems coupled with other problems such as addiction and mental health. One of the needs identified was access to integrated health and psycho-social services, to be capable of identifying and establishing the various needs of the victim and referring them to adequate professional services. A respondent spoke of this challenge:

*The majority of them come in with some mental health issues, whether it be bipolar or borderline personality disorder, post traumatic stress, anything like that. That's a challenge because a lot of the doctors and health providers out there as soon as they think "oh they've got an addiction", they'll not look at anything else, like the dual diagnosis ... They just slip through the cracks. (Interview 68, Trafficking Shelter)*

Many community organizations, particularly housing resources, would like access to a health resource or even have a nurse to provide onsite care and then referrals to deal with many health problems:

*Having an onsite nurse I think is quite important ... She has an opportunity to assess where some of their mental health or emotional needs are at. She's able to make those referrals. As well as [for those who do not have] healthcare cards or healthcare insurance, and access to healthcare. She's able to do some really basic stuff onsite, but then she's also able to make referrals and advocate strongly for them. She has gone with some our clients right to their medical appointments and advocated for them. She's amazing, she's great. That's one thing I think that should be in consideration. (Interview 38, Sexual Exploitation Shelter)*

Many respondents also highlighted the lack of awareness about human trafficking in the health field. Health services (emergency rooms, community clinics) are privileged locations for identifying victims. Trafficking victims are generally isolated and their opportunities for contacting frontline workers or services are few or non-existent. The health sector is one point of contact; for

example, in a crisis (following an episode of violence), a victim may end up in emergency. The potential for health professionals to play an important role here should not be neglected.

The Fraser Hospital in British Columbia is currently developing a mandatory online training for its staff. The training was developed by a group of nurses with experience working with survivors of sexual violence. Just as in situations of conjugal violence, every contact with a frontline worker or service should be an open door, an opportunity for victims to disclose their situation: “every door is the right door”.

## Legal Support and Advice

Legal and court support needs that respondents identified include regularization of immigration status, accompaniment when the trafficker is facing criminal charges, compensation claims for abusive working conditions, and indemnity, benefits, or compensation claims for victims of crime<sup>20</sup>.

Accompanying the victim through a judicial process can be an important part of supporting a trafficking victim.

Accompanying the victim through a judicial process can be an important part of supporting a trafficking victim. The first thing they need is access to information about their rights.

*So sometimes we can just equip them, give them information. I think that it's really, really important in these files to give as much information as possible. Because often they have been very abused. They knew nothing, they were controlled, had as little information as possible. So, we try to do the opposite so they can take back power over their lives. It's really the aim of all this work. (Interview 52, Victim Services)*

Some community organizations and housing resources offer legal advice and can readily make referrals to specialized lawyers (for example, immigration). In addition, several community legal clinics in various parts of the country have developed expertise or significant experience and interest in the area of human trafficking. Some community organizations working with migrants, especially temporary foreign workers and domestic workers, have developed expertise in responding to violations of labour standards and labour rights. Both formal (through labour standard boards, for example) and informal (direct approaches to employers) means are used to obtain compensation for unpaid salary, unpaid vacation leave, or damages for stress and violation of dignity. Very few cases of forced labour have led to criminal charges for human trafficking against the employer; even fewer have resulted in a guilty verdict<sup>21</sup>. For the most part, legal undertakings by international victims are aimed at having their labour rights respected and regularizing their immigration status.

In all provinces, services to help victims of crime were found to have played a role. These services are key: they have expertise, knowledge of the legal system and skills to inform victims about their rights and how the legal system works.

Some services for victims of crime also offer psycho-social support to victims or may be able to refer them to community resources. Several respondents described these services as a bridge or pivot point between police, legal and community services. However, these services fall within the provincial jurisdiction and their structures and organizations differ greatly from province to province. The use and role of services for victims of crime thus vary. Some victim services are incorporated into police forces, some are para-public, others are integrated into community organizations (legal aid clinics, housing resources, etc.). This respondent highlights the importance of developing the capacity of these services to work with trafficking victims:

*So there are police-based Victim Services Workers and community-based Victim Services Workers. We believe that they are a good channel to create awareness and deliver the services and so on. Human trafficking falls within their mandate because it is an offence in the Criminal Code ... Rather than start new services and new programs for which we don't have money, we need to be smart and strategic on how we use what is already in place. There are services and programs and great people in place already. So part of our work is to figure out that map of assets and recruit them and coerce them to work, you know, along – work in partnership. (Interview 36, Coalition)*

Finally, when criminal charges of human trafficking are laid against the trafficker and the file goes to court, it becomes centrally important that the victim be accompanied and prepared for court. Some services for victims of crime offer this kind of support, in collaboration with or complementary to investigators and prosecutors. Some facilities, particularly housing, also have qualified staff to do this kind of accompaniment; some may have a victim advocate on staff. Legal proceedings are long and complicated. Moreover, the burden of proof for the most part lies with the victims and their testimony. They thus need a great deal of support and need police and legal sectors to collaborate closely with the (community-based or public) front-line worker:

*In fact we have to go through the entire preparation. The anxiety can ... there are scenarios that they don't necessarily dare talk about sometimes. They are afraid that everyone will be there, that it will be published in the newspapers, that their name will appear ... So, we're there to do the preparation ... Of course we don't go into the content, it's not our work to get into the evidence ... We are really there at the emotional level, stress management, relaxation, breathing, really to learn how to breath in those moments. (Interview 52, Victim Services)*

Pressing charges and testifying against the trafficker is difficult for victims and can be traumatizing. Adequate psychological support is primordial.

One of the major difficulties of prosecution is its slow pace and the length of proceedings. From preliminary investigation to trial, it can drag on from one to three years. The victim may wish to end proceedings just to be able to turn the page:

*One of the biggest things that I'm having to do now, now that there are charges being laid against the offenders, it's assisting her through the long, long criminal justice process. The direct-service provider involved has to be prepared to be involved for two years, right, and longer, three, and Immigration as well, right? Like, you might be involved forever. So, these – you have to be prepared to be able to keep a file open that length of time. If your agency can't do that, then it's a struggle... It's a long process and Defence is going to try and bleed her out. So, they're going to drag these cases out as long as possible in hopes that she's just going to go away. (Interview 70, Legal Aid)*

## **Travel: Between Provinces and Municipalities and Overseas**

A victim may need to be transferred or repatriated on an emergency basis or in the short- or medium-term to another city, province or country. This need may arise for numerous reasons: protection and security (distancing the person from a trafficker or network), desire to be closer to loved ones, or access to more specific housing resources. Transportation may also be needed when cases are before the courts and the victim must travel frequently to attend trial (victims do not necessarily live in the city or location of the trial for security or other reasons).

There are currently very few services to cover travel costs, even during emergencies (victims only very rarely have the means of paying these costs themselves). Some community organizations working with youth in difficulty, homeless people, or people working in prostitution offer this kind of service.

As a temporary measure, organizations working on human trafficking have developed partnerships or (informal and fragile) agreements with some airline companies. Others have set up emergency funds to cover bus or train travel. These local initiatives require ongoing financial support so that these organizations can continue to cover travel costs.

Lack of access to an emergency fund or repatriation programme was identified by many respondents as a gap in the services offered to trafficking victims. Access to an emergency fund is essential; not only to cover local travel and longer trips, but for all immediate needs, which vary from case to case.

## **PROTECTION, SUPPORT AND LONG-TERM ACCOMPANIMENT**

Former trafficking victims face multiple challenges in the medium- and long-term: stabilization, transition and reconstruction of their lives. The process of recovery, both psychological and physical, is long and can take several years. However, support and accompaniment for long-term recovery are the least developed aspects of the aid trajectory for trafficking victims. Many tools, task-

forces, networks and referral mechanisms have been developed for emergency and short-term responses; few or no resources exist for long-term intervention and support. Moreover, few organizations have the resources to offer services and meet the needs of victims for a long period of time.

Mental health is a key element of long-term recovery. Access to transition housing (that is, semi-autonomous apartments) or affordable housing is also important. Another challenge for trafficking victims, for which there are few resources, is financial; access to work, studies or training and a stable income.

## Economic Stability

Many trafficking victims are heavily in debt. Migrants in particular have often had to spend large amounts of money to migrate to Canada. In addition, traffickers sometimes use their victims' identities for billing (public services, rent, rentals, etc.), purchases on credit (car or other), or to access loans. They may thus have debts to many institutions and governments. In these circumstances, stabilizing their financial situations can be complicated.

*Financially there is lots to say. "So, I've got a car and i don't have a driving licence, I can't pay for a car." So a lot, a lot, at that level, having used their name, then having run up tabs, then bills – the women are really in debt when they get out ... And the procedures here are not easy. (Interview 52, Victim Services)*

Budget management is also a skill to develop. .

## Access to Jobs

Job reintegration and skill development are also concerns. Needs are different from situation to situation. In situations of international trafficking for forced labour, access to work permits and/or regularization of immigration status are important issues to resolve.

*Lots of people, they want work... because they're trying to send money home. So, we've had some success in finding people work but it's not what we do and... it's hard. That's an area that really we need to try and wrap our brains around some more and really get some partners who are going to take that on themselves instead of us looking for work for people. (Interview 70, Legal Aid)*

Many of the difficulties encountered by people who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation are similar to those experienced by women transitioning out of prostitution. It is thus important to draw on the experience and expertise of

However, support and accompaniment for long-term recovery are the least developed aspects of the aid trajectory for trafficking victims.

frontline workers with people in prostitution, as well as studies on this issue. Finding an alternative or other options for revenue is one of the main challenges they face. There is a whole problematic here of leaving the milieu of prostitution and changing one's way of life. Although women do not keep their revenues when they are under the control of a pimp, the sex industry offers the means of making quick money, unlike minimal wage jobs and welfare.

*She was so caught up in the lifestyle... She just comes here and looks at her options and says "Well, I don't really want a life of poverty on welfare when I can make..." and I don't remember the exact amount. I think it was something like three grand she'd earned this guy in a weekend and handed the three grand over to him. But she still thinks, "I can make that money. That's how much I'm worth so why would I go to work at Tim Horton's and make however much an hour?" (Interview 10, Trafficking Shelter)*

Support for job reintegration includes preparing a CV, which can be difficult when the person has no professional experience prior to entering the sex industry.

*They don't have a CV, they don't have a curriculum vitae. They have a gap of ten years. So, what are they supposed to do? It means that they have to be accompanied. (Interview 22, Prostitution))*

Respondents also identified the need for women leaving situations of sexual exploitation to develop skills and habits adapted to the labour market (for example, punctuality, autonomy, etc.). All provinces have job reintegration programmes. However, respondents cited a lack of specific programmes and lack of awareness around the issue of trafficking.

## Access to Education

People who have been trafficked may eventually want to enter training programmes. According to respondents, it can often take at least a year before the person is ready to enter a training or formal education programme. The capacities and interests of each individual must be evaluated to help them make choices. Frontline workers emphasized that education is an important bridge to recovery and well-being. Education is an important tool for social reintegration, outside the milieu of exploitation, to recover self-esteem and develop autonomy:

*The journey from identifying the victim to their independence is long ... Unless they get a kind of lucky pass ... [and] the support they need, they won't get there. (Interview 11, Law Enforcement)*

This study documented many examples of people who ended up being exploited in the sex industry after having entered it in order to pay for their post-secondary education. It is thus important to ensure that they have the support and resources necessary to resume their education.

Trafficking victims may have never attended school or they may have left before the end of primary, secondary or post-secondary (college, university). Organizations stressed the need to adopt a less formal approach with those who have had little schooling: they must be supported through a process towards institutional education. This can include literacy training and English or French as a second language. People can then choose to finish their secondary education or do professional training. For those eager to get back into the labour market, organizations highlighted the need for professional programmes, involvement in social economy projects, and work internships. In other cases, people leaving trafficking may be better served by a post-secondary education which would help them enter a profession.

Frontline workers emphasized that education is an important bridge to recovery and well-being.

It is essential that education efforts help develop capacity to earn a salary to meet one's own needs and, depending on the situation, those of one's family, in *dignity*. Hope for a good or even a high income underlies many people's vulnerability to human trafficking.

*A trafficking victim must have access to a decent income to distance themselves from this situation; if not, they may be back on welfare, not be able to stick to their budget, and be back out on the streets really soon. So it is primordial for us to ensure that this person will have a better income or the potential to get one, like better education. (Interview 10, Trafficking Shelter).*

Organizations with longer experience working on trafficking note that it often takes several years and the completion of an appropriate educational programme before people who have been trafficked are able to look on the future with more confidence, security and hope.

## KEY ISSUES

Obviously our division of aid into different steps – emergency, short-, medium- and long-term is not so clear-cut in practice. Each person's journey is far from linear and needs may arise at any of these steps.

Three key issues require constant attention: identifying situations of trafficking through continuous outreach; education and training of frontline workers; and the key role of an accompanying, lead service worker.

### Identification and Outreach

The first barrier to offering services is identifying victims. Our interviews revealed that many trafficking cases go unidentified (Farrel et al., 2010; Webber & Shirk, 2005; Oxman-Martinez, Lacroix & Hanley, 2006). First, trafficking victims do not identify themselves as such, or only very rarely. Frequently isolated by the traf-

ficker, people in trafficking situations are reluctant to seek help or prevented from doing so. It is thus crucial to meet these people and ensure that they receive information about available services and their rights. Outreach is thus primordial to intervention; at sex industry sites (e.g. strip bars and massage salons), and at workplaces of precarious migrants.

However, it is difficult to reach potential victims. This is partly due to the clandestine, underground and invisible nature of trafficking. For example, the sex industry has changed. Street prostitution has given way in many areas of Canada to a less visible industry taking place in private spaces (condos, houses, apartments), motels, and hotels, and organized through agencies and online advertising. It is thus more difficult to meet people working in prostitution. This constitutes a significant barrier to outreach and street work. It is also very difficult to reach more vulnerable populations in forced labour; domestic workers and other workers who live with the employer or work in isolated places (e.g. in agriculture, forestry, mining) or very small-scale businesses (family or with few employees).

Frontline workers also testified that these populations were not only marginalized but in precarious situations. Youth in difficulty or street-involved, people working in the sex industry, and migrants with irregular immigration status live in precarious and unstable conditions, with high mobility (frequent changes of address and telephone). Some respondents highlighted the difficulties of staying in touch with potential victims:

*That's the thing, I've had clients that just, like, disappear. And I don't know whether they're moving on their own will or if they got, like, a job ... or that's the thing, right, when you lose that contact ... like, they're so transient their phone numbers are never the same. Like, you know, I'm trying to get a hold of old clients and I can't and ... or even ... even this session a couple times they just stop showing up and we heard they moved out of the city and it's just, like, you don't know why they moved or where they went or with who. So —Yeah, that's definitely true because our population is really transient. Some have been moved elsewhere and we would have no way of knowing that. (Interview 1, Youth)*

## Education and Awareness-Raising

The question of identification naturally leads to the importance of education and awareness-raising, with both frontline workers and the broader public. Nurses, doctors, street-workers, police, and social workers will all be better qualified to identify victims once they have a better knowledge of the issue. Not only frontline workers but any member of the public can help detect and identify a situation of trafficking or meet a trafficking victim. Respondents thus noted the importance of encouraging greater awareness of the public in general and of more targeted training of frontline workers who would be in a position to identify situations of risk.

Respondents all agreed that targetted awareness-raising for frontline workers has positive results. However, opinions were divided about awareness-raising for the general public. Many respondents expressed reservations about the multitude of awareness-raising initiatives. Some awareness-raising promotes a sensationalist representation of trafficking, which impedes victim identification<sup>22</sup>.

Discourses like this feed an image of trafficking as exclusively about extreme and stereotypic situations – someone locked up and physically restrained – which obscures situations in which coercion and violence are primarily psychological. Such stereotyped images of victims can add to the reluctance of exploited people to identify as trafficking victims. This respondent expresses the difference of perception:

*And the media is one thing, the newspapers that publish is one thing. But go to court and look at the transcript and see the case, it's going to be different than what the media publishes. 'Cause right now it's sexy, human trafficking, the word – everyone jumps on it, right? So it's not always accurate. (Interview 26, Law Enforcement)*

This respondent highlights the importance of the choice of words and the different perceptions that frontline workers and victims may have:

*They were paid under the table very, very little and they were working upwards of like eighteen, twenty hours a day. So a lot of indicators of trafficking. And when I talked to these individuals they didn't think they were victims of anything. They certainly didn't think that human trafficking was a phrase that applied to them. So that was another real concrete example for me of how the language we use is so important. You use words like victim and that doesn't mean anything to a person. Then we're using words like slave... I could never use those words to those individuals. It wouldn't mean anything to them... When I asked, "Do you want to pursue criminal charges... against this individual that kept you in this warehouse?", their words were "We didn't think he was that bad of a guy." (Interview 5, Coalition)*

Thus while all respondents agreed on the need for more awareness-raising, care must be taken to avoid a sensationalist definition or view of trafficking. This risks departing from the victim-centred approach advocated by all involved in the fight against trafficking. As many respondents stressed, victims must be allowed to name the reality they are living according to their own perception of it.

Some organizations created a list of indicators or tools or information documents aimed at facilitating the identification of potential victims. These indicators are integrated into awareness and training sessions. Within an individual's specific context, they can help identify the presence of trafficking. However, many respondents warned against using a list of indicators without analysing the context.

In their view, it is difficult to reduce the complexity of trafficking to a few “ingredients” or elements without a contextual analysis. The issue of indicators to identify trafficking is also examined in the section on intersectorial collaboration below.

## Accompaniment and Role of Lead Service Workers

Trafficking victims need more accompaniments and require more hours of intervention.

A unanimous observation emerged from the interviews: trafficking victims need more accompaniments and require more hours of intervention. This difference between trafficking victims and other populations was also documented in other studies (Clawson & Dutch, 2008a, b). It is explained by the complexity of their situations: the multiple needs of trafficking victims and the multidimensional issues they often face require that many steps be taken simultaneously, necessitating many hours of accompaniment. In fact, as we have seen, multiple aspects of their recovery require psycho-social support and accompaniment: search for housing, frequent or daily psychological support, applying for social assistance, returning to school, finding work, etc. Each situation is different and frontline workers must often go beyond their mandates. Another specific or particular characteristic of accompanying trafficking victims that emerged was its emotional intensity. Victims may have lived through severely traumatic events. The complexity and the emotional intensity of accompaniment have numerous effects on interventions.

Relatedly, it emerged that there is a great need for flexibility of approach, of intervention framework, and in the number of hours of accompaniment. Unfortunately, many organizational frameworks – notably public but often also community – do not allow for the flexibility or time these cases require. Such support and services may also be beyond the capacity of some organizations. It is difficult for already overstretched organizations to justify or sustain such an overload of work.

To meet these challenges, many respondents stressed the importance of a lead service worker or accompanier able to provide the accompaniment necessary for all needs, to coordinate services and ensure support in the various resources. Some American studies about service provision to trafficking victims also identified the role of case management as a promising practice that can help address many of the difficulties raised by the frontline workers interviewed (Clawson & Dutch, 2008a, b).

This helps address the issue of trust. Many respondents recommended that a lead service worker be assigned to accompany victims so that they are spared the meanderings of the aid network and not forced to repeat their story endlessly to

different service workers. However this lead worker must be supported by a team and a network of frontline workers. This lead worker is also well-placed to raise the awareness of people working in the different sectors and services contacted on behalf of the victim. Through referrals and collaboration, these lead workers provide information and raise awareness about the issue of trafficking.

Another promising practice that was identified is peer support; that is, support from other survivors. Organizations created and managed by survivors, mostly of sexual exploitation, already exist in the country. These organizations provide exactly this kind of support and accompaniment and an intervention framework that meets the needs of victims.

## SPECIFIC NEEDS OF TARGETTED GROUPS

Up to this point, we have been addressing gaps and issues common to all trafficking situations. However, despite some similarities in the needs of international and domestic trafficking victims (Clawson et al., 2008a; Caliber, 2007; Aron, Zweig & Stewart, 2006), each situation has its specific traits. The diverse types of trafficking and of social groups and populations at risk of trafficking need to be understood.

### International Victims

Among the groups requiring a specific approach are migrants with precarious status. They need more complex legal advice and help regularizing their status. Non-Canadian victims often lack the necessary knowledge and may not be familiar with the local system of legal and social rights. Issues relating to immigration status are dealt with in detail in Section 3.

In addition to immigration status, international trafficking victims face other difficulties; notably cultural and linguistic barriers. Even when non-Canadian victims have legal status in Canada, their needs may differ from those of Canadian victims. First, they may need interpretation. The quality and accessibility of interpretation services vary greatly from city to city and province to province. In some provinces, frontline workers had an overall positive experience collaborating with interpretation services. In others, the situation was more difficult. Several common challenges emerged: like other situations requiring interpretation, reliance on an interpreter considerably changes intervention dynamics and the development of trust. Communication becomes more challenging, and it may be more difficult to understand the victim's story. In addition, finding an interpreter (by telephone or in person) who speaks the right language and dialect may cause delay. Distrust was also flagged as an issue: victims may fear that their story will become known to members of their community and this may make them more reluctant to speak about their experiences of exploitation. Respon-

dents also highlighted the importance of adopting a culturally sensitive approach in housing resources. In food and general life-style, frontline workers must remain alive to different spiritual, cultural and communication needs.

## Indigenous People

Indigenous people, specifically women, are identified as one of the groups most vulnerable to and heavily affected by human trafficking in Canada. This reality is rooted in colonialism, and enduring racist, social and economic inequalities and discrimination. However, there are few studies – Canadian or other – on the issue of trafficking of indigenous people. Our study was moreover unable to further understanding of this issue.

The exploitation, discrimination and violence experienced by indigenous women and children must be understood in a post-colonial context. The Canadian public has only recently begun to pay attention to violence against indigenous women and link this exploitation to human trafficking. Consciousness of trafficking grew apace with heightening public awareness of the disappearance of women, often supposed to have entered the sex industry and sometimes eventually found dead. Indigenous women are dramatically over-represented among these disappeared women and indigenous women's organizations have adopted a strategy of mounting a public campaign to have this kind of exploitation and violence against women in Canada recognized as human trafficking. For many participants in our study, the concept of human trafficking is just one tool among others. Other forms of violence experienced by indigenous women may not be trafficking but they are no less heinous.

In Western Canada, indigenous people have a large presence in urban centres and are greatly over-represented among victims of violence, criminalization and sexual exploitation. Respondents emphasized the absence of social and family networks, economic precarity, and difficulties in finding work as factors creating vulnerability to trafficking. While these factors are consistent across most situations of trafficking, many stress the fact that indigenous women are also subject to specific forms of trafficking because they are indigenous:

*There have been cases in which young indigenous girls were lured by strangers and forced to move in order to do prostitution in a similar way to non-indigenous girls. However, the kinds of trafficking to which indigenous women and girls are subjected because they are indigenous are associated with discrimination, racism, poverty and the breakdown of social networks. In the Canadian prairie provinces, the first to exploit the vulnerability of indigenous women and girls are family members, known people who hang out with indigenous gangs, drug-pushers and “friends” from the streets. (Interview, First Nations)*

Given the complexity of this issue, in-depth studies should be undertaken to identify causes and needs.

## Intervening with Minors

Adolescent and young women constitute the group most vulnerable to sexual exploitation. In youth interventions, there is still a great deal of confusion and overlap between juvenile prostitution (perceived more as a problem of behaviour and delinquency), sexual exploitation (emphasizing the fact that any minor is first and foremost a victim of sexual abuse), and trafficking<sup>23</sup>.

Work with minors engages distinct legal and institutional frameworks, such as Quebec's *Loi sur la protection de la jeunesse* (youth protection act), which is provincial jurisdiction. Some provincial governments, including Alberta and Manitoba, have established specific legal measures to combat and respond to the sexual exploitation of minors. Minors involved in prostitution are considered to be victims of sexual abuse and this legislation ensures that protective measures are applied. For example, in Alberta, the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* (PSECA) gives police and youth protection officials the power to place youth at risk or in a situation of sexual exploitation in custody. The youth can be held in a secure residence from 5 to 47 days. Some residences are specialized in dealing with sexual exploitation. The law thus assumes access to certain services for children and the family. The legal frameworks differ from province to province and it was not possible in the context of this study to undertake a comparative analysis of the different systems and their implications for interventions with minors.

Youth protection institutions play a frontline intervention role with numerous youth who have been sexually exploited or who are at risk of sexual exploitation and have been reported, specifically returned runaways. Across the country, the level of awareness of youth protection bodies about trafficking and their collaboration with other sectors, such as community, differ significantly. Youth protection agencies generally have existing collaborations with police forces as well as information-exchange mechanisms or protocols. The return of runaways presents an important opportunity to intervene and expose trafficking situations. Some agencies have developed awareness-raising and prevention tools specifically aimed at sexual exploitation. In addition to the inherent limitations and difficulties of working with a non-voluntary group, one of the issues flagged concerns the transition to adulthood. The issue of supporting and preparing youth once they have attained the age of majority is crucial and requires close collaboration with other organizations. It would be interesting to undertake future research on the best way to intervene in situations of sexual exploitation under the Québec *Loi de la protection de la jeunesse* (youth protection act), based on a Canadian comparative analysis.

The return of runaways presents an important opportunity to intervene and expose trafficking situations.

Outside the institutional youth protection frameworks, there are many issues specific to working with minors. For example, prevention must be carried out in all sectors affecting youth: school, youth centres, social media. Social networks and internet now play an important role and frontline workers are modifying their prevention tools for youth accordingly. Several organizations working with youth are developing programmes and activities centered on prevention through media. It will be interesting to study the impact of these evolving intervention strategies.

The involvement of minors – that is, teenagers – in prostitution is certainly no new phenomenon. Organizations working with street-involved youth and youth in difficulty have expertise and a vast experience on the ground. Their work must obviously be built upon when intervening with youth at risk of human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Given that the intervention of each sector is limited, any effective action strategy must involve collaboration, thus providing youth with a broad continuum of services and ensuring the capacity to intervene at any given point along the trajectory towards situations of trafficking.

## Men and Boys

Men and boys are all but forgotten in discussions of human trafficking, largely because women and girls are the main victims. The realities and dynamics of trafficking of boys and men remain invisible, misunderstood, and untracked. Some respondents explained this invisibility as arising from the difficulty of perceiving men as victims. Operation Opapa, which exposed the forced labour of Hungarian men in Ontario, proves that men too can be trafficking victims (Kaye, 2013; Hastie & Yule, 2014). However, this case remains an anomaly and the vast majority of resources and most attention are focused on potential women victims.

Moreover, male prostitution appears to bear an even greater stigma and the phenomenon and its forms of exploitation are misunderstood. While respondents who work in the prostitution sector all confirmed the existence of sexual exploitation of boys, few document the cases they encounter:

*It's not just a single — yeah, women are predominantly the victims, but there's a lot of boys, a lot of children. We have Boys downtown here. Same thing happens to them, and there's not as much attention that happens, You don't get as many kids coming forward in the boys' side. It's a — it's, I think, a bigger stigma, but you can't ignore the boys but, I mean, I know most of the focus is on the female side and the juvenile side, but I find the male side is extremely neglected. (Interview 44, Law Enforcement)*

The same respondent also highlighted the discomfort that police forces may have in investigating masculine prostitution:

*Well, we started, you know, going on gay.com and a few things. We had permission to do that, and we had a lot of information coming in from the gay community. But my bosses were very nervous, because we have a great rapport with the gay community, and — but it made a lot of people uncomfortable politically, especially in the gay population, because a lot of people are scared to go there because it's risky, right, and it doesn't — you can get a lot of bad press in law enforcement if something's done wrong, but we have a boys track. We used to look after it. (Interview 44, Law Enforcement)*

All interviews confirmed that few or no resources exist for male trafficking victims. Thus, when frontline workers encounter a male trafficking victim, they face an important lack of resources.

*So that's happened a number of times with male victims and we really scrambled, we really don't have anything in place ... sorry I'm talking about the challenges and some of the gaps but it's something we've identified in case coordination is that the services for men are really few and far between and not always very appropriate for the needs of the victims. (Interview 5, Coalition)*

When frontline workers encounter a male trafficking victim, they face an important lack of resources.



# SECTION 3

## SPECIFIC ISSUES ABOUT SERVICES FOR TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

### HOUSING

Housing is crucial for people leaving situations of trafficking. Numerous frontline workers identified housing as simultaneously the main immediate need and one of the main challenges. Typically, the most immediate needs involve housing. According to one respondent, one of the first questions asked during the identification of trafficking victims is, “*Where will they sleep?*” (*Interview 5, Coalition*)

Access to housing is important in the service trajectory, both short- and long-term. Victims urgently need housing to leave the situation of exploitation and ensure their security; to reflect, sleep and eat comfortably, and gain stability. Transition housing is also an important need in the recovery process, both psychologically and financially. Long-term, affordable housing facilitates access to work and a stable income.

## Accessibility

The main challenge is to find housing, specifically in an adapted facility. The adequacy and adaptation of housing services to the specific needs of trafficking victims raises many questions and dilemmas.

Canada has few housing resources specifically for trafficking victims. To our knowledge, there are only two formally established centres, although other initiatives are under development or have just been opened. At the time of publication, we were not able to ascertain if these new shelters were in operation. Other shelters reserve some beds for trafficking victims. There are also housing resources for women transitioning out of prostitution which offer structured programmes (such as education programmes and job integration) and which can readily be used for women who have been sexually trafficked.

Apart from these few resources, frontline workers generally refer the victim to resources serving other populations: youth in difficulty or street-involved, abused women or women in difficulty, migrant women or families and, more rarely, homeless people. Sometimes trafficking victims are identified but trafficking is not given as the grounds for the housing request.

The respondents were unanimous that there is a lack of housing resources for male trafficking victims. Housing for men is usually aimed at homeless people and is not suitable for the needs of these victims. A few rare facilities for migrant men (asylum seekers) exist.

*So that's happened a number of times with male victims and we really scrambled. We really don't have anything in place... It's something we've identified in case coordination, that the services for men are really few and far between and not always very appropriate for the needs of the victims... There's almost no shelter for men... unless a man wants to go to the drop-in centre downtown, but there's pretty low security there... His traffickers could just walk in and grab him. So there's not a lot of great services in terms of shelters for men. (Interview 17, Coalition)*

For women, sometimes including young women between 16 and 18 years old, homes for women victims of conjugal violence may best meet the needs of trafficking victims for sexual exploitation. We will thus focus on shelters for abused women. However, while trafficking victims may share experiences with

women who are victims of conjugal violence, respondents identified several specific difficulties and challenges, confirming the findings of studies in the United States and Europe (Caliber, 2007; Shigekane, 2009).

One difficulty is that shelters sometimes refuse trafficking victims. While collaboration between shelters and police or other frontline workers is generally very good and many shelters are open to trafficking victims, cases of refusal have also been reported.

Apart from lack of space, which is by no means limited to the trafficking issue, security and admission criteria pose other difficulties. Some shelters refuse trafficking victims because they believe that the dangers will be greater than those associated with conjugal violence; while at shelters for migrant women or families, the issue of security may not even be on the radar. At shelters for refugee women, it may also be impossible to accept people who are not asylum seekers. Similarly, trafficking victims may be refused from other shelters because they have not experienced conjugal violence.

Respondents identified drug dependency as another challenge to accessing shelters: women must be sober to be admitted. This complicates access to adequate support, especially within a short timeframe. The majority of housing resources have a policy of zero tolerance to drug and alcohol consumption. Women with this kind of problem must thus first access a detox service.

*[...] so we've been really lucky have amazing support from women's shelters. There's a number across the province that have been really helpful and really been able to ... and in some of the cases we've had to kind of explain, some of the women's shelters have said things like "well we only help victims of domestic violence" and in some of these cases of trafficking the trafficker was living in the same house so it's is domestic violence or family violence. So we've been able to make that connection for shelters. In some of the cases where it's not domestic violence at all but where it's still human trafficking we still have shelters that are willing to open their doors and you know they're pressed for their resources as well but they have recognized the immediacy of the needs of some of these individuals. (Interview 5, Coalition)*

In addition to admission criteria and high occupancy rates, referral procedures can also sometimes create barriers. Shelters may require that the woman call directly rather than allow a frontline worker to do so on her behalf. This practice is not always suitable for emergency situations or when the victim is in a state of post-traumatic shock. Moreover, when preparing for a police intervention, investigators may need to "reserve" one or more beds in a shelter so that post-intervention needs can be met rapidly. However, shelters do not operate in this way and are not able to guarantee access to beds in advance.

Sometimes a woman may need a place for a few nights only, but homes for abused women generally do not offer emergency shelter. Shelters for homeless people, on the other hand, do offer one or two nights but are not suited to the needs of trafficking victims; for example, security measures are not adequate.

In relation to these access issues, all respondents emphasized the importance of having a network and contacts with shelters to facilitate and accelerate referrals. Trafficking situations do not always fit the admission criteria of housing resources, especially during police interventions. It is important to ensure that housing resources have a good understanding of trafficking and that their frontline workers are able to provide adequate support.

Finally, another challenge was identified in connection with the existing network of shelters (that is, that are not specialized in trafficking). This network is not equipped or prepared to receive many victims at once, a need that may arise in the aftermath of a police intervention or the dismantlement of a trafficking ring. This has already happened on more than one occasion; for example, a dozen victims were simultaneously freed in the context of Operation Opapa in Ontario.

Given the shortage of available shelters, other housing practices have developed, such as hotels and rotating safe houses (that is, the location regularly changes so that addresses remain confidential and emergency housing can be guaranteed for a few nights).

## Security Issues

Housing needs for trafficking victims are often linked to the need for protection. However, not all trafficking situations require security; situations must be assessed on a case by case basis. Homes for abused women already have security mechanisms to prevent reprisals by violent partners. Trafficking victims and abused women thus share a need for protection from their exploiters. However, respondents stressed the fact that some cases of trafficking require greater protection, particularly when criminal organizations are involved. Shelters specifically for trafficking victims have heightened security measures in place and tighter ties with the police.

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Victims may ask to be moved to another city or province for their security. It may also prove necessary to move them more than once; changing housing, cities, and provinces. When this is the case, an interprovincial network of housing resources might prove useful in certain situations.

Victims may also prefer to return to their country of origin. Although this does not seem to be a wide-spread practice, some frontline workers facilitate volun-

tary repatriation by relying on an international network of resources and allies. This ensures that the person has access to support, a welcome at the airport, and housing upon arrival:

*[We have access to] a global network of women's shelters and we're really excited that this exists because there was one woman who wanted to go home and we were able through this other network of women's shelters to make sure somebody was at the airport to pick her up when she got home and that she was going to have a safe place to stay and not be re-trafficked. (Interview 6, Sexual Exploitation Shelter)*

In shelters for people in difficulty, men or women, protective measures are insufficient. The trafficker can easily find them. Moreover, many frontline workers cited a risk of recruitment or further victimization in this type of resource :

*I remember a case where we dealt with a resource for women in difficulty. Then another woman went there to look for her and inform the pimp where she was, so there are real security challenges in short-term housing. (Interview 52, Victim Services)*

## Co-habitation? When Housing Resources aren't Trafficking-Specific

As already noted, trafficked women and women who have experienced conjugal violence have similar needs and issues. They have experienced some form of violence, fear for their lives, and need protection from their aggressors. Moreover, women in housing resources face multiple problems, just like trafficking victims. However, respondents identified difficulties and limits in their interventions which were not always appropriate to situations of human trafficking. For these reasons, housing resources have resorted to different ways of adapting their practices.

Homes for abused women offer numerous support and psycho-social services, and can provide referrals to other resources as necessary. Housing resources for abused women can offer, for example, a 24/7 crisis line; psycho-social and crisis intervention services, consultation and information services, referrals and accompaniment for various procedures (legal, medical, administrative, and immigration). Some resources also provide support for job re-integration, returning to school, and post-shelter follow up. Some resources primarily host migrant women and have developed a solid expertise in immigration processes and in working with interpreters. They have also developed an approach to different ethnocultural communities.

While these may initially appear appropriate, there are difficulties in adapting housing resources to adequately meet the needs of trafficking victims. First of

all, not all housing resources have experience working with complex immigration situations nor the capacity to meet the needs of foreign trafficking victims.

Other difficulties brought up during interviews relate to issues already canvassed above. Notably, support and accompaniment of trafficking victims require more time, more intense intervention, and specialized psychological support, notably in trauma.

*A trafficked victim is going to come with very, very severe, compounded traumas – emotionally, psychologically, sexually, and otherwise. Shelters [are] not equipped and [do] not have the specific programming to assist in that area. (Interview 68, Trafficking Shelter)*

Other difficulties identified by respondents point to a discrepancy between the needs of trafficking victims and the environment offered by this kind of housing. Trafficking victims may feel that the environment doesn't suit them for many reasons. First of all, these homes are often governed by restrictive rules and measures such as a curfew and codes of conduct including obligations to participate in the centre's activities (e.g., educational programmes, group activities, weekly meetings with a frontline worker). Limited resources and the need to serve many different people make it very complicated to accommodate individual wishes.

*Some girls don't do so well in that environment. It's not a good place for them to be. It's challenging for her because we have rules and everything and so for a lot of these girls they've been held against their will so they don't want to be told what to do, where to go, what time to get up. I mean that's what ... That's kind of how they've lived their life, right? So it's a bit of a challenge getting that balance. But yeah that's their immediate needs, it's just "let me be me, don't control me, give me back my independence, let me be me". (Interview 18, Women's Shelter)*

In addition to the strict rules of community life, the sharing of common areas and a general lack of intimacy were also cited as barriers for trafficking victims. However, some housing resources have adapted their interventions to take a more flexible approach with trafficking victims:

*So when they come here... as long as they're getting along, there's a lot of latitude... I'll give these girls a lot. Like they don't ... They can just sit and to try and figure out what it is they want to do next and I don't put any big timelines on them for that to happen... because for a victim it requires flexibility. You cannot put them back in a shelter because they've just been pulled out of a controlled situation. You're throwing them back into a controlled situation. (Interview 15, Refugee Shelter)*

Trafficking victims for sexual exploitation may experience shame about their involvement in prostitution, the sexual violence to which they have been subjected, and

the gravity of the trauma endured. Stigmatization around prostitution – whether real or feared – may mean that victims of sexual trafficking share few or none of their experiences with other residents.

*We have not disclosed and the women have the right to, yes or no, disclose if they've been trafficked and they've all chosen not to because of the stigma. They feel the stigma is there. Especially if it's prostitution. Because they feel that people won't accept them. And the honest to goodness truth is probably a lot of them wouldn't understand it and they'd start judging. And because it's communal living, that could be a real strain. So I hate the thought that these women, although we keep them here and we try to support them as best we can, they can't totally be themselves because they're having to keep quiet about the real reason why they're here. (Interview 18, Women's Shelter)*

For this reason, peer group and support activities, which are frequently part of the services and activities at shelters, are not always appropriate for trafficking victims. This issue was identified by respondents and has also been documented in studies in the United States (Caliber, 2007). The frontline workers interviewed preferred an individualized approach.

Another difficulty with co-habitation is the sensitive question of behaviour. Shelters hosting women and children do not provide an appropriate environment for episodes of rage and aggression:

*People when they're in pain can act very differently. And in this house, because we have children, they can't do the displays of anger that they might do if they were in another setting. We understand it as workers, but our clients don't necessarily understand it and they're coming from an abusive relationship and they don't understand. (Interview 18, Women's Shelter)*

Many respondents confirmed that some victims of sex trafficking did not want to go into women's shelters; they didn't identify with the issue of conjugal violence. Their way of life was too different from that of the general population. This was particularly the case with young adults, in their early twenties or younger: they didn't want to be in with women in their thirties who were in shelters with their children.

*We also hear: "I don't want to go with women victims of conjugal violence. That's not me, it's not a couple relationship." Some will see things like that. Some will still say, even after it's over, "It's my ex." Others, on the other hand, don't want to have any association ... so they don't see themselves going into a shelter; they don't identify, they don't see themselves, no similarity, so it's less appropriate. (Interview 52, Victim Services)*

In sum, the communal living and lack of intimacy, overly restrictive measures such as curfews, and the necessity for greater self-control were identified by respondents and by the trafficking victims they worked with as problematic for women leaving situations of sexual exploitation.

The challenges in forced labour cases involving non-Canadian women are on a completely different plane: regularization of immigration status, integration into a new community, and linguistic and cultural barriers.

*It is also complicated because the residency for these women drags on much longer. Because it takes time to get it all together. [Their documents, to see their income.] Everything. Everything. Everything. Everything takes longer. So we extend their stay, and then it isn't necessarily healthy for a woman to remain in the shelter longer than three months because she sees others leave. She sees others moving forward in their lives; then even if she is moving forward with her procedures, she has the impression that she isn't moving forward enough. As though there aren't enough positive changes in her life. And then sometimes it plays with [dynamics, relations] between residents because she becomes like the queen of the shelter. (Interview 39, Women's Shelter)*

Given these challenges, some respondents recommend establishing facilities uniquely for trafficking victims. However, opinions diverged on this point. Other respondents preferred the solution of making existing resources more appropriate by training and preparing shelter staff to meet the specific needs of trafficking victims.

## Longer-Term Challenges for Housing

Access to housing resources is generally short- or medium-term. Transition housing – autonomous apartments at affordable prices – may sometimes be available, but it is insufficient: the number of places is often limited and occupancy rates are very high. Many respondents confirmed that sexual exploitation and forced labour trafficking victims often need longer stays in housing. Once priority and urgent needs have been dealt with, they need to equip themselves to find work. Moreover, for migrant women, immigration procedures and integration may require more time than shelters usually offer.

The majority of respondents highlighted the challenge of accessing affordable or social housing. Public programmes are limited. Waiting lists are long. Added to the lack of employment access programmes and the obstacles trafficking victims face in finding alternative and sustained sources of income, the difficulties of finding long-term housing may destabilize the recovery process. Victims without regularized status do not have access to social housing, or at least not easily.

Other respondents highlighted the location of social housing as a problem; because it is often situated in the most disadvantaged areas, the process of transitioning out of prostitution may be compromised.

## Specialized Housing for Trafficking vs Adapting Existing Resources

In discussions of best practices, respondents raised the question of specialized and exclusive housing resources for trafficking victims. In Canada, opinions diverge on the need for specialized and exclusive resources as opposed to relying on existing networks and adapting relevant practices to the special needs of trafficking victims. All respondents did agree, however, that access to housing – emergency, transition and long-term – is currently problematic and requires study to think through the most appropriate solutions.

*I think that's really something where there's got to be changes, to be thought through. Because yes, for some, the network that is in place works, but for others it doesn't work. (Interview 41, Victim Services)*

A significant argument put forward in support of dedicated facilities is that it would provide, under one roof, services to meet all the needs of victims; this was referred to by some respondents as a “one-stop shop”. A housing resource that played this key role would spare the victim from having to navigate a complicated system and repeat her story to each frontline worker she meets. Moreover, the frontline worker at the housing resource could take on the role of lead service worker:

*Yeah, a house where they move in; you get your victim advocacy support, you get addiction support, counselling – everything under one roof. So this person now doesn't have to tell their story ten times over, to ten different agencies, because you've got addictions over here and you've got counselling here and victim services, so you have three different people. [When they] have to tell their story [over and over, it] causes more trauma... More trauma over and over and over again. (Interview 2, Prostitution)*

However, doubts and cautions about specialized shelters were also expressed. First, there is a risk of recruitment and new victimization. Relatedly, taking in many victims of the same pimp or same ring at the same time during a police investigation and court case could raise questions about contamination of evidence. Furthermore, if the idea is a resource for all trafficking situations, the question of the co-habitation of victims of forced labour and of sexual exploitation necessarily arises. Their needs differ in many ways.

A compromise could be a modular approach with different options: a few specialized facilities across the country and, at the local level, a good network of diverse housing resources (for young adults, for families, for abused women, for men, for migrants, for women transitioning out of prostitution, etc.) to adequately meet victim needs.

*[We like] modular kinds of approaches so that we have this and this and this and any of these might be the right answer for a particular trafficked person or a family or a particular group. And we're sort of on our toes and prepared for any of these things to be the right answer because I think that the debate has been very kind of two-faceted. Should we have a shelter or should we have flexible kinds of arrangements like say, floating safe houses? (Interview 11, Law Enforcement)*

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## Recommendations and Promising Practices for Housing

Although we have highlighted the difficulties and limitations that existing housing resources face in meeting the needs of trafficking victims, respondents also shared positive experiences and some promising practices.

An action strategy proposed by all respondents was to set up a network and close ties with housing resources to facilitate referrals and ensure frontline workers in these resources are aware and informed of the issue of human trafficking. A collaborative network would also make it easier to find housing for many victims at once. Some have established protocols with one or more shelters to reserve emergency beds, among other things, when a police intervention is in preparation. Currently, these mostly take the form of informal agreements based on individual relationships. This kind of arrangement can work well on a case by case basis and when there are few referrals. But, if there is an increase of referrals, informal partnerships will be hard-pressed to respond to need with sufficient rapidity.

It was recommended that intervention approaches within housing resources become more flexible in their admission criteria, referral procedures (e.g., allowing frontline workers to make requests), and mandatory participation in activities.

Residential programmes for women leaving prostitution may be of interest to victims of sexual trafficking because they offer more security, transition or long-term housing, and a complete programme of support and accompaniment encompassing many aspects of the recovery process. Moreover, these shelters are more likely to avoid stigmatisation and judgement.

## DEALING WITH THE PRECARIOUS IMMIGRATION STATUS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAFFICKED

In cases of international human trafficking, immigration concerns stood out as a very difficult domain in which to offer protection to victims. For many international victims, the desire for permanent residency status in Canada contributed to their vulnerability to trafficking; the fear of losing their legal status or being reported to immigration officials if they were undocumented was used against them as a form of coercion to keep them in trafficking situations. Over and over, service providers talked about the precarity of international trafficking victims should they come forward. While the Temporary Resident Permit for victims of human trafficking has existed since 2006, it is far from being seen by service providers as the answer to all international trafficking victims' immigration problems. In this section, we will review some of the common immigration needs observed among international victims, the services that groups are able to offer them, and a review of their experiences in accompanying international trafficking victims through different immigration procedures. We end the section with a review of best practices raised by interview participants.

### Immigration needs & services available

In cases of international trafficking, addressing immigration status emerges as one of the most pressing needs. While most service providers in big Canadian cities will have experience working with immigrants, they are generally more used to dealing with cultural differences or language challenges than immigration status per se. Once a person has permanent residency, their immigration status begins to have much less impact on their service eligibility. For international trafficking victims, however, questions of immigration status can be much more complex. Establishing trust with international victims around immigration status is essential if we hope to avoid situations such as the one described here, one that leaves people in a precarious situation:

*There's no trust in the immigration system, or the process... The women I've worked with who have just arrived, every day they hear about people who are deported. So, in this context, it's nearly impossible to convince them. You have no chance. Even if there are many women for whom we were able to get really good lawyers and the lawyers thought they had really strong cases, the women still couldn't imagine women. Instead, they go underground, basically. (Interview 43, Prostitution)*

To begin with, many international trafficking victims need support in determining what their actual immigration status is. Retaining information about immigration status or misinforming people of their status is a principle means of coercion of international victims. Sorting out the migration trajectory and admi-

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nistrative situation of an individual is a key first step in protecting an international victim and one that can require a fair amount of experience. Once a person's status is determined, it allows a determination of their eligibility for health and social services since many – if not most – services are reserved for permanent residents and citizens. For those with temporary statuses, it can be necessary to advocate for access to services to which migrants are, in principle, eligible.

In nearly every case, an international trafficking victim will benefit from a legal aid immigration lawyer for professional support in either renewing their status (for a Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) or student, for example), for making new applications (for a Temporary Residents' Permit (TRP), refugee claim or humanitarian and compassionate claim for permanent residency) or for fighting detention or deportation in the case of undocumented people:

*So we need to see. Are we going to do an asylum claim? Should we ask for a temporary resident permit? Do we do a humanitarian and compassionate application? You know, that's really what we need to figure out. (Interview 53, Legal Aid)*

In some cases, criminal lawyers may also be necessary if a person has been charged with criminal activities. A few respondents highlighted the need for better coordination between criminal and immigration lawyers in those situations.

Finally, in some cases – although apparently more rare ones – international trafficking victims express a desire for voluntary repatriation. The organizations interviewed had little experience in helping to arrange safe, voluntary return and expressed a desire to develop international connections to ensure the possibility of follow-up for a person should they desire it once they are in their home country. Also of concern is the risk of revictimization should the person be returned to the same conditions of vulnerability in which they began. Few organizations described being members of Canadian coalitions with international partners, allowing them to contact trusted counterpart organizations in the country of origin to arrange for support upon the person's return.

We found a variety of agencies that were offering the services described above. The most common agencies involved in dealing with the immigration aspects of international trafficking were refugee shelters or advocacy organizations, the rare organizations serving TFWs and immigration legal aid offices. Less common, but also involved were women's organizations (domestic violence, sexual assault) with a particular mandate to serve immigrant women. In some cases, ethno-specific associations were called upon to provide support to people sharing their background, but there was some trepidation about this when the associations were relatively informal because of a risk of information circulating

through the community back to the traffickers. Finally, immigration settlement organizations were not very present in our study; their government funding tends to limit their work to permanent residents in Canada five years or less, a situation not so common among international trafficking victims.

As we review in the next section, interview participants reported the need for support in three main areas of immigration: applications for the Temporary Resident Permits for victims of human trafficking; applications for permanent residency via the refugee system or on humanitarian and compassionate grounds; and help dealing with immigration detention and deportation orders.

## Temporary Resident Permits (TRPs) for human trafficking

People offering support to international victims of human trafficking were not overwhelming in their evaluation of the effectiveness of the TRP; comments such as, “*The TRP is not useful*” (Interview 53, Legal Assistance) were not uncommon. Positive aspects of the TRP is that it offers recognition of people’s experience of trafficking (when they are able to obtain it) and it provides eligibility to certain health and social services through the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP). If people are otherwise undocumented, gaining access to the IFHP can be essential, as we hear in this example:

*« Joan » used to wake up at two in the morning... with dissociations or flashbacks, stuff like that. So that was a real difficulty... She was going through this kind of stuff and was still doing psychotherapy. It was very expensive. But immigration (IFHP) would pay for it... and other things like her medical and therapeutic needs. But we’re talking about \$100 or \$150 an hour. No NGO can afford that kind of thing. (Interview 19, Women’s organization)*

Despite these potential benefits, the number of TRPs issued over the past 8 years suggests that it may be underused, whether from lack of knowledge about the possibility (several interview participants without legal or immigration specializations were unaware of the TRP, for example) or whether it is due to a distrust of the process. As one respondent put it:

*“TRPs are issued at the whim... and I’m not speaking badly of CIC but that’s a real concern for me because you get victims of human trafficking who are in such a bad psychological state that they, they don’t realize that they’re victims” (Interview 29, Law Enforcement).*

Many of those with experience applying for TRPs found the process of applying very intrusive, requiring victims to expose traumatic experiences to an authority who seemed unsympathetic in a cold environment and without professional translation being offered systematically:

*Immigration officers, when they do an interview, they're very intrusive. It makes you feel really guilty. The way they are treated is really not nice... You have to bring your own interpreter... It's very strange and the environment is that you are in front of a desk and someone is questioning you. 'Why are you here? Why don't you want to go home? Why did you come?'* (Interview 15, Refugee shelter)

In such a scenario, proving the need for a TRP can be quite difficult, with victims caught in a Catch-22 situation. Without the TRP, they cannot access many health and social services but without support letters and assessments from health and social service professionals, it is hard to justify the need for a TRP.

Despite these difficulties, several respondents noted that there were previously certain CIC officials who were sensitive to the potential trauma experienced by people caught up in human trafficking and who worked to avoid revictimization. With the recent cutbacks and reorganization of CIC, many organizations reported losing access to specific CIC officers with whom they had developed a good trust, and a good working relationship. Now, with the recent cutbacks, the process of all requests for TRPs has been centralized and is no longer dealt with in local offices. Some respondents wondered whether there are new, more restrictive directives about TRPs coming from the federal government:

*Oh, it's incredibly hard. Oh, it's so rare to get a TRP... I've had tonnes of referrals from the police but the police will do their investigation and, afterwards, if there are no charges, everything gets dropped. So the person is at our shelter and there is a police file but the file is closed. Once the file is closed, that means there is no ongoing investigation. And that's that what CIC wants to justify giving the TRP and all the benefits that go along with it.* (Interview 68, Women's shelter)

For people not connected to a criminal prosecution, applying for a TRP is a real gamble: :

*You know, it's a challenge for my clients and me. Because, I can't say to them, "You will definitely get your TRP." I can't say that. Because it's uncertain, right? I can't tell them that I'm sure that I'll be able to win their case, that they'll get their money back. I can't say these things. Obviously, it's a huge barrier to our work.* (Interview 37, Worker's rights)

However, otherwise undocumented victims involved in prosecution cases seem to get TRPs rather systematically, with law enforcement agencies reporting good collaboration from CIC and, in many cases, quick responses. Consequently, the TRP was seen – by law enforcement authorities in particular – as a very good option for people participating in police investigations and prosecutions:

*The TRP is there for the purposes of law enforcement... It assures that the victim will be there to testify in court, because it's a long process. So if the trial is*

*a year, the TRP will still be valid. A refugee claim can take a year. So, yeah, we might have them here for a year but if they are refused as a refugee, they have to go back... With a refugee claim, it's like rolling a die. That's how I see it. The TRP more secure for us, in law enforcement. (Interview 21, Law enforcement)*

However, even from law enforcement, the limitations of the TRPs were discussed, among others the difficulties to renew the TRP and the delay in renewing it. Thus, even when there is a prosecution, renewal is not guaranteed, despite the fact that the victim is the key witness and that without the secured presence of the victim in the country, there is no longer a case or a prosecution.

Any delay in getting the renewal has important impact on the person, as it cuts access to health and social services (i.e. medication, therapy, etc.).

For those who do obtain a TRP, there remain a number of problems. The TRPs are very short term without any long-term security or protection from detention or deportation:

*They are very tough there, at CIC. The immigration officer was very rude. She said, 'Here's your TRP, this is when it expires. So you have to start thinking now about whether you want to stay in Canada or whether you want to go home... You have six months in total so you have three months to think about whether you want to apply for permanent status and then you have to hand in your application. If you don't do it by the end of your TRP, you risk deportation.' (Interview 4, Women's shelter)*

And in many cases, renewal of the TRP for longer than 6 months seems to be tied to participation in an investigation or prosecution:

*If the person has a TRP when they come to us, we give her the choice of whether she wants to continue with that. Because what the government does is, they want you to continue to be part of the legal procedures. If you don't collaborate with the police, your TRP won't be renewed and you'll have to leave the country after six months (Interview 15, Refugee shelter)*

Overall, this lack of security related to the TRP process is a major deterrent to international human trafficking victims – particularly those who were victims of forced labour – wanting to avail themselves of it:

However, even from law enforcement, the limitations of the TRPs were discussed, among others the difficulties to renew the TRP and the delay in renewing it.

*Once they have a TRP as a victim of trafficking, they have to go through all the procedures to identify the people who are guilty. That just that can be something that stops the majority of migrant workers from using that program, because they're afraid of reprisals. If CIC gets what they want, they can just deport them, right? So, I think the lack of real protection or any kind of guarantees to protect migrant workers, the lack of not only their own security but that of their families – all of these discourage people from using the TRP for victims of trafficking. (Interview 50, Immigration)*

This lack of confidence in the TRP leads many international victims of human trafficking to go other routes, such as claiming refugee status or permanent residency status on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. A final shortcoming of the TRP is the impossibility of using it to bring overseas family members to Canada, whereas refugee claims and H&C claims offer that eventual hope.

## Accessing a permanent status

Refugee claims seem to be one of the most common choices for otherwise undocumented international victims of human trafficking. In some cases, it is simply because the person does not identify their trafficking situation until much later or it can be because the organization with whom they are working is not fully aware of the possibility of a TRP. Also, as opposed to the TRP, refugee claim lead to a more permanent regularization of the immigration situation and potential permanent residency. The TRPs are essentially temporary. In some cases, the person who eventually became a victim of trafficking was vulnerable to exploitation precisely because they were refugees or victims of persecution or violence already.

Being a victim of human trafficking in Canada is not in itself a legal basis for obtaining refugee status; the exploitation happened within Canada, not the country of origin. While the refugee claim may be seen as attractive because it opens up of eligibility for permanent residency, and also to the health and social services – including welfare – so urgently needed by many victims of human trafficking, it is an avoidance of the actual issue of trafficking. As well, with the recent reforms to the refugee determination process, the timeline for a refugee claim is often shorter than the 6 months offered by the TRP with no guarantees of the claim being accepted. One coalition representative offered this perspective:

*We think that refugee claims can seem tempting at first, because that opens the doors to accessing services... But a refugee claim may not be appropriate because the exploitation took place in Canada. In terms of preventing trafficking that might take place if someone is deported, a refugee claim can be a reasonable choice. But if the exploitation happened in Canada, I think it's best that it be considered as a case of exploitation where the perpetrators of the crime are in Canada and not in the country of origin... In the end, you are not guaranteed a positive decision. It can be yes or no. (Interview 36, Coalition)*

When the victims come from a country that is generally recognized as a potential source country for refugees, however, many of our respondents – especially those specialized in accompanying refugee claimants – felt that a refugee claim was a much safer route for victims of human trafficking, and one that offered more freedom to victims to determine if and how they wanted to be involved in investigations and prosecutions. They are able to integrate the human trafficking element into a refugee claim by arguing that the person is facing high risk of violent retaliation or revictimization if they are returned to their country of origin.

The refugee claim is not always an alternative to the TRP route, however. It can sometimes be complementary. We heard several examples of victims filing a refugee claim after the TRP was no longer available to them:

*She applied for refugee status. Because of what happened in her case, because the charges were dropped, she was no longer eligible for Witness Protection. So she applied for refugee status to be able to stay in Canada. (Interview 44, Law enforcement)*

Humanitarian and compassionate grounds for permanent residency (H&C applications) are another way that victims of human trafficking are able to regularize their immigration status. These applications are very labour-intensive and the person has to not only argue for humanitarian and compassionate consideration, but also demonstrate that they are socially integrated in Canada and able to work. This may be a tall order for some trafficking victims but lawyers working on trafficking cases have developed arguments to justify the exceptional nature of trafficking cases:

*I think that CIC is maybe sensitive to when the person was a victim of trafficking. They might not be as rigorous with the application. Were they really integrated here? That's what I'm talking about. The person might not have been here for years but here's what happened since she arrived in Canada. And, since we are part of international conventions (like the Palermo Protocol), we have a responsibility to look after these people... So we have to explain. Ok, they're not working but we ask that that not be held against them. There are reasons why they are not currently working. They are able to work, they have done it before. That's how we bring trafficking into it (Interview 53, Law enforcement)*

In certain cases, human trafficking applications for H&C were studied and granted amazingly quickly, in a matter of weeks rather than the years that are usual.

For human trafficking victims that have chosen to use the TRP and were successful in obtaining it, an H&C claim remains an eventual option. According to law enforcement officers involved in accompanying victims who were involved in criminal investigations and prosecutions while on the TRP, the success of a later H&C application seemed somewhat assured and they had several successful examples. Those working in the community sector were less confident.

In summary, while refugee and H&C claims are successful for some people, they are not designed for victims of human trafficking. They may be the best hope at permanent status for some people but they remain a long shot and fail to offer any guarantees to international victims whose first concern is to remain in Canada.

## Dealing with detention and deportation

A decade ago, the detention and rapid deportation of people who were potentially victims of human trafficking raised an outcry from community group. This was one of the contributing factors to increased concerted action among service providers and also was behind the creation of the TRP. In our interviews, we heard many examples from service providers and law enforcement officials of how detention and rapid deportation interfered with the rights of victims as well as with police investigations, as we hear from this police officer:

*There are some things that we would do differently if we were doing it today, things we didn't necessarily know in 2009. So, since then, a victim will no longer be returned to her country of origin in the first week after she is rescued... The other person "rescued" might actually be guilty of the trafficking but they both ended up deported too rapidly to do anything about it. (Interview 9, Law enforcement)*

Unfortunately, however, despite the widening awareness of the problem of victims being treated as criminals themselves, detention and deportation remain serious risks for those who are intercepted by law enforcement agents. According to this refugee worker, and confirmed in several law enforcement interviews,

*The challenge is that if there are immigration problem, the police have to contact immigration. There is no choice. Their obligation is to report it to immigration and, once that's happened, if you have no status, you are going to be detained and you are in the hands of the CBSA. (Interview 15, Refugee shelter)*

A central challenge is that people who have just come into contact with law enforcement or with community or social services are often very frightened and unsure of their rights. Particularly for those who are caught up in a police raid, it is far from automatic for them to immediately disclose their true situation. They may well fear that they will be charged for criminal activities and so will stay silent about any of their experience but, as we hear from this law enforcement officer, such strategies lead systematically to detention:

*If we go into a factory and we wonder if there are victims of trafficking, the victims might not want to talk on the spot because they're scared. We can ask CBSA to come if we see something like they've got a student visa but, actually, they're illegal here. We can take that person aside and work with them, we can interview them. We work with CBSA that way but, with them, detention is systematic. (Interview 34, Law enforcement)*

And the decision to proceed as if the person is a suspected criminal or a victim is highly discretionary and may change significantly based on the sensitivity or leanings of individual police or CBSA officers:

*We've had a few, girls working in a massage network... Let's say she gets arrested in a raid but the girl doesn't want to talk. She doesn't want to say, 'Listen, I'm a victim in all this.' I don't know if CIC or the CBSA will have the reflex to say, 'Oh! She looks like a victim. We won't do a criminal check on her.' They have the discretion to exclude her on criminality grounds. I think it depends on the agent. Is the agent sensitive? Does he understand that the person can be a real victim but still participate in a criminal act? Or does he take a hard line? 'Look, too bad for her. She did it. It's not my problem. Canada should be rid of her...' (Interview 33, Legal Aid)*

Amazingly, people in immigration detention are not systematically represented by a lawyer. Unless they ask for legal representation, they are on their own and may have next to no information about the legal situation in which they find themselves.

*For example, when they get a deportation order, it's terrifying. It's also very demanding for our organization to offer that level of advocacy with the government, politicians, lawyers. It's very, very hard. I think that people don't realize that victims of human trafficking need an individual lawyer who works on their case on a daily basis. (Interview 68, Women's shelter)*

Several respondents pointed to this period immediately after initial detention as critical; if victims are unwilling or unable to identify themselves as victims or as refugee claimants, CBSA may issue an exclusion order in as little as 20 minutes to 2 hours<sup>24</sup>. Once these orders are issued, it is next to impossible to block their deportation.

This treatment of undocumented people or people in other situations of immigration violation can very seriously curtail the protection offered to a victim of human trafficking, as we hear in the experience of this woman:

*She was raped at work. She went to file a complaint, the police arrested her and she ended up in the hands of the CBSA... When I called this arrogant woman in immigration, she told us we would just have to wait and see. It would take about six weeks... She was eventually deported... because she didn't play the game properly, you know? She took the wrong path. Yes, she was caught. But after having been raped. (Interview 49, Women's shelter)*

Many community and public service providers were outraged with this situation, arguing that this focus on detention and deportation stops people from coming forward. And while they are in detention, it is very difficult to provide any kind of protection services:

*Her, they kept her detained like she was a criminal when, actually, she had lived through hell. She had the right to receive services, so we wanted her to be relea-*

*sed rapidly into a shelter. There was definitely a risk to her safety because of how dangerous the suspects were. She had to be moved somewhere for her protection, but a secure place where she could also receive services that would help her move forward. And that was not easy to find. (Interview 41, Victim services)*

Service providers were fairly categorically against the detention of human trafficking victims. However, there were several examples where detention of a victim served as short-term protection from dangerous traffickers, both physically and by giving the impression that the victim's connection to law enforcement was involuntary (i.e. she was not an informer who was denouncing the trafficker). We heard one example where a woman was detained upon entry in the country because she was a suspected victim of trafficking. When the woman was told of CBSA's concerns for her safety and that of her child who was accompanying her, the woman willingly entered detention while the situation was sorted out.

Another possible positive experience in detention is when a victim comes into contact with a social worker or community worker who provides information about their rights and supports them in defence of their rights:

*So, what we do most often is to help people in the detention centre by trying to make sure they have a lawyer and explaining to them the procedures of detention. There are regular detention revision hearings where they have the possibility of being released, so we help them to understand that. And we offer them accompaniment to these hearings because they usually the place where they can get the best picture of why they are in detention and what they need to do to get out. (Interview 69, Immigration)*

The social workers and community workers with access to detention centres reported that they may miss many potential victims, unfortunately, because people move through the centres to deportation very quickly and they are not systematically referred to all detainees.

One unfortunate side effect of the detention and deportation agenda is that it seems to be pushing a growing number of precarious status migrants to either go underground or to seek ways to bend the immigration programs to fit their situations. Without a clear, protective immigration procedure in place, this situation seems unlikely to change.

A final key point related to detention and deportation is an apparent tension between local police forces or RCMP versus CBSA. Police forces have the mandate to investigate and criminally prosecute cases of human trafficking, making them unfavourable to the rapid deportation of irregular status migrants connected to their cases. CBSA, however, is mandated to enforce immigration law and the current government is pushing a hard line on detention and deportation. There

is a resultant clash with many of our law enforcement officers and service providers suggesting that CBSA behaviour has interfered with both the protection of victims' rights and with the investigation and prosecution of trafficking perpetrators.

## Best Practices related to Immigration

The respondents in our study had a number of recommendations to improve the experience of immigration procedures of victims of human trafficking. A first step is to educate service providers in general about issues of immigration so that they are aware of the legal and emotional stakes related to immigration status and its implications for eligibility for social services. More specific suggestions related to immigration status include:

- Restoring designated immigration officers responsible for TRP and other trafficking-related immigration issues and have these people known to immigration lawyers, law enforcement and community advocates.
- Reducing the processing time delays within the immigration system, now present for nearly all categories other than refugee claimants. In particular, speeding up the processing of TRPs, work permits and H&C claims would take more trafficking victims out of legal limbo, reducing their vulnerability and increasing their ability to focus on the future.
- Providing systematic, confidential social work and legal representation to all people held in immigration detention, and not leaving it to the individual to request such services.
- Removing the obligation of police to immediately call in CBSA.

One unfortunate side effect of the detention and deportation agenda is that it seems to be pushing a growing number of precarious status migrants to either go underground

Vulnerability to trafficking and difficulties in escaping it can also be linked to lack of familiarity with the Canadian context. Opening up general immigration settlement measures to a broader range of immigration statuses, particularly to temporary foreign workers, people awaiting family sponsorship and refugee claimants, would help people better protect their rights. The immigration challenges related to human trafficking are part of a larger picture where immigration is becoming increasingly restrictive and increasingly precarious in Canada.

## INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS

Law enforcement has played and continues to play a leading role in developing responses to human trafficking in Canada. Of course, the level of engagement and the activities of police forces differ from city to city and province to province, but it can nevertheless be said that advances have been made over the past years in their fight against human trafficking. There are many commonalities in the difficulties investigators face and the solutions they propose. In this section, we will look at awareness-raising, challenges to police and investigators, and collaboration between police (or law enforcement agencies) and other sectors.

It is first important to understand the different policing structures across the country<sup>25</sup>. Human trafficking investigations can fall under municipal, provincial or federal (that is, RCMP) police jurisdictions, depending on where the crime takes place. In addition, the RCMP is responsible for international trafficking investigations, although in these cases there is often close collaboration with municipal police.

Some police forces have established training and awareness initiatives about human trafficking and sexual exploitation; these are mainly aimed at training police (e.g. patrol officers or community liaisons) to identify situations of exploitation.

Vice units most often have the responsibility for or are tasked with investigating trafficking cases. There are also organized crime units. Some units have a formal mandate for trafficking. Some of these stand out because of their expertise, experience in investigation, and commitment to pursuing investigations despite heavy demands on human resources<sup>26</sup>. Such investigative units have become leaders in the country primarily because of the dedicated work of individuals. Without a doubt it has been investigators – individuals – who made human trafficking a priority; some directorates have then taken it up and supported them.

### Complexity of Investigations

Human trafficking investigations are often more complex than other criminal investigations; a fact documented and corroborated in other reports (RCMP, 2013; Farrel, McDevitt & Fahy, 2008). This study participant explains:

*So being robbed in your house is easy for police. You give us the evidence, we do the arrest. The human trafficking case is different. These investigations are different. [The victims] are not calling often. We take that a step further, and we go and we'll talk with them. First of all, the police officer has to be smart to identify the victim. Ok, "I think she's a victim," officer's got to justify why she's a victim. If we pull her in and say, "Sit down, we want to talk to you, I want to know are you a victim?" she's going to say no. She may tell us everything or she may lie. Until she says yes, we can't do nothing. (Interview 26, Law Enforcement)*

The victim's testimony is central to the evidence. To prove exploitation, it must be shown that the victim feared for her security, which is difficult. The collaboration and testimony of the victim are thus essential. Working with the victim becomes an important aspect of police work, as does accompaniment during prosecution. Respondents reported that intervention with these victims is often more demanding than it is with other types of victims. We will return to this point.

Moreover, respondents all indicated the importance of a proactive approach to investigation; preliminary work to identify potential victims is primordial. This obviously requires more time and human resources.

## Identification

For police and all frontline workers, identifying trafficking victims and cases of trafficking is a major challenge. Victims rarely make a police report on their own initiative. Women who are under the control of a violent pimp only turn to police as a last resort, often following one or several episodes of violence:

*When they did report they had experienced all kinds of violence prior to reporting. So they may have been beaten ten, twenty times. By the time they report to police, there's nowhere else to turn, they have hit rock bottom, they have ... feel forced to talk to the police. (Interview 26, Law Enforcement)*

Moreover, it is already well-documented that, for many reasons, victims rarely identify or perceive themselves as victims of exploitation. They are sometimes in an intimate relationship with the exploiter. They may have a negative perception of the police, be reticent to make a report, or be afraid of reprisals by the trafficker. They may also have fears related to their immigration status. For these reasons, all police and investigators interviewed emphasized the importance of building trust with the individual. The work may drag out over many weeks, months, or even years. How is this trust established? Police respondents identified many factors: the police officer's attitude, language and way of approaching the victim, the fact of not wearing a uniform, etc. While these may seem banal, even obvious, they are nevertheless crucial and can even be determinant in obtaining the victim's statement and opening and continuing an investigation.

While investigations get a lot of attention, the preliminary work must not be forgotten: the important outreach work done by police (for example, by community liaisons, youth intervention, etc.). Through their work, they can, over time, develop trust with potential victims and make the difference between a statement and report being made or not. This trust can become crucial in the very frequent situation in which the person initially refuses to meet with police but then contacts the police in a crisis to seek help. As this respondent highlights, although police raids and interventions are sometimes necessary, they can damage the trust of potential victims:

*So, there may be a need for us to intervene in a hurry, and that may cause us to use a more intrusive approach. I'm not saying that'll never happen, but if we are looking to build a case against a pimp or a trafficker, we really need the victim to be on the side with us. So, that's generally built through... building rapport, building trust down the road, and then having that victim, when they're ready, come to us. Obviously, in most instances, that's after some kind of abusive incident or some kind of trauma, where they kind of question their loyalty to that individual. That short window of opportunity, where they may choose to reach out to a police officer. (Interview 62, Law Enforcement)*

## **Awareness-Raising and Change of Mentality**

Another aspect of victim identification relates to education, training and awareness of police and patrol officers. As already noted, awareness and training initiatives about human trafficking have developed over the past years within police forces (for example, SPVM (Montreal Police), Niagara Region Police Service, RCMP). A better understanding of the issue helps police to detect and identify indicators of trafficking and exploitation when other incidents or crimes are reported. For example, calls about conjugal violence receive greater attention from units trained to recognize sexual exploitation or trafficking behind the conjugal violence, such as in situations in which the trafficker is in an intimate relationship with the victim.

Investigators interviewed stated that training and awareness have had significant results. A better understanding of the phenomenon has made police more alert to situations of risk and better able to detect them:

*Before, someone who responded to a call about conjugal violence would [not] have paid attention to these things. Now police officers, knowing this kind of information, are a lot more on top of it: "Oh wait, there was this indicator, there was this thing .. Oh maybe ..." So they notice it, the police officers, and it's all recorded in our databases that we already had, but now its additional information ... When they get there, they note certain facts about it, if they have a suspicion, we want them to develop an instant reflex to call the investigative unit. (Interview 71, Law Enforcement)*

However, this respondent makes clear that more awareness-raising may suffer a setback if unaccompanied by additional resources to meet the increased number of identifications:

*As a result we began to receive complaints from victims and patrol officers. This was mostly better detection. That's excellent but it's a double-edged sword because I don't have the manpower. [...] Because detection is so good on the ground, on conjugal violence, with diverse frontline workers, that I can hardly deal with the complaints that come in. (Interview 73, Law Enforcement)*

The same respondent also explained that the increase in the number of cases detected led to a reduction in his team's proactive investigative activities. Training had the most impact on conjugal violence interventions, and among patrol officers:

*Domestic violence was one of the most valuable areas to train because... I was called out for several calls from domestic violence investigators who were actually called to what was termed “domestic situation.” However, once they got there and started talking to the victim they found out and they recognized the indicators of human trafficking [so]— three cases I can think of off the top of my head as a direct result of domestic violence investigators recognizing – after they’ve been trained – recognizing the characteristics of human trafficking and calling me to help with the interviews. So, we immediately saw results on the front lines as well, same thing. The front line officers are now much more aware of what to look for, what questions to ask and what services to offer based on the training they received and that has helped us move forward with prosecutions and with helping victims. (Interview 74, Law Enforcement)*

Awareness of trafficking cannot be disassociated from the evolution in the understanding and perception of prostitution. Some respondents from the policing sector spoke of a change in mentality towards prostitution, although uneven from city to city. Changing attitudes towards prostitution in general are connected to actions undertaken in the fight against human trafficking for sexual exploitation. This shift in mindset involves police viewing people in prostitution more as victims than as criminals. It has also influenced intervention approaches, with a trend towards fewer arrests of people in prostitution.

Some municipal police forces have actually announced a change of approach to the media: the Ottawa police (CBC, 7 January 2014) and the Montreal police (La Presse, 28 January 2013). At the time of publication, the Montreal police (SPVM) was on the point of releasing its action plan on prostitution and human trafficking for sexual exploitation. In Vancouver, police have adopted new guidelines:

*Vancouver Police policy with regards to enforcing prostitution laws in Vancouver takes a more supportive protective approach to the people that are involved in prostitution rather than the punishing and it is the first time that it is in writing.... It is a written policy of the Vancouver Police. So those are big shifts in our opinion. (Interview 36, Coalition)*

However, several nuances must be made. These shifts in approach are in their infancy. Much work remains to be done. The taboos and stigmatization around people in prostitution persist. Between the declaration of a policy and directives and the reality of patrol officers, there can often be a wide gulf. Moreover, in

some municipalities, frontline workers affirmed that nothing has been done, that officials and police forces have shown no interest in addressing the problem:

*I think we still bury our heads in the sand here. Their team [in neighbouring city] is working aggressively on it, and we are completely behind the eight-ball, and it's embarrassing. We are not doing what we should be doing. Whereas our neighbours next door are kicking butt on these investigations and are fully committed and fully resourced and staffed, we have completely dropped the ball. So, it's frustrating seeing that, right? (Interview 44, Law Enforcement)*

On a final note, the Supreme Court's Bedford decision (Canada vs Bedford, 2012) and resulting changes in the legislative and penal framework of prostitution will greatly influence police work in this area.

## Police Investigations and Forced Labour

Forced labour is a neglected aspect of police intervention. There are many reasons for this. First, more resources are available and more attention is given to sexual exploitation. Police already have far more experience investigating activities relating to prostitution. Vice investigative teams already cover issues related to prostitution. Forced labour is a new and little understood issue, primarily affecting migrants, and a matter of international trafficking. Investigations into forced labour are thus primarily the responsibility of the RCMP. Moreover, migrants who are victims of forced labour are extremely reluctant to lay a complaint, because of their precarious immigration status. At the same time, police are reluctant to investigate forced labour. There are still lots of problems of perception and understanding of trafficking for forced labour by all frontline workers, including police.

*The international cases are a lot more complicated. Yeah, and of course, yeah, I guess the other kind of constant pattern that we see with the international cases is that the survivors don't want any police involvement. They don't want to go the RCMP route. So much of that remains under the radar. That is why I always kind of cringe when I see the statistics around the sexual exploitation and the labour exploitation because I know how much of the labour exploitation that is in our area that is just totally under the radar and it is never going to get on a database. (Interview 35, Coalition)*

In addition, as this respondent highlights, there is a lot of discomfort on the part of police in so-called less traditional cases:

*I mean, a lot of times cops are not very comfortable with the non-traditional form of trafficking which we advocate for. (Interview 12, Legal Aid)*

Finally, the very definition of human trafficking in the criminal code limits investigations and prosecutions for forced labour. As other authors have remarked, the

way this definition is interpreted, exploitation and physical forms of violence and threats are highlighted, while in cases of forced labour, economic coercion and threats are central (Hastie, 2013; Kaye, Winterdick, and Quarterman, 2013).

*Many [victims] do not want to go after the recruiter, employer, because they don't want to be in trouble. And because they feel like, "Well, I've done all this unauthorized work as well, if I report this, I'm going to get into trouble." Well, in our experience, because so few cases of trafficking come up with government agencies, they don't know how to deal with it... So, it's often the case where we are saying, "This is a case of trafficking or labour exploitation, this is a case of forced labour..." They say, "Oh, well, where was the exploitation here? She could have left any time. How is this forced? Because she knew going in what was happening, right?" So, it is the case that government agencies I think need to be sensitized, or need to understand that it's not so easy or black and white in most cases. (Interview 37, Labour Rights)*

Finally, current efforts by the Canadian government to increase surveillance of workplaces where trafficking victims might be found involves close collaboration with the RCMP and CBSA. Under cover of a proactive approach to identifying victims, these efforts can target undocumented people and lead to their deportation. There is a fine distinction between border security objectives and tougher measures against precarious migration, on the one hand, and “protecting” victims of crime, on the other – and the two are often confused.

## Challenges

Trafficking investigations and cases are often more complex than other types of investigations, as the following illustrates:

*If we arrest a guy with three kilos of cocaine, just the fact that he was taken with it is proof of possession. But when we catch a pimp with three young minor girls in his car, that's not proof. Proof is when the girl says, "Yes, I was exploited." And so that's what the guys capitalize on. They know the girls are afraid, have little credibility. They can manipulate them and then, even if they say the truth, they can either influence the girls before their testimony so they don't testify or the defence lawyer will play on their credibility ... That's what's difficult to explain, what's increasingly accepted and recognized by the courts, but it's more difficult to prove than catching someone with three kilos of coke. (Interview 60, Law Enforcement).*

The crimes are often committed in different municipalities and provinces. This is a tactic of traffickers, to move victims from one town or province to another. Consequently, crimes and infractions are committed in different jurisdictions. For example, a victim may have come from Quebec and been exploited in Quebec and then in Ontario and then later brought to Edmonton where she was finally intercepted by police. Tight collaboration between different police forces and criminal intelligence is obviously necessary.

*They're everywhere, so it's hard for law enforcement because they may not get the support to go to Montreal, or to go to Ottawa or to go and investigate. There's a lot of complications involved. I can tell you, the majority of charges that we lay are from other jurisdictions. So we'll bring them to [that other city] but all the offences happened in [another city]. We will arrest that guy, take him to [that other city]. And we get it all the time. (Interview 26, Law Enforcement)*

Moreover, in cases involving international victims, there may be a need for cooperation and collaboration with officials from the country of origin, as well as between the RCMP and local or provincial police.

*And that's one of the big issues with an international case like this: law-enforcement cooperation internationally. The type of records they keep there but also, who can you trust over there? Because the corruption is huge. All the girls said the same story, they all told us these stories, but they were petrified of the group, petrified of testifying. They didn't want to testify, because these guys knew exactly where their families were overseas, and we couldn't protect them.*

These investigations are emotionally more demanding and require greater contact with victims.

*We were even scared to contact the local authorities to make any inquiries, because we didn't want to put their families in jeopardy. (Interview 44, Law Enforcement)*

Another important deficiency identified by investigators interviewed was a lack of resources to pursue many investigations at once. Because of the complexity of trafficking cases, extensive investigations require a lot of material resources, time and labour to gather evidence and corroborate victim testimony. This is in addition to the proactive investigative surveillance work to identify potential victims, which also requires resources.

Lack of financial and human resources is a challenge for frontline workers in all sectors. While the directorates of many police forces show mounting concern for the issue, the commitment and will to fight this crime does not seem to translate into more resources for investigative teams.

Relations with victims is another difficult dimension of their work. These investigations are emotionally more demanding and require greater contact with victims. Many respondents cited the importance of being able to count on investigators who possess the interest, sensitivity, and even passion for this kind of file, in which the relationship with the victim is central:

*These type of investigations, you either have the passion for it, or you don't. I tell investigators when I lecture, it is more emotionally-draining investigations. It's very victim-management intensive, because everything is built around your victim. And as an investigator, if you don't have the interest or the passion for the victim*

*and for yourself, give it to somebody else. Because, my team, we had the one case [and] we just got burnt out. (Interview 44, Law Enforcement)*

Moreover, many front-line workers described a common feature: the victims, especially those who had had an intimate or love relationship with the pimp, transferred the dependency resulting from the coercive control of the trafficker onto the first responder, often the investigator. Trafficking victims may have lived under the coercive and violent control of the trafficker. During the process of transition and liberation from this control, together with post-traumatic shock the victim may suffer, she may develop a quasi-exclusive bond of trust with the first responder.

*It's person-intensive. It's also discussions with individuals who may be trafficking victims over time before they're ready to come forward with a complaint. So, we know social agencies, NGO's, service providers in Ottawa are dealing with victims. Some of them aren't ready to make a criminal complaint, and that's fine, as long as they're, at this point, getting the assistance they need. For us to initiate those discussions, that takes a lot of personal hours on the part of the officer as well. So, you need victim management. It's a huge aspect of these types of cases. (Interview 62, Law Enforcement)*

One of the challenges that investigators ran into during the first trafficking investigations was that they sometimes had to go beyond their mandate. Faced with urgent need for action, often outside their working hours, the investigator was left finding emergency housing for the victim and other emergency material resources.

*I mean, finding shelter is not my forte. Investigating criminal acts is. So we need to find those experts that can take on that role that, you know, a victim services facilitator or something that can look after all those ancillary needs that are necessary but maybe not properly placed in the lap of the police agencies that are investigating the offences. (Interview 9, Law Enforcement)*

## Intersectorial Collaboration

Collaboration with social and community services to help victims is crucial. What support will victims receive after a police intervention? Investigators need contacts to find an organization to take on psycho-social assistance and facilitate referrals to appropriate resources. This need for collaboration and partnership in emergency action gave birth to many existing partnerships in various cities which now constitute promising practices.

While collaboration is essential during the investigation, it is just as much so in preliminary work and outside any investigative process; that is, even if the victim does not make a complaint. One of the main obstacles to collaborating with the police expressed by community sector workers was the obligation to lay a complaint.

Community sector workers need to be able to access advice, to be able to contact a police officer and trusted investigator in order to verify information and clarify doubts about a potential trafficking situation without feeling the obligation to lay a complaint or disclose personal information.

*Quite often I'll have agencies call me. Because I've spoken at a lot of different agencies and people that are responding to both international and domestic human trafficking victims. And they'll call and they'll go, listen, this is what we've got. Quite often they don't give me a name and they'll say this is our — this is the scenario, this is what we've got, do you think it's human trafficking? And I'll say, well, you know, it certainly has all the tenements of human trafficking and this is who maybe you should want to contact, you know, to get support for that victim. And, you know, so we — I get a lot of that also. (Interview 11, Law Enforcement)*

Some RCMP regional trafficking awareness coordinators seem to have played an important role here, as resource people and as liaisons with local police forces.

The study showed a positive development in the perception and experiences of collaboration between community sector and police as well as the legal sector. While on each side there were negative perceptions and reluctance to work together, many frontline workers described very positive recent experiences that helped them change their view of working with police. However, this trust and collaboration is often limited to just one or two police officers to whom they will refer their clients, trusting that they will be met with respect. This shows the importance of setting up dedicated teams, to facilitate this kind of trust. In the long-term, this type of relationship can mean a greater number of case disclosures.

Finally, coalitions and other collaborative bodies have sometimes helped to foster trust and facilitate collaboration between community sector and police, as this respondent, who is part of a coalition, explains. To maintain trust and ensure a smooth collaboration, it is important that the frontline worker knows with whom, which police officer, she will be working:

*Some of the social service providers were not against working with law enforcement but certainly had had experiences in the past that made them cautious about doing so. And made them want to discern who exactly at the Police Service am I going to work with or who exactly at RCMP am I going to work with because I've had good experiences with some officers and not so good experiences with others. And I want to know what is this going to be like and I want it to be clear and respectfully acknowledged that I may have information that I don't plan to share with law enforcement. And by the same token, law enforcement said, "Yeah, you know, ditto! Because there are some things that in the middle of an investigation we're not going to share with community members." (Interview 20, Awareness)*

We believe that it is important to highlight a fundamental limit on collaborating with police, which was identified by community sector respondents working with

migrants. In situations where international victims have precarious immigration status or no papers, police will inform Immigration Canada and the CBSA and thus put the person directly at risk of deportation. This is contrary to any protective intervention. It obviously creates a reluctance to contact the police in situations of forced labour trafficking of migrants – thus helping to keep this reality invisible.

## Relations with Judiciary

*I think the next challenge that we face is finding Crown prosecutors that are willing to stay with an investigation from beginning to end and every step through it and then as investigators tells us what they need in order to help them mount a successful prosecution. (Interview 9, Law Enforcement)*

Even with an exhaustive and rigorous investigation, outcomes obviously depend on prosecution. While law enforcement of human trafficking by some investigative teams has improved, and the number of investigations into trafficking-related cases increased, things are quite different with prosecutions. As we have already noted, human trafficking charges are seldom prosecuted and trafficking charges are often abandoned during trial in favour of lesser charges with lighter sentences. Many respondents stressed that there is still a very great need to educate prosecutors and the entire judicial system.

Prosecutors seem reluctant to prosecute trafficking charges for many reasons: absence of or very limited jurisprudence in this area; misunderstanding of the legal measures; and victims' potential lack of “credibility” to testify before the court. According to this respondent, very few prosecutors have experience in these kinds of cases and it is thus difficult to rely on the work of colleagues:

*So our police officers now are just starting to get comfortable. And even more importantly, our federal and provincial Crowns are starting to get comfortable with the legislation. Because police officers will pretty much try anything but, you know, the education for the Crowns is important. Education for the judges is very important, also, and I'm not sure how much that happens. (Interview 11, Law Enforcement)*

There are still very few prosecutors committed to this issue and few ways of ensuring that trafficking files go to prosecutors with interest and experience. Respondents highlighted that collaboration with “committed” prosecutors is important to increase the number of prosecutions and boost success rates. Once again, collaboration is essential:

*There are advantages in having someone to call immediately to get advice in the midst of things ... It takes prosecutors who want to work, who want to push ... who believe in it. That's not the majority. You know, these victims aren't easy and they aren't credible (Interview 60, Law Enforcement).*

Collaboration between investigators and prosecutors is very important to the success of trafficking cases. There are obviously many challenges in prosecuting these cases, notably: credibility and collaboration of the victim, and even working with them; deadlines for judicial proceedings; and difficulty in proving exploitation and fear for security. Many of these difficulties intersect with those encountered during the investigation. The issue of working with victims returns with force during accompaniment through legal proceedings, which are slow and very long:

*Honestly, the time from start to when you go to court with this person? We're talking years... The process is so slow... And for something like that to drag on for a person... To go to court and testify against the accused, and that process from the time the person's arrested till it goes to preliminary, till it may get a trial – if it does... You're talking years... (Interview 2, Prostitution)*

Many respondents stressed that there is still a very great need to educate prosecutors and the entire judicial system.

Accompanying the victim and preparing for the legal process are crucial and require close collaboration between investigators, prosecutors, and community sector workers (often the social worker for victims of crime). Testifying in court is a difficult experience for the victim and can be re-traumatizing. Support before and during proceedings is determinant. Respondents highlighted the importance of transparency in legal proceedings. These people have been manipulated and lied to. Investigators

and other service workers must be transparent from the very beginning and make no promises: “You have to be transparent throughout the proceedings. They must not feel that they have somehow been taken in during the process.” (Interview 60, Law Enforcement)

Victim credibility is obviously important, because the evidence for exploitation relies to a large extent on their testimony, as already stated. Drug addiction and post-traumatic shock may increase the difficulties of testifying.

While the length of legal proceedings is a big challenge for all trafficking victims (and for victims of crimes against the person in general), some respondents highlighted particular difficulties for minors. Maintaining ties with youth during lengthy proceedings is even more difficult than with adults:

*You know, when they become 18, often, well ... let's drop the case. OK. Support is done. When there is follow up, the during, well, the "before" it's important, the during well, the after, also. How to say to the prosecutors, can we, the trafficking cases, the abuse cases, pull out all the stops? It's not a hold-up at a corner store. You're going to postpone his case ten times, I don't care, but sexual abuse, can we proceed quickly? Because we tell the youth to report, to do it, you do it, but nothing happens. It takes three years, it takes six month to get news, just forget it. (Interview 33, Youth Protection)*

In conclusion, many respondents noted an improved collaboration with prosecutors. While still few in number, more prosecutors are agreeing to prosecute for trafficking charges. Relations between police forces and the legal sector have improved where trafficking files have been brought before the courts.

*In the first years, the prosecutors had to be convinced. It was really difficult. But again, it was individuals. The Chief Prosecutor, it was like he didn't believe that it didn't apply. It meant that in the beginning, we weren't able to pass on our trafficking files. There were files, clearly trafficking cases, but they were not authorized. But today we no longer have this problem. But I can tell you that, it's not part of my mandate, but I really held on to it, I fought, I held on to the end, and I still kept on. [...] It made it, it was difficult. But mentalities have gradually changed. Today, it's a priority for them too. So, we have no more problems. So, communication is really great and it is going really well. So we work more and more as a team. Plus mutual respect while before it was – I am a prosecutor, you are a police officer. It's difficult to work like that. So, we often work with the same prosecutors. (Interview 73, Law Enforcement)*

Collaboration between investigators and prosecutors is very important to the success of trafficking cases.

Just as with police, there is a multiplier effect. When prosecutors get a conviction and promote trafficking cases as important, other prosecutors become interested. Moreover, some initiatives aimed at committed and experienced prosecutors have been launched across the country. Prosecutors who work on sexual assault cases are often those who are led to take on human trafficking cases. Finally, it's important to recognize that prosecutors bringing trafficking charges are often the first in their province to do so and that there is little or no jurisprudence on which they can rely. Human trafficking convictions have the important effect of showing the capacity of the legal system to convict traffickers and to recognize and condemn this type of crime. They may also have an impact on victims considering laying charges, on the general public, and on prosecutors.

*I think there are also challenges in the way the legislation is written, interpreted and applied. We still don't have a conviction in [our province]. I believe that a human trafficking conviction will have a tremendous impact in the community awareness deterring other traffickers and denouncing the crime and make it more tangible for [the population of our province], that hey, somebody was convicted of human trafficking in [our province]. (Interview 36, Coalition)*

## Conclusions: Promising or Desired Practices

In conclusion, despite the will to combat trafficking and efforts made by investigators and prosecutors, directorates and officials do not always follow through. This respondent explains the ambiguous position of his police force:

*“Well, yeah, we want you to respond to it, but we don't want you opening Pandora's box, because we really don't have the resources to look after it.” Well, then, don't create a team to do that. (Interview 44, Law Enforcement)*

Police priorities shift according to political interest and public concern. Resources allocated for different priorities displace each other: one year homelessness is the priority; the next, it is corruption and the drug trade. While sexual exploitation and trafficking are now receiving greater attention, there are no guarantees that this interest will last. The efforts which have been made are fragile. The central recommendation made by police and legal sector respondents is to establish dedicated human trafficking teams. Such teams can guarantee the minimal resources necessary for this kind of investigation and maintain expertise of investigators and prosecutors.

## SECTION 4

### EXPERIENCES OF INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION – COORDINATING RESPONSES

The issue of collaboration and coordination between different frontline sectors is a key element if we wish to respond adequately to human trafficking, whether on the local, regional, provincial or national scale. There is consensus, both in the literature and among our study participants, that the most effective strategy for prevention and the protection of victims is the adoption of an approach of intersectoral collaboration.

As discussed earlier, the physical, psychological and social recovery of each person who has experienced trafficking requires a broad range of resources and no single organization can respond alone to their needs.

The call for better collaboration is not recent. In their 2005 study, Oxman-Martinez, Lacroix and Hanley affirmed the need to improve coordination, not only between groups in the community sector, but also with social service providers, public health and law enforcement. The present study reiterates this need for coordination and collaboration in service provision.

Important gains have been made in this direction, across Canada. Of note is the creation of formal coalitions and informal networks in nearly all cities where we conducted interviews. To our knowledge, this research is the first in Canada to analyse the different models of such efforts to collaborate across sectors.

In this section, we will begin with a description of these coalitions in terms of mandates, structure and membership. We will then explore the development of intervention tools by these coalitions. While respondents are committed to these coalitions and find them helpful to their practice, coalitions reported a number of important challenges to their work. We will explore these challenges before turning to the promising practices proposed by those in the field.

## COALITIONS TO ADDRESS HUMAN TRAFFICKING: MANDATE, STRUCTURE, MEMBERSHIP

How have service providers come together to better respond to the needs of victims of human trafficking? As we see in this section, the past decade has seen the emergence of many networks and coalitions that are aiming to be prepared for a rapid, relevant and concerted response to the cases of human trafficking that are identified in their communities. While in the early days of Canadian experience related to trafficking such coalitions were typically focused on public education and awareness raising, the coalitions explored in this study tend to prioritize service provision. Without claiming to have an exhaustive list, we were able to identify the following cross-sectoral networks or coalitions aiming to improve protection services for victims of human trafficking:

**British-Colombia:**

Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons (OCTIP – 2007<sup>27</sup>)

**Alberta:**

Action Coalition on Human Trafficking (2007)

**Manitoba:**

Tracia's Trust: Manitoba's Sexual Exploitation Strategy (2002)

**Ontario:**

WeFight: Windsor Essex Fighting the International Growth of Human Trafficking (2004)

Ottawa Coalition to End Human Trafficking (2011)

London Anti-Human Trafficking Committee (2006)

Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network (2011)

Ontario Coalition Against Human Trafficking (2011)

**Quebec:**

Coalition québécoise contre la traite des personnes (2011)

**Nouveau-Brunswick:**

New Brunswick Human Trafficking Task Force (2007)

**Nova-Scotia:**

Nova Scotia Committee on Human Trafficking

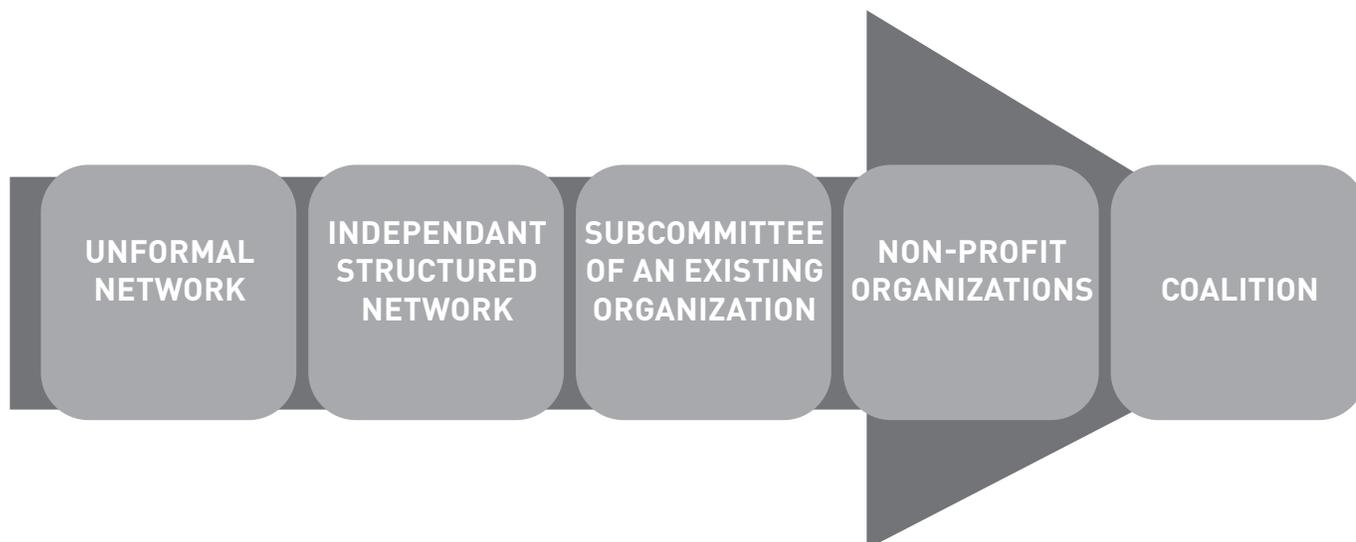
**Prince Edward Island:**

PEI Human Trafficking Committee

**Newfoundland:**

Newfoundland Human Trafficking Committee (2007)

These initiatives are relatively recent, most initiated since 2007. It is interesting to note the heterogeneity of the models of collaboration that have been put in place across the country. Their main objective is to bring together, on one hand, different knowledge and expertise and, on the other, to improve the protection services offered to victims of trafficking. They aim to work together so that victims can be assured the support and protection they require. These initiatives have been created at the provincial, regional and municipal levels. Some created formal coalitions, others less formal networks or working groups. The different initiatives can also be distinguished in terms of their organizational structures, as we see in this diagram:



In this section, we review the varied mandates, structures and membership of Canada's human trafficking coalitions. However, it is useful to underline the work of three initiatives that particularly distinguish themselves.

First, BC's Office to Combat the Trafficking in Persons (OCTIP) stands out. OCTIP is a unique government initiative that is entirely dedicated to this issue. The Office was created in 2007 by the Ministry of Public Safety and the Solicitor General and today is part of the Ministry of Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch. OCTIP was given the mandate to elaborate and coordinate the British Columbia strategy to fight human trafficking through partnership with concerned actors (governmental as well as community). OCTIP developed a model of response, supporting local prevention and service provision initiatives, as well as offering expertise and consultation. The Office provides also an online training for frontline workers (in English and French). And until very recently, OCTIP offered direct assistance and follow-up in specific cases of trafficking. However, recent budgetary compressions have caused an important reduction in their activities. Entirely financed by the government, OCTIP was identified as a promising practice, a model for other provinces. In 2013, it launched the British Columbia Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons. This Plan targets the following priority groups: 1) sexual exploitation of youth; 2) vulnerable workers and; 3) indigenous people.

The province of Alberta has the Action Coalition on Human Trafficking, commonly known as ACT Alberta. This coalition is a non-profit organization that serves as a central actor in the Alberta response to the trafficking issue (Kaye, 2013). ACT Alberta was created in 2007 in the wake of a study undertaken by a local immigrant women's organization that documented the phenomenon in the Alberta context. ACT Alberta was a response to the needs identified in that report: to have more knowledge and awareness of the issue; to strengthen local capacity to respond; and to increase collaboration and joint action (Quarterman et al, 2012). The coalition brings the community, governmental and law enforcement sectors together with volunteers. The Alberta model is a province-wide organization with local branches that aim to develop local capacities to respond. Three branches are currently active: Calgary, Edmonton and Red Deer. ACT Alberta is able to rely on a small staff, made possible through government funding.<sup>28</sup> ACT Alberta represents a unique model of a non-governmental coalition that has acquired solid experience and expertise and that has developed a number of very useful tools, in particular a response protocol.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, in Manitoba, a provincial government strategy has been in place since 2002: the Manitoba Strategy Responding to Children and Youth at Risk of, or Survivors of, Sexual Exploitation. The Manitoba strategy has had three phases. In its initial phase, the strategy mainly targeted the sexual exploitation of minors through prostitution. In 2008 it launched its Phase II: Tracia's Trust: Manitoba's Sexual Exploitation Strategy, a strategy addressing all forms of sexual exploi-

tation, including the trafficking of persons of any age. In its current form, put in place in 2011, an emphasis was put on human trafficking, especially the internal trafficking of indigenous women and girls (Manitoba, 2014). The distinguishing feature of the Manitoba approach is that the government has backed up its commitment with substantial funding of not only related law enforcement efforts, but also prevention, the coordination of services and intersectoral collaboration. For example, in 2005, the government of Manitoba modified its youth protection law, the Child and Family Services Act, so as to increase the penalties related the sexual exploitation of minors. And in 2012, Manitoba adopted the Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act.. Finally, the Manitoba strategy ensures a support for the coordination of services, in particular through the creation of a human trafficking response team lead by a community organization (the Salvation Army).<sup>30</sup>

In the rest of the section, the analysis concerns the range of non-governmental coalitions or networks. Please note that, for the purposes of simplicity, the term “coalition” will be used, even if not all initiatives that have opted for this formal structure.

## Mandate

Being able to count on a coalition with a specific mandate to address trafficking was seen as very useful, as we hear from this youth worker:

*It's good to have an agency that that's their mandate, that's what they focus on... Cause some of these other agencies work with potential victims but that's not our only mandate, we do so many other things. It's good to have an agency, that's what they do... Specialize. (Interview 1, Youth)*

Having a specialized coalition allowed organizations to benefit from their knowledge and experience, without having to focus all their energy on the topic when trafficking remained a small – but very difficult – part of their caseload. The model of a coalition or network seeks to address these concerns, as we hear from this coalition volunteer:

*Our mandate is to network with others so that we don't duplicate effort or try to do something that we don't have the expertise to do. (Interview 20, Awareness Raising)*

It is interesting to note the local contexts that led to the creation of coordination initiatives were varied. Some were initiated by law enforcement representatives. Many of the coalitions were created at the initiative of local police or RCMP (particularly the regional coordinators) who were seeking better relationships with community groups for when they encountered victims and needed emergency services for them, especially immediate shelter. With the increase in resources (in some regions) for law enforcement activities around human traf-

ficking – particularly within the RCMP in the early days and, later, within local police forces – police officers were confronted with the challenge of supporting victims with complex needs, as we are told by this RCMP officer:

*We realized who we were dealing with [victims of human trafficking] and then realized that we need to [work with] those agencies and other NGO groups... Because certainly [law enforcement] couldn't do it all... We're not counsellors or we don't have long term places for someone to stay if they needed to get out of that situation... We don't do those kinds of things. (Interview 29, Law enforcement)*

Other coalitions were created by community organizations. Here, two scenarios were common, either (i) service-providing organizations that, confronted with trafficking situations, felt an urgency to coordinate with other actors in their settings; and (ii) trafficking-specific organizations engaged in either awareness-raising or advocacy that facilitated networking among service providers. As the following example illustrates, there are some situations where several victims need help at once, creating the urgent need to “work together”:

*While [our coalition was] still in the initial stages, I got a call from an RCMP officer who told me that they were working on a case and it might involve a large number of survivors and would we be able to deal with a large number? We had, to that point, really just been dealing with one or two people at a time. What we did was we called together some of the key agencies that might be able to help us out and said, “Look, together can we respond to this need?” And they were very open to doing anything they could. So that really was it, the RCMP call was the impetus that kind of pushed it forward into the development of the coalition stage. (Interview 35, Coalition)*

Other coalitions were created proactively, in anticipation of the need for better coordination, especially when the initiating organization had a mandate of awareness-raising rather than service provision.

The coalitions generally combine the goals of:

- Sharing of information about trafficking trends or about specific cases
- Sharing of referrals and resources to support victims
- Public education and awareness-raising or training of frontline workers
- Policy advocacy for improved support for victims of human trafficking.

None of the coalitions were direct service providers for victims of human trafficking. When it came to the issue of case management – a key concern for coalitions whose overarching mission is to coordinate services – there were two primary approaches:

- Multiple entry points to the coalition’s network of services with the case management remaining with the organization who had initial or most relevant connection to the victim, the more common approach; or

- Case management by the coalition or a designated member of the coalition, where a paid staff member took referrals and then became responsible.

Shared by nearly all the coalitions, however, was a goal to use an empowering approach. Much has been written and discussed about the dangers of revictimizing people coming out of human trafficking situations. The coalitions wanted to avoid this, with many adhering to a victim-centred approach or, as this coalition staff person describes it, an empowerment approach.

*When a victim of trafficking comes in, it comes to [the coalition] and then the trafficked person gets put in the middle of this victim-centred approach... As a social worker, I firmly believe this is the most empowering way to handle victims of trafficking. This idea that we have this community of services and you get to pick and choose what is a fit for you, rather than us telling you, “You need counselling for that sexual assault... I think you need to go to this office to get these health care pieces dealt with.” It's just not the way to handle victims. They've already gone through a system of control and abuse. And then coming to us and ushering them through these non-consensual ways of doing isn't appropriate, in my view. (Interview 8, Coalition)*

## Membership<sup>31</sup>

Nearly all the coalitions combined community, public social services and law enforcement membership. In the tables below, we give some examples – not an exhaustive list – of some of the most common kinds of organizations involved in the coalitions we interviewed:

<b>COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS</b>		
Youth Organizations	Immigration Settlement Services	Faith-Based Organizations
Homeless & Women’s Shelters	Aboriginal Organizations	Employability and Adult Education Organizations
Refugee Services	Labour Rights Organizations	Women’s Centres
<b>PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES</b>		
Child Protection	Victims Services	Municipal Housing
Hospitals & Health Clinics	Public Health	Legal Aid
<b>LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES</b>		
Local Police	Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)	Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA)
Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) <sup>32</sup>	Crown Attorneys	

For many of the community organizations, direct cooperation with police was a new experience, but it was generally seen as positive, as we hear from this community worker:

*... We entered a partnership with the [local] police about starting a... Trafficked Person Response Team. The sole mandate was to respond when and if a trafficked person is found... We were able to get the players together when it came to CIC, CBSA, RCMP, pretty much every law enforcement came out in droves... Our sole purpose is, "Let's talk to each other, get to know each other, so that if a trafficked person presents themselves we can have this relationship to respond in a victim-centred approach." (Interview 58, Coalition)*

In contrast, there were some coalitions that made conscious decisions to exclude the public sector, but especially law enforcement and immigration authorities:

*No [we do not include government services] because, and I don't know if it's wrong, we believe that first of all we, as a civil society, we need to organize. Because if not, ...the government comes and they are organized, the law enforcement they are organized, the crown attorneys are organized. But civil society, we are not organized. We need to organize and know what are our own principles. (Interview 15, Refugee Shelter)*

Members of the coalitions often had not had direct experiences with trafficking cases but felt it was something they might face in the future. These groups participated in order to offer their services if necessary for a specific case and to gain knowledge for their own practice. Membership in a coalition implied awareness-raising for groups that were not yet confronted with trafficking. In the end, however, many coalitions reported that the number of member groups directly involved in the casework for victims of human trafficking was quite limited:

*The purpose of the coalition is at least just to: itemize the process; itemize the whole full scope of needs; see what organizations exist; see where their limitations may be within their mandate; or their willingness to participate. But what we're finding is it's really a few, it's just a few. We have 45 members but there really hasn't been the need to reach out to all of them. It's very, very specific, very targeted. And, in some cases, one or two organizations can manage it. They don't need to draw on everybody else. (Interview 17, Coalition)*

Overall, most coalitions limited their membership to organizations with frontline responsibilities but others were quite open with their membership, sometimes leading to problems. When there are too many participants, it is difficult to have concrete exchanges related to specific trafficking cases. And there can be impor-

tant differences between frontline and other organizations in terms of their mandates and what they hope to get out of the coalition. Some are trying to coordinate services while others mainly seek to be informed and to stay current with their information:

*There're a few academics on there. They talk about human trafficking in all its forms and a couple do gender-based research. So [for them], it's more of a forum, I think, ...for some kind of personal or professional motivations. (Interview 17, Coalition)*

And finally, when asked if there were gaps in their membership, the most common areas identified were immigration officials, legal aid representatives and, in Eastern Canada, aboriginal organizations.

## Structure

The structures of the coalitions generally followed the classic pattern for community-based coalitions. There was a little bit of variation, however, as we can see in these examples that were observed during our interviews.

COALITION STRUCTURE A: SIMPLE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP WITH COORDINATOR who may (a) have a specifically funded position for the coalition; (b) be offered “in-kind” by one of the member organizations (meaning the coordination has been offered to the person’s job in another organization with a particular interest in human trafficking; or (c) be a completely volunteer community member.



COALITION STRUCTURE B: GENERAL MEMBERSHIP WITH COORDINATOR AND A STEERING COMMITTEE. In these examples, the coordinator can again take the forms mentioned above and the steering committee members are generally staff people of member organizations. The members of the steering

committee are often those with the most frontline experience dealing with human trafficking and tend to be more active in responding to specific cases of trafficking. The general membership may be there more for education and awareness purposes or to offer specific resources, as necessary.



COALITION STRUCTURE C: COMMUNITY *ONLY* MEMBERSHIP WITH COORDINATOR and consultation with public sector and law enforcement. Government officials are not members of the coalition.



STRUCTURE D: GENERAL MEMBERSHIP WITH LEAD ORGANIZATION. In these structures, the coalition has clearly identified a lead organization for response to human trafficking cases. This may be in the form of the coalition staff person doing case management or the designation of one of the member organizations as the lead.



In only one instance, the coalition was organized along the line of chapters in different cities and towns within their province, allowing them to have quite a broad reach for educational activities.

Most coalitions reported having a general meeting every two months. Coalition meetings could be used for: organizations to share their recent trafficking-related experiences and seek support; updates on legislative or policy changes; research presentations or guest speakers. Rotating locations or hosts for the meetings was seen as a positive way to profile different organizations and the resources they can offer. Too many meetings, however, is a common complaint among frontline workers, one of which coalition coordinators are keenly aware:

*We decided to go with the bimonthly [meetings] because we wanted them to be more meaningful... But really it was the meaning-making. I want people to come to those meetings and say this was really, really meaningful. And if I have a month in between each meeting to sort of really plan and make some intentional choices around who's going to present and what's going to be done, I think the meetings are going to be way more valid. (Interview 8, Coalition)*

Where there were steering committees, they usually met more often in order to do follow-up from the coalition, plan and deal with specific cases of trafficking. For confidentiality reasons and for efficiency, detailed discussions of active cases

was usually reserved for outside the general coalition meetings. A subcommittee, the executive committee or an ad hoc committee of key frontline workers would meet or talk by phone to coordinate the response to a given situation:

*We will coordinate debriefs or case consultation meetings with the other agencies that are doing this work. So that might be an outreach agency, it might be a women's shelter, it might be a victim service agency, it might be a immigrant service agency and it might be an agency helping provide employment. They might all be doing that work but they might not all be communicating with each other... [The debrief] would happen outside of the [coalition] meetings because it's not relevant and it's confidential information. So we would have those meetings separately and only as needed. (Interview 5, Coalition)*

Finally, funding was a major challenge for all coalitions interviewed. Given the need felt by members, the work was going forward on a shoestring budget. One member described the evolution of her coalition and the long list of accomplishments before commenting:

*And all that happened before any whiff of funding. (Interview 20, Awareness-raising)*

Few if any coalitions have renewable core funding. Different coalitions reported project funding from a variety of sources (ex. provincial Victim Services Funds, Canadian Women's Foundation, Community Foundations, Justice Canada) but most were more or less dependent of the in-kind contribution of staff and other resources from their member organizations. Coalition members seem committed to the work but without funding, burnout is a major concern. Additionally, many of the members of these coalitions are facing severe cuts to their core activity funding, leading some of them to have to withdraw from active participation in the coalitions.

## PRINCIPLE ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY HUMAN TRAFFICKING COALITIONS

Our interviews documented a wide range of activities undertaken by Canada's human trafficking coalitions, with groups adapting to the local context and local needs. The activities undertaken by many, but not all, coalitions include:

- Awareness-raising and training
- Acting as resource people and offering information and referrals
- Coordination of services<sup>33</sup>
- Direct accompaniment of victims of trafficking
- Political action
- Emergency intervention or emergency financial aid

Most groups were involved in general awareness-raising, whether among the general public or among service providers. Coalitions play an important role in assuring communication between different sectors of service providers and with law enforcement. When it came to actual intervention with victims of human trafficking, many coalitions served as sources of information and referrals while others took on direct intake and case management. As coalitions gained experience, they tended to look more towards developing services to fill the gaps they had identified and pushing for policy reforms.

## Awareness-raising and training

To begin, most human trafficking coalitions were involved in some form of awareness-raising, seeing it as a core activity. Participants in coalition meetings reported finding this first level of activity very important:

*I think just being more aware of [human trafficking is important] because there isn't anything in place... to deal with human trafficking... Even, myself, attending these monthly meetings, I know what's in place and I can let the other departments know about these resources that are in place and then... I think [I am] asking the right questions. (Interview 1, Youth)*

The coalitions were rarely the only actors engaged in such initiatives in their city. Awareness-raising was also being undertaken by RCMP anti-trafficking regional coordinators, particularly with law enforcement and public sector employees. And many cities had organizations that were focused either specifically on sexual exploitation or on human trafficking in general who engaged in popular education on the topic, reaching such audiences as schools, faith-based organizations and youth groups. Such groups were often able to link their awareness-raising to fundraising, generating small funds that were offered to the coalitions or to specific organizations to serve the needs of people leaving situations of human trafficking.

The level of collaboration between citizen initiatives or trafficking-specific organizations and coalitions varied from one city or one province to another. The different groups engaged in awareness-raising generally seemed to know each other and find their training activities to be complementary. Beyond the risk of redundancy of efforts or competition for limited funding, there were important differences of perspective between these groups and there were serious reservations about the image of human trafficking and of people caught up in human trafficking that were being promoted. Several frontline workers questioned the competence of certain groups to be offering awareness-raising workshops without any experience in the field.

Finally, there is a distinction between education and awareness-raising activities targeting the public versus those targeting frontline workers and service organi-

zations. In other words, the process of networking and the consolidation of collaborative relationships with a broad range of organizations is itself a form of awareness-raising. Some coalitions offer training programs for frontline workers, targeting specific service sectors or issues.

## Information resource and referrals

Beyond the awareness-raising, coalitions act as key sources of information and referrals for their members. On the one hand, the information and referral role allows the coalitions to support the identification of victims of trafficking. As we saw in the section on the definition of human trafficking, it can be difficult for organizations with less knowledge and experience to recognize situations of trafficking. When there is a coalition, they can call and consult the staff about particular cases.

On the other hand, coalitions who take on this information and referral role have a list of appropriate community resources and can facilitate referrals on a case-by-case basis, according to the person's needs:

*One of the good things about the network is when we bring cases, they give referrals on how we can work together. (Interview 15, Refugee shelter)*

Learning about what services are available within the community and under what circumstances was very helpful to groups that were just beginning to identify cases of human trafficking.

And one area that was very much a “value-added” element of the human trafficking coalitions was their ability to act as a liaison between the community and public sectors. In particular, many community groups had very little experience with law enforcement, while the issue of human trafficking quickly raises the need for consultation with law enforcement. This coalition coordinator describes how they are able to act as a conduit – and also a buffer – between community groups and law enforcement:

*The RCMP has said that whenever we have a case of trafficking and we're not sure, we can call [our contact] and he can give us a consultation. So what this means is that because we recognize that there will be victims that don't want to go to [the police]... we can call [our RCMP contact] and we can tell him the situation and he can give us a consultation. Now, this doesn't mean that he's suddenly calling the green light and they're going to swoop in and do something about it. This just means we're going to talk about it, which is really valuable. (Interview 8, Coalition)*

## Coordination of services and accompaniment of victims

Not all coalitions or working groups engage directly in the accompaniment of victims of trafficking or in individual casework.

However, all the initiatives documented aimed to increase the coordination of services. In taking on the information role described above and in facilitating referrals to appropriate resources, coalitions contribute to a better coordination of services, increasing complementarity. This participant shared her experience managing services for a person recently identified by the RCMP as a victim of human trafficking:

*[We have constant communication with the RCMP] of here's the situation, here's the basic needs. If you're doing a kind of x-ray scan, this is what we think we need right away. ... Literally every half an hour, the wish list or the needs just keep growing and growing, the more that you talk... Well, they need food, and they need this, and they need this and they need this. And so, really, for the first two weeks it was a full-time job just to case manage the family. (Interview 17, Coalition)*

In most cases, the referrals and coordination occurs between frontline workers. The staff of the coalition are not in direct contact with the victim, but rather in communication with the frontline worker who is doing the accompaniment. However, an initial meeting may be organized in order to better understand the person's needs:

*[When] I'll get that initial call, I'll get as much information as I can... The most important piece for me is, is that individual safe? And is the individual calling me safe? ... And then when I can, I will set up a meeting to meet with the traffic victim and the individual who has called me. (Interview 8, Coalition)*

This initial meeting can either be a consultation where the coalition coordinator is able to plug the victim and the caseworker into the coalition's network of services or, it can be the first step towards the coalition taking on the role of case management.

The degree of a coalition's involvement in service delivery and accompaniment depends to a large degree on the available resources:

*I mean, our coalition is a coordination body. I think we are still determining what level of direct involvement with the client we can manage given our current human resources. Our role is as a coordination body and not so much to do frontline intervention. We don't want to replicate what other agencies are already doing. (Interview 5, Coalition)*

It will also depend on what type of organization assumes the leadership of the coalition; if it is a service-providing organization, the coalition tends to be more involved in direct accompaniment. However, when the coalition has staff or leadership who are not service workers, the role tends to be limited to referrals and coordination of services.

Finally, in terms of the coordination of services, coalitions may also play a role in ensuring victims' safety. In cases where the victim is felt to be in danger in the city where they were identified, they may be offered assistance in changing cities. In emergency scenarios, coalitions may also act to facilitate moving victims from one city to another, all the while ensuring a good transition to service-providers and support workers in the new local. We are only aware of two coalitions that have a standing emergency fund for such occasions and, it is important to note, these funds are very limited.

## Political action

For some of those we interviewed, particularly those with more experience dealing with trafficking situations within their agencies, the most important role of the coalition was to serve as a collective voice for policy advocacy:

*It doesn't help my day-to-day work per se because I have the expertise. So if anything, I think I have something to offer, right? ...So for me it's about... developing policies and best practices... at a local and international level. And that's what I see is sorely lacking, certainly on the international level. (Interview 13, Youth)*

This linking of practice to policy seems to be an important potential contribution of human trafficking coalitions. To date, however, most seem to be caught up more in the day-to-day response to the needs of victims and the consolidation of their membership. They have yet to emerge as a powerful political force.

## TOOLS TO BETTER SERVE VICTIMS

Different coalitions have developed formal tools to better structure their work and avoid reinventing the wheel with the addition of new organizations or when there is turnover within organizations. Interview participants described being at different stages of developing these tools. The four tools that stood out in our research were: formal agreements for member organizations; identification tools; response protocols; databases of resources; hotlines or collaboration with Crime Stoppers; and newsletters or other information-sharing mechanisms. One interesting thing about these tools was that there is already quite a bit of sharing among the different coalitions with older coalitions or those with more experience sending their tools to be adapted by coalitions in other cities.

## Memoranda of understanding (MoUs)

To begin, many coalitions described a desire to consolidate their membership through memoranda of understanding (MoUs), making clear what role a member organizations could play within the coalition and what services they can offer to a potential victim of human trafficking. For example, representatives of government agencies are often committed to participating in these coalitions but cannot be part of any political activities, such as policy advocacy. Or the eligibility criteria of different services may limit in what capacity different groups can be involved in different trafficking cases; for example, many groups only serve youth or women or permanent residents.

Several coalitions expressed an interest in making these commitments and these limitations clear as a way to facilitate efficient work when emergency situations arose:

*What we are going to have is sort of a sheet that says you are going to provide – usually free – services for victims of trafficking [during a one year period]. That doesn't mean that the services will stop if I need them past then. It's really a chance for us to do a review. So I can go back and say, hey, [employee's name] from Legal Aid, we signed this document a year ago. In that time, I know that you and I have worked on two or three cases of trafficking together; I want to sit down and review how this is working for you. So is the referral process working? Are the services you're giving our victims accurate, needed? How is the communication between me and yourself working out? (Interview 8, Coalition)*

While coalition representatives commonly expressed a desire to head in this more formal direction, not all agreed:

*Let's not get these MoUs and blah, blah, blah. We didn't go that route. It was just too much. Because then it takes time. We got something, we need to react right away. So... all these other agencies, we keep them in the loop. Because you might be calling them only once a year. (Interview 21, Law enforcement)*

However, in the case of at least one coalition, the signing of agreements between two or three partners, rather than among all members of the coalition, seemed to work well. This type of agreement allowed them to make official and clarify the service-provision responsibilities of these key partners, and to support victims within the boundaries of their mandates.

The issue of formal collaboration agreements is also linked to the development of a response model, including mechanisms for referrals that, in some cases, have led to the elaboration of intervention protocols.

While tools vary from one coalition to another, they share the characteristic of facilitating referrals to a continuum of services.

## Identification tools and response protocols

More universal in acceptance was the need for both identification tools – to help service providers recognize and identify situations of human trafficking – and response protocols. While tools vary from one coalition to another, they share the characteristic of facilitating referrals to a continuum of services. Some groups have developed a response model (ex. OCTIP), while others have developed a trajectory of community services (ex. the Ottawa coalition). Finally, some groups have opted for intervention protocols. It was often described as a long and constantly evolving process.

This coalition coordinator gives a detailed description:

*Part of it identifies the principles from which we want to operate. And then it gets more specific in terms of how we will respond to situations... If a call comes through to the hotline, how will we respond to the situation and make sure all of the right people are responding? Or... if a case comes in to a specific agency, how will we respond? So we are just accepting that there are going to be multiple points for the initial contact, whether it is shelters, social agencies, a community member or [law enforcement].*

*[a] What should that point person at that agency do to make sure that the appropriate members get involved, whether it is interpretation services, healthcare, police, shelter, hotel vouchers, that sort of thing?*

*[b] And then [one member of the coalition] makes sure that we are collecting the generic details of the case and that it is going through an analysis process...*

*[c] And then... responding to the secondary needs, whether it is legal assistance, accompaniment, counselling, advocacy, employment, health, social assistance, that sort of thing.*

*[d] Then dialoguing with the survivor to explore options and develop a plan for moving ahead and bringing the generic case details back to the full coalition group for reflection and education and possible advocacy action.*

*(Interview 35, Coalition)*

## Personalized databases and resource lists

The development of such a response protocol quickly raises the necessity of organizing and making available to relevant people the details of service provision (including cost, eligibility criteria) and they coalition's contact person. Several of the groups are in the process of creating a database of resources:

*But we're thinking we'll put this catalogue online. So the idea is that when I go, the knowledge is transferred to somebody else. So you go into this database and you say, "Oh, gosh, I have a victim of trafficking and they need immigrant services." So we type in "immigrant services" and everything that that organization has promised they will do for us will come up. And maybe, we're not sure yet, the contact*

*name for that individual. That might be something just privately passed on from me to the — to the next person in my position. (Interview 8, Coalition)*

The confidentiality of this information is very important for the sense of trust among coalition members, but also potentially for the safety of both victims and service providers.

## Identification tools

Coalitions have developed human trafficking victim identification tools in order to help frontline workers recognize and identify situations of human trafficking. Several of the provincial level coalitions have made them central to their training and their operations:

*So we've trained other agencies on the tool with these indicators... We know that there are a lot of agencies that will see something that sounds like trafficking or they think it's a little bit like trafficking and maybe meets some of those indicators and so they'll phone us about that and I think that's good. (Interview 5, Coalition)*

The idea behind such tools is not so much to be a questionnaire that would be asked directly of a person presenting for intake in an organization, but more a checklist for reflection by the worker if they have suspicions about the situation. If the indicators suggest trafficking, then the worker could explore in more depth with the person.

*Does that on their own mean that they're a victim of trafficking? No. But with a few of those other things well, you know what? We're going to start looking a little bit deeper... So that on its own may not be enough. But you get two or three of these things and then we maybe need to ask some different questions. (Interview 29, Law Enforcement)*

Overall, however, most respondents were interested in having access to screening and identification tools that could guide their practice without being seen as a golden answer. There was generally strong awareness that each indicator on its own may not be a fail-proof sign of human trafficking but many respondents felt the tools were useful:

*We do annually kind of go through just a little basic training with our staff who answer the crisis calls, to know what to look for, certain red flags, anything that would indicate that they are maybe a victim of human trafficking and then I actually read all of our crisis calls every single day just to make sure that we didn't yeah, that nobody missed the trafficking and such... I just go through it [our identification and screening tool] and read and just kind of look for any of the red flags that would maybe indicate that victim was a human trafficking victim... (Interview 4, Women's shelter)*

For other coalitions, the usefulness of such a tool was not so widely agreed upon. Some respondents said that it was so rare for them to encounter trafficking victims that they didn't see it as relevant to make such a tool part of their practice; if they had suspicions, they would just turn directly to the coalition and probably refer out. Others felt it was impossible to come up with a comprehensive list of indicators and suggested that developing such tools could sometimes just be a busywork project for some coalition members:

*At the end of the day, we just needed to inform people that their language or their approach needs to be sensitive, and don't be so directed and don't be so pointed... So some of these projects, you would let people go off and do it so they could air and contribute. (Interview 17, Coalition)*

And some respondents warned that overly simplified identification tools can simply lead to continued misconceptions about human trafficking:

*I look at all these pamphlets and I laugh... So does she speak English? Are there bruises on her? Does it look like she's being controlled?... You can't tell like that! Those indicators make me laugh... It's confusing the public, 'cause everybody still thinks it's the girls being shipped from Russia, shipped from China... Oh, it's easy, she doesn't speak English, she doesn't know where she is, she's got bruises, she doesn't want to talk. When have you ever had that?! (Interview 26, Law enforcement)*

## 24/7 Help hotlines

While service providers already connected to the coalition will obviously know how to reach out should they encounter what is potentially a human trafficking situation, many coalitions identified a gap when it came to members of the public or victims themselves reaching out for help. Several have created their own hotlines for trafficking cases, but others have entered into agreement with their local Crime Stoppers to field 24-hour calls in relation to human trafficking cases.

## Newsletters

Finally, several of the coalitions distributed a regular newsletter (usually via e-mail) to share news and information related to human trafficking to their network. This was also a way to keep in touch with groups that are sympathetic to the issue but unable or unwilling to be regularly involved in the coalition work.

## Challenges in undertaking Coalition Work

Finally, several of the coalitions distributed a regular newsletter (usually via e-mail) to share news and information related to human trafficking to their network. This was also a way to keep in touch with groups that are sympathetic to the issue but unable or unwilling to be regularly involved in the coalition work.

Overall, respondents were very positive about the contributions of a coalition to their work. There were of course challenges, however. Among the challenges identified were:

- Developing trust among different partners
- Understanding and respecting each member's mandate
- Insuring the sustainability of the work over the long term
- Respecting confidentiality and the limits of information-sharing
- Divergences in terms of the definition of trafficking and the language used in relation to it
- Great diversity of actors involved in the coalition
- Communication
- Security issues

Here we will discuss a few of them.

## Limited resources for coalition work

As indicated earlier, with the exception of British Columbia (OCTIP), Alberta (ACT) and Manitoba, very few organizations (if any) receive recurring funding to address the issue of human trafficking. As mentioned elsewhere, very few – if any – organizations received stable or core funding to address human trafficking. In general, work on human trafficking was added to someone's existing work mandate, leaving them feeling overloaded, or people were acting as volunteers. The ensuing lack of time to concentrate on the human trafficking work was keenly felt:

*I think the major challenge for everybody is time, but we're trying to build something we think it's really important... But everybody's doing this as part of their work or as volunteers. And it means that things don't necessarily move forward as quickly as we'd like. It's challenging because you want to be ready to receive and treat in the best way possible the victims that come forward or come to light. (Interview 20, Awareness-raising)*

In many jurisdictions, participants are hoping that the federal and provincial governments will step up their support for human trafficking work, in order to counter this barrier. Support for coalitions is perceived as an effective way for governments to counter human trafficking.

As well, awareness-raising and training take up an important proportion of coalition leaders' time. Apart from the struggle to have time to do the victim response work, human trafficking coalitions find themselves under high demand to conduct education and awareness raising workshops. While they consider this to be essential, useful, preventative work, such activities eat into their limited time to consolidate the service provision aspect of their coalition:

*Because the faith communities, schools, they — they want this stuff, but the two of us can't do it. And because my work is solely the protocol [working on victim response], I can't rationale in my head giving 80 percent of my time to doing presentations. I think that's really worthwhile, but I need to keep the network going and the protocol going because [the educational] stuff could take forever. (Interview 8, Coalition)*

Unfortunately, it is not only the human trafficking coalitions that lack resources to complete their mandates. Several participants reported losing coalition members when allied organizations experienced funding cuts. Either the services they had previously offered to the coalition were no longer available or they no longer had the staff time to send a representative to meetings. Additionally, the low pay and tough conditions in many community groups could lead to high turnover.

The confidentiality of this information is very important for the sense of trust among coalition members, but also potentially for the safety of both victims and service providers.

All of these elements combine to create coalitions' reliance on key people or 'champions':

*Again, it's based on personalities. [A key coalition member's] executive director is 25 years in this business, she knows everybody in town. She can get stuff [snaps fingers] like you wouldn't believe. If you need a hotel because there's a male victim or a family, she's the one we call. It's not the city, it's not other organizations. So the success really hinges on certain experience, networks, personalities and friendships. (Interview 17, Coalition)*

While this is working for current coalitions, it leaves them vulnerable to collapse should the key players in their coalition be either unable or unwilling to continue their contributions. And given the unlikelihood that cases of human trafficking are going to diminish as service providers become more adept at identifying them, this seems a precarious situation. Measures are needed to render this work more sustainable.

## Diversity and divisions among the members

Another theme related to challenges facing human trafficking coalitions is that of diversity and political divisions among members, which can make it difficult to find common ground. Human trafficking calls for sectors that previously worked in silos to come together. Important challenges can arise from the differences in organizational culture or mandates that can be found among community, social service and law enforcement actors. Their frameworks for practice and the degree of flexibility in their work varies widely. In addition, some mandates can be in opposition to others. A street worker, for example, might remain quiet about certain risky situations in order to maintain the trust of the people with whom they work, when the police would be obliged to intervene. One of preoccupations of frontline workers is the need to respect victims' choice whether or not to file a complaint with the police.

*...I kept saying [to the law enforcement members of our coalition], “But, okay, even if a victim doesn’t go that route, so what’s the next steps?” And they couldn’t get their head around it because that was their purpose: “Well, we’re here to get the bad guy, right?” And everyone said, “Well, no, we’re here for the victim.” So if that results in their cooperation to get the bad guy in the end, that’s great, super, that’s one part of the process. (Interview 17, Coalition)*

It is important but difficult to understand and clarify each coalition member’s mandate, and then to respect it.

Another element of division can sometimes be the difference between organizations with a focus on immigration issues versus those focused on women’s issues such as domestic violence and sexual exploitation. One participant described it this way:

*Anyone is invited from the social services, but we start seeing divisions between people who work with domestic cases [versus] people who are working with international cases. People with domestic cases are more like, “Okay, provide services. Give us funding in a way that we can do it.” [They have a] very protective or rescue concept. And the ones that we are looking at international cases, we want to bring in a very anti-oppression and anti-racist framework. (Interview 15, Refugee shelter)*

The priority issues in domestic versus international cases can be quite distinct. For example, those dealing with domestic cases often struggle with addressing psychosocial trauma and addictions while those dealing with international cases struggle with immigration status and eligibility for health and social services.

The priority issues in domestic versus international cases can be quite distinct.

Tensions also exist between groups with different positions in the prostitution debate.

*There are some organizations that work on the sex trade and they have this model to remove [women] from the sex trade and to rehabilitate them... And we have other groups that they say, “Well, why not? Prostitution is legal right now.” ...We lose the component that we are working for to stop human trafficking... It’s quite challenging. And if they are in your network, it’s double the work... We didn’t realize that we had [this debate] within our network. (Interview 15, Refugee shelter)*

The conflicts related to this debate are longstanding and well-known within the Canadian women’s movement but the fact that organizations are trying to build coalitions around human trafficking at a time when public policy debates around prostitution are raging make it particularly challenging. The phenomenon of human trafficking is often reduced to sex trafficking – to the frustration of groups trying to address labour trafficking – and some organizations contend that all prostitution is equivalent to sex trafficking – to the frustration of those who pro-

mote decriminalization of sex work as a way to increase safety or who promote sex work as legitimate work. In more than one coalition, tensions around these issues have led to members leaving the coalition or creating difficult environments for collaboration. In some cities, this debate has led to the creation of parallel coalitions.

## Trust, communication and confidentiality

Once a coalition or a group gets involved in the coordination of services and concerted action around specific cases of human trafficking, the questions of confidentiality and the limits of the exchange of information becomes central:

*So how do we get around this privacy stuff, sharing of information? That's a major issue... I'd say it took almost two years to break that barrier, to develop that strong working relationship... So we kind of explained to the rest of the members on the steering committee this is how we will proceed, just to give them an understanding of how law enforcement works and what we have to do. By law, we have to investigate... We have protocol that we have to follow and if it's leading them to detention, that's not something I can change. (Interview 21, Law enforcement)*

Developing a relationship of trust takes a lot of time, as this frontline worker has emphasised. As each member's mandate and parameters of confidentiality become clear, greater trust can be established. It's often through practice, when actors must work together to respond to a concrete situation of trafficking, that trust is strengthened. Finally, a related challenge to the development of trust is that it is often based on an interpersonal rather than an inter-institutional basis, meaning that if an individual moves on, the process must start over.

## PROMISING PRACTICES FOR THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES

We now turn our attention to promising practices for the development of strong, effective responses to the needs of victims of human trafficking. The three areas that stood out were relationship building between organizations, the ability to respond under emergency circumstances, establishing clear structures for medium and long-term response and continual outreach.

Coalitions and the coordination of services were considered by our participants to have many positive effects. Coordination efforts allow for:

- the mobilization of existing resources and concerned actors around common objectives; and
- the facilitation of referrals among services across different sectors
- the avoidance of the duplication of services

Coalitions and coordination of services assures a better understanding of needs, the sharing of up-to-date information, as well as the identification of gaps in local services. These initiatives not only encourage networking among local frontline workers, but they also facilitate networking at the provincial and national level. We were able to document the development of new collaborations between frontline workers from different cities and different provinces via coalitions and national groups.

One very important effect of these collaboration efforts obviously concerns, then, the creation of durable links between different groups. Creating trust and recognizing each member's priorities and ways of working can easily take two to three years. This coalition coordinator shares her experience:

*I think in terms of actually getting the coalition started, the process that we have used of going around to the different social agencies and kind of talking to them about human trafficking and trying to get a sense of their experience and having that dialogue with them one on one before we brought them together – I think was a very good way to go. I think it has been quite fruitful. I don't know, so far the protocols we are using seem to be working well. (Interview 35, Coalition)*

In general, in addition to creating links, respondents underlined the importance of: an open attitude and the willingness to collaborate; being willing to work across differences in order to address common issues; and keeping the focus on responding to the needs of the person who is leaving a situation of human trafficking:

*...Everybody wanting to help... Everybody respecting the victim-centred approach, which I think is absolutely key. It's a pretty unique model. So the fact that we can find all sorts of different service providers that don't necessarily even work under that model that are willing to at least talk with us and say we can chip in a bit here and there is phenomenal. (Interview 8, Coalition)*

As we have seen above, the coalitions also put in place different response models with varying degrees of formal structure.

## Emergency response

In order for a coalition to be truly effective in protecting the rights and interests of human trafficking victims, they have to be able to step up in emergency situations. As mentioned above, many coalitions were instigated by law enforcement

If the coalition is able to respond with safety, psychosocial and material support in these emergency situations, it can diminish the fear and revictimization of people who are leaving a trafficking situation, often in the context of police intervention.

officers aiming to build relationships for when they encountered unforeseen victims. Being able to respond on a 24-hour basis, with a variety of services, is essential to the wellbeing of a person exiting a trafficking situation, as described by this police officer:

*If you're pulling [a trafficking victim] out of a dangerous situation and you put them in shelter, you got to look out for the staff who are going to look after that victim and the victim themselves or anybody else in their circle. So there's a lot of issues that have to be worked out but that was the immediate need that we identified... So that was the very first thing we started reaching out to different agencies. Who can help us out here on an emergency basis? Can they come onto the steering committee? And that way we're building a quick little network. I can pick up the phone, call the executive director or whoever on an emergency basis. So three in the morning, yes, I can call this number. And that's what it boils down to. (Interview 21, Law enforcement)*

If the coalition is able to respond with safety, psychosocial and material support in these emergency situations, it can diminish the fear and revictimization of people who are leaving a trafficking situation, often in the context of police intervention.

## Medium and long-term response

Beyond the immediate emergency situation through which many human trafficking victims come to the attention of coalitions, there are the medium and long-term needs that must be addressed. To date, none of the coalitions seem to have the staff necessary to act as the lead service provision organization for victims of human trafficking. There were two models that seemed to be working well for the coalitions that had adopted them. First, several coalitions ended up having a lead organization. In one example, it is a women's shelter. In another, it is a legal aid clinic. When human trafficking cases are identified by coalition members, the person is referred to the lead organization for case management and the coalition mobilizes the necessary complimentary resources and services.

Most coalitions, however, recognize the initial intake group or the group with the most relevant mandate as the lead organization, as we hear here:

*There has been some collaboration in terms of when a case comes up, making contact with folks from the coalition who have legal backgrounds on immigration issues, also making cross reference calls with folks who have counselling backgrounds. So wherever the case appears, at whatever agency, they take the lead but then they call in different members of the coalition as needed. (Interview 35, Coalition)*

In both cases, it seems to work well for the specific context and may reflect to what extent different agencies have experience with trafficking-related cases. In

bigger centres, there seem to be more organizations with deep experience and the overall greater number of trafficking victims may just mean that more groups were already dealing with them before the coalitions were established.

## Ongoing outreach and education

Finally, a number of participants pointed out the importance of engaging in ongoing outreach and education, despite the resource challenges raised in the last section. Such work serves a preventative role. Raising awareness can both help potential victims recognize the risks and seek out help and it can also encourage service providers and members of the public to signal potential trafficking cases. This was underlined by the following participant:

*Another element that will be interesting for you is that out of every presentation that we make to diverse groups of people – workers, hotel managers, social workers, teachers, whoever – there was always somebody... One, there is always somebody in the audience that would say, “Now that you put the indicators together, now I remember a case or two or three of people who came to us for assistance and we didn’t actually grasp the nature of the situation.” So that was a consistent factor at every presentation. Another one was that people wanted to learn more. They liked the presentation. They said there is lots of information but we want to learn more. (Interview 36, Coalition)*

So, despite the challenges, it seems important for coalitions to support ongoing outreach and education that does not sensationalize trafficking, objectify its victims and provides concrete, practical information about what can be done.



# SECTION 5

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

There has been an unprecedented mobilization against human trafficking in Canada. Numerous groups joining the fight against trafficking have emerged from civil society. The Canadian government adopted a national action plan in 2012. There are regular newspaper articles and public events on trafficking. In parallel to all this public interest and indignation, field workers attempt to address the needs of people who have been trafficked. to show its strengthened commitment.

There are regular newspaper articles and public events on trafficking. In parallel to all this public interest and indignation, field workers attempt to address the needs of people who have been trafficked. This study has attempted to document the efforts of frontline workers in all sectors and to examine the main challenges of service provision to trafficking victims.

This study shows that despite the efforts that have been made and the commitment shown by the government, concrete resources for the protection and support of victims are still lacking. To date there is no specific government body to offer assistance to trafficking victims or mandated to make referrals or coordinate access to services for victims. Coordination of support services is done by local, regional and provincial initiatives, mostly non-governmental. The steps taken by the Canadian government, including the adoption of the National Action Plan, are not sufficient. Criminalizing trafficking-related offences and adopting this plan are essential components of a strong national response, but incomplete. Without adequate resources and without an organizational and institutional structure specifically mandated to protect victims, these actions can have little impact.

In this context, without government initiated and supported structures or mechanisms, frontline workers and organizations have mobilized and developed or adapted services. Numerous civil society initiatives have emerged to respond locally to trafficking situations, in a “bottom-up” approach. Since 2005, local, regional and provincial initiatives, mostly non-governmental, have been launched across Canada to help create a coordinated and more effective response. In other words, local coordination on the ground preceded public financing and the 2012 National Plan of Action.

In this section, we will review some of the highlights of this report, raising points of debate and issues related to intervention. Suggested solutions and promising practices will also be examined. We believe it is important to discuss issues about services for trafficking victims not only in terms of challenges and promising practices, but also as issues. Practices and interventions with this group are relatively new. It is not opportune to adopt an evaluative or prescriptive approach. We are at a propitious moment to highlight issues that should be taken into account. It should be noted that our analysis of practices and services remains anonymous for the most part, so non-nominative.

## PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION

The difficulties of defining trafficking have been raised in each section of this report. The definition, and consequently the understanding, of human trafficking has implications at all levels and steps of intervention. Difficulties in identifying victims as well as documenting and measuring the scope of the problem are discussed at length in the literature on human trafficking. The first challenge, raised some years ago and well documented in the literature and confirmed by participants, is the difficulty of obtaining reliable statistical data on the extent of the trafficking problem. This difficulty is in part due to the very nature of trafficking: illegal, underground, and stigmatized. It is also a result of definitional challenges.

In Canada, an evolution in the perception and understanding of the trafficking phenomenon, both by governments and frontline workers, can be observed. Three main phases can be identified. First, human trafficking was mainly perceived as international, affecting women coming to Canada from overseas (Asia or Eastern Europe), mainly for exploitation in the sex industry. Gradually, the focus shifted towards domestic sex trafficking, taking place within Canadian borders and with Canadian victims. An increase of investigations into sexual exploitation in Canada and media coverage have made local sex trafficking a matter of public debate. Finally, over the past two years, there has been interest in forced labour, a form of exploitation mostly affecting non-Canadians.

Respondents confirmed that human trafficking is not a new phenomenon. Exploitation, in many forms, has always existed. And, while the context of this exploitation – notably the sex industry and migration dynamics – has transformed, the main changes have been in the perception and way of looking at exploitation. The fact that victims do not see themselves as trafficking victims was already well-known. However, frontline workers can also be reluctant to name certain situations as trafficking. These situations thus remain invisible and are not reflected in the statistics. Beyond legal and political considerations in defining trafficking, there is another important issue: the implications of distinguishing trafficking from other social problems in the practice of frontline workers.

The main changes have been in the perception and way of looking at exploitation.

These considerations lead us to two conclusions. While it is true that statistics can never offer more than a partial estimate of the extent of a problem, it is even more important to note that they do not encourage an understanding of the continuum of exploitation and violence. The focus on human trafficking as it is officially defined risks banalizing less extreme forms of exploitation.

Questions about defining trafficking raise the more fundamental issue of whether the very concept of trafficking is useful to interventions. Isn't trafficking just one extreme of a broad continuum of exploitation? Do the attention and resources focused on trafficking overshadow the plight of people who are exploited in other ways, though they are more numerous and just as deserving of support and compassion? Is the “anti-trafficking” movement creating a category of “deserving victims” whose needs count for more, and who have a greater right to receive help, while abandoning those who don't happen to fit the definition? As we have already discussed, many frontline workers do not think it is essential to their work to name their client's situation as trafficking; this would make absolutely no difference to the way they intervene. However, some frontline workers believed, rightly or wrongly in specific contexts, that trafficking raises greater indignation and has become a priority. Alongside these sensitive questions, it is important to note that numerous frontline workers believe that the interest in trafficking has created a greater recognition that all forms of exploitation are unacceptable. Just as in the development of awareness around the issue of conjugal violence, appropriation of the concept of trafficking can help expose the fact that a third party (the trafficker) is responsible for the exploitation and profits from it.

## SPECIFIC NATURE OF TRAFFICKING INTERVENTIONS

Across disparities of municipality, region, and province, sector, and organizational mandate, there were broad similarities in the difficulties and challenges that frontline workers encounter. Although, as we have just seen, some frontline workers do not see any difference between their work with trafficking victims and with their usual clientele, others identified some features that are particular or more specific to trafficking victims.

As we have seen, victims of trafficking – whether for forced labour or sexual exploitation – are difficult to reach. Relatedly, respondents often only had a rare and short window of opportunity to intervene when the victim sought help.

*For these victims, at the time they are ready to talk, the opportunity can close again pretty quick. (Interview 31, Youth Protection)*

Many obstacles and fears prevent people who are being exploited from seeking aid. When they do, the moment must be seized and the response must be rapid. This means not only having resources on hand and available so that referrals are immediate, but also keeping the door open; being very available and facilitating constant contact with frontline workers.

This obviously raises the question of the lack of 24/7 emergency resources as well as 24/7 emergency referral mechanisms, their adaptation and how infor-

med they are about trafficking. This is a need frequently cited by frontline workers, for which there are multiple responses, notably through coordination of services by a coalition or task-force.

The difficulty of establishing trust is also a central challenge. Whether it is forced labour or sexual exploitation, the experience of manipulation, coercion, control and all the forms of constraint exercised by the trafficker leaves the victim isolated, anxious, and distrustful, even towards community organizations. It takes a lot of time before people are willing to disclose situations of exploitation. Establishing trust can be even more difficult with foreign nationals.

Trafficking victims need intensified accompaniment because of trauma, legal proceedings (during investigations and prosecutions), and the complexity of situations and multiple needs. Lack of coordination among resources and misunderstandings of the issue mean that interventions require more time; the frontline worker must navigate the system, repeat the victim's history, and educate other frontline workers at each step.

Victims of trafficking  
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Another specific feature of accompaniment of trafficking victims is that it is emotionally intense; the victims have often passed through severely traumatic events. This was expressed by all respondents, from all sectors: police, lawyers, social workers, health professionals, etc. Many frontline workers also stressed the importance of being available around the clock. This “clientele” has lived through trauma and may be in need of constant support, whenever the need for listening arises:

*Absolutely; my phone is on 24/7. Yeah, it is, and she knew that she could phone and get that support. She... you know, we have boundaries and things like that, but for her and for other women we've worked with, right, that's when the night terrors come three o'clock in the morning, we're getting the phone call, right. We really are, because they trust you, right. (Interview 2, Prostitution)*

A common theme in the interviews was the necessity of going beyond one's mandate and organizational framework, given the complexity of situations in which several problems are often intertwined:

*You have a system. You have to work within the system but if the system isn't the right fit then you have to find the right fit. Yeah, you just ... you have to. You have to think [...] outside the box. Always, yeah, looking for a different angle. (Interview 13, Youth Shelter)*

Legal support and advice is another important dimension of intervention. Given the criminal nature of trafficking, it is often necessary to collaborate with police and legal sectors. For some organizations, this seemed to be a new aspect of their intervention work.

All sectors identified the need for intersectorial collaboration. First, there is a plurality of needs, meaning that many sectors must learn to work together. In addition, the new character of trafficking, mainly in its penal sense, requires working with other frontline workers possessing specific knowledge, and thus adding another dimension to collaboration. Finally, trafficking crimes are often committed in a number of different municipalities and provinces because moving victims from one town or province to another is a tactic of traffickers. Thus the need to collaborate and coordinate services often goes beyond the location in which the organization works and requires inter-municipal and even sometimes inter-provincial collaboration.

The intensity of interventions in these cases involves a risk of burn-out among frontline workers and raises the issue of sustainability.

## MAIN MATERIAL DEFICIENCIES IN SUPPORT SERVICES

From Section 2, on the range of services, from emergency to long-term, it can be concluded that there is a solid network of organizations and agencies offering, within their mandates, services to trafficking victims alongside other populations whom they already serve. As a service worker responsible for a coordinating body stated, existing resources must be identified and used to avoid duplication:

*Rather than start new services and new programs for which we don't have money, we need to be smart and strategic on how we use what is already in place. There are services and programs and great people in place already. So part of our work is to figure out that map of assets and recruit them to work in partnership. (Interview 36, Coalition)*

However, despite this rather positive conclusion, some deficiencies and many challenges in offering services to this population were identified and analyzed in this report. Some services are lacking or do not meet the specific needs of trafficking victims.

Most gaps identified concern access: access to housing, to healthcare, or to a psychologist, therapist or psychiatrist. Access problems to many social, community and public services are not unique to trafficking victims. However, this report shows there is still a specific lack of understanding and awareness about the trafficking issue on the part of various professionals. Few professionals have

specific expertise and experience with this exploited population, nor hence with the specific nature of traumas experienced and the relationship to the trafficker.

Among the gaps and missing services, we identified transportation and transfer of victims from one city or province to another or to the country of origin.

Many issues relating to immigration status were examined, notably the Temporary Resident Permit (TRP). While it is an important tool for temporary protection, it has proven insufficient. It is of limited use for the many reasons cited above. Despite the Canadian government's growing concern about human trafficking, migrants with precarious status (especially undocumented people, asylum seekers and temporary foreign workers) are targeted by increasingly restrictive measures which criminalize them and increase their vulnerability. The fear of being detained and deported remains one of the main reasons that international trafficking victims do not reach out for help.

Finally, as we have seen, long-term support is greatly lacking. Recovery for someone who has been trafficked may take a long time and resources which can be mobilised in an emergency or for a short-term intervention tend to dissipate over time. Not only are resources such as housing and employment access programmes scarce, few organizations offer long-term psycho-social support. At the same time, legal proceedings are often very lengthy. This has been identified as a difficulty; offering support for legal proceedings that may last two or three years or more can be difficult for some organizations.

At this point, the majority of specific initiatives to address human trafficking in Canada rely on the commitment of a few individuals commonly seen as 'champions of the cause'. Many initiatives have resulted from the actions of passionate and committed frontline workers going beyond their mandates. Partnerships and collaboration mechanisms are often informal. Finally, the lack of resources raises concerns about the sustainability of existing initiatives.

## INTERVENTION ISSUES

Trafficking is a complex reality with multiple ramifications raising numerous issues for intervention. In this section, we will discuss intervention issues identified in this study and provide some attempts at solutions and practices our respondents believed to be appropriate.

### More Specialized Resources?

Respondents often raised the issue<sup>25</sup> of whether it is preferable to develop more specialized resources to address human trafficking or adapt existing resources and provide good training and awareness programmes for frontline workers<sup>34</sup>. The example of housing is a good illustration of this debate.

rapid development of new housing resources by new organizations without long professional experience in intervention is risky.

Across the country, organizations face the same kinds of questions about the best strategy for offering housing services to trafficking victims. Two possibilities are discussed: 1) establish new, specialized housing resources exclusively for trafficking victims; or 2) network with existing resources and adapt practices as necessary. Despite divergent perspectives, respondents all agreed that access to housing – whether emergency, transition or long-term – is problematic and requires further reflection. The latter is underway and it was premature at the time of publication to draw a conclusion. However, we can highlight a concern expressed by many respondents, that rapid development of new housing resources by new organizations without long professional experience in intervention is risky. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that no single model fits all human trafficking victims. For some, existing resources (for example, for conjugal violence) are suitable and can meet their needs; not so for others. Each person's situation is unique.

Generally, an argument against developing new resources specifically for human trafficking is that few human trafficking cases have been identified, and thus investment in such resources cannot be justified.

At the same time, most respondents believed that it was important not to wait for an increase in the number of cases to organize support and that having more resources in place could lead to an increase in the number of victims identified.

We also noted that organizations which have developed some expertise in the field remain entrenched in the two main camps of intervention in human trafficking: sexual exploitation (organizations working with people in prostitution or youth at risk) and forced labour (group working in immigration and labour rights).

## A Global Approach to Trafficking: Welding Different Forms of Expertise?

Another challenge for service provision is connecting the different forms of human trafficking. Should a global approach to trafficking – encompassing both situations of sexual exploitation and forced labour – be developed and maintained? Or, to avoid diluting efforts, does it make more sense that each sector mobilize the actors and expertise it needs?

This question lurks beneath all attempts at coordination or coalition. Don't different forms of trafficking involve different needs and responses? Two important points should be taken into account. First, the visibility and attention given to sexual exploitation as the main form of trafficking has meant that forced

labour has remained in the shadows and received less support. This dynamic is reflected in existing coordinating bodies where, because of the current social and political context, the issue of sexual exploitation may be prioritized over forced labour. Generally, there are far more resources relevant to sexual exploitation; addressing sexual violence, conjugal violence, abused women, youth at risk or street-involved, prostitution, etc. In the area of migration, resources are fewer and often more precarious.

Obviously, the forced labour of migrants and the sexual exploitation of Canadian nationals require different expertise and the interests of the two do not always converge. However, many frontline workers said that being members of the same coalitions or networks had a positive impact on their work. They were made aware of resources outside their usual networks of collaboration which could be useful in trafficking cases, the latter often being a little different from the cases they normally encounter.

## Rapid, Mass Mobilization around Human Trafficking: Double-Edged?

The larger mobilization of actors is positive and must continue. As we have seen, prevention and awareness projects are essential to make all sectors of society aware of this issue. However, these initiatives can have negative effects which are important to consider.

Many of the practices and services reviewed in this study are of recent vintage; between three to five years and sometimes less. There is little or no assessment of their impact on trafficking survivors. Most trafficking-specific initiatives are still in a process of development and learning. Each situation is different and each case provides an opportunity for new learning. The same is true for organizations with an interest in this issue or which have only recently added it to their mandate.

For frontline workers who have been working with people in prostitution for many years, the current interest in human trafficking and the support it mobilizes sometimes appears to sideline the vulnerable population with whom they work, who don't necessarily fit into the trafficking category:

*So I think for us what changes is that saying someone is trafficked is kind of like a magic word to open a door to getting supports that they don't otherwise have. [...] because there are a number of groups that are interested in this issue more doors open, way more doors open. I can provide someone with a lot more support if they want to identify as trafficked with financial support than if they are a sex worker. (Interview 7, Prostitution)*

The rapid and somewhat eclectic expansion of services risks creating new resources which lack necessary skills and expertise; this can have a negative impact on the people targeted by these resources. Many respondents raised concerns about new resources with no strong, prior experience working with such a vulnerable population. Many service workers highlighted the complex and sometimes heavy nature of working with trafficking victims, requiring experienced frontline workers.

To conclude, the fad for the trafficking issue and the desire to “do something” have led to the creation of numerous groups dedicated to fighting trafficking. However, public financing for protecting trafficking victims should go to organizations with the required expertise rather than to support the emergence of new resources specifically aimed at trafficking but lacking in practical experience. The urgency of working against trafficking must not supercede the ground rules for any social intervention.

## Victim-Centred Approach: Advantages and Limitations

Central to any intervention and the main recommendation of all frontline workers is adopting a victim-centred approach. However the issues about interventions examined above also apply here.

While there is consensus in the literature and from respondents about adopting such an approach, few question what it means in practice. One respondent explained that a victim-centred approach must not lead to viewing the person as nothing but a victim, thus stripping her of autonomy, independence and decision-making power. The majority of respondents understood it as follows:

*This idea that we have this community of services and you get to pick and choose what is a fit for you, rather than us telling you actually you need counselling for that sexual assault, actually I think you need to go to this office to get these health care pieces dealt with. It's just — it's not the way to handle victims. They've already gone through a system of control and abuse. And then coming to us and ushering them through these non-consensual ways of doing isn't — isn't appropriate, in my view. (Interview 8, Coalition)*

A victim-centred approach must be based on the person's rights and dignity and giving her back the power to make decisions. Support must be based on the person's needs; her needs must be put back into the centre and addressed according to her own rhythm. This can counter or lead to contradictions with the mandate and goals of frontline workers and organizations, even when the latter are strongly motivated by the victim's well-being.

## SOME PROMISING PRACTICES

Respondents identified many aspects of their work and practices that they considered appropriate and positive for victims. While there is no one model that can fit all local contexts, respondents did identify certain practices as effective and appropriate. When respondents were asked what constituted a promising practice, they generally responded with “ingredients” rather than a “recipe”. In the current context, intervention relies on organizations which do not have mandates specific to trafficking. The key element to adapting these services is flexibility, which requires support from the management of institutions and organizations. Organizations have developed different strategies to ensure better adaptation of their services to the needs of trafficking victims. Here are some examples.

### Attitude: Fundamental and Key to Intervention

One of the most common points raised was the importance of a non-judgmental and respectful approach. Experiences of exploitation and serious abuse are often accompanied by feelings of shame and guilt. Moreover, prostitution is stigmatized by society. Some victims may also harbour an ambiguous feeling of “complicity” in their own exploitation. All of these elements make trust very fragile, and the attitude of the frontline worker can be crucial. In situations of sexual exploitation, patience and consistency are vital, even in the face of a possible return to a situation of exploitation and renewed victimization. In fact, in cases of sexual exploitation, one of the challenges is the frequent return to situations risking exploitation.

*Honest and non-judgemental and just let them be who they are, and you know...And always know that this door is open, because I know it takes a lot for a woman to leave any part of it, right, and so they need to know that they can always come back here and that they'll always be supported, right. (Interview 2, Prostitution)*

There are also questions of language and attitude, as in all social interventions. It is important to adapt to the population served to build trust and create a safe space for the disclosure of abuse suffered. In situations involving international victims, this means a culturally sensitive approach. In situations of sexual exploitation, many frontline workers noted the importance of understanding the culture and language of prostitution circles. While this issue of knowing how to behave is part of any social intervention, judging from the comments of our respondents, it seems this dimension assumes a particular importance in work with a population with whom it is so difficult to establish trust.

### Involving Survivors and Peer Support

Involving human trafficking survivors in the fight against human trafficking and in support for victims is a practice desired by many respondents and an important component of responding to trafficking. Survivors can be involved in many ways

and at all phases of intervention. In prevention, for example, survivors can be involved in awareness activities and offer their testimony.

However, while it is essential to give people who have been trafficked a voice, it must be carefully done to avoid instrumentalizing survivors. Testimony must be used with sensitivity and sparingly. Adequate support and accompaniment must be offered to the person, the audience must be taken into account, and it is important to avoid asking the same survivor too many times.

Survivors can also be involved as peer support. Peer support is already practised in some organizations working with abused women or women in prostitution. A Montreal police initiative called “Survivors” offers this kind of approach; survivors testify in an awareness and training programme for frontline workers and are available to meet teenagers or young women in situations of exploitation or risk.

Peer support is seen as a complementary practice or component of intervention that can be further explored and used to a greater extent. This frontline worker, who previously worked in prostitution, explained how the fact that she shared this experience helped create a climate of trust without fear of stigma:

*I'm not saying that I'm any different. I just — I do things differently. [...] I believe in sharing a piece of me. Because when you share a piece of you, you don't come across as so removed from where they're at. [...] And so, [...] the boundary comes down slightly and that gives them a door to kind of go, wow, she's just like you and I, you know. [...] And they're not so afraid to [...] say some of the things that they feel might shock others. (Interview 18, Women's Shelters)*

This practice, however, requires a lot of tact. The people involved must be supported and receive total respect for their capacity and limits on speaking in public about their difficult experiences. Histories of survivors must not be instrumentalized in a sensationalist approach to trafficking, which is another form of exploitation.

## Adaptation of Housing Resources

Respondents from housing resources enumerated many adaptations of their practices and intervention approaches. More intimate shelters, with fewer beds and fewer strict rules, are needed. Intervention activities must also be adapted (individual vs collective). Stays in the shelter may have to be longer. International victims may need support integrating, cultural sensitivity, and accompaniment with immigration processes. Flexibility is needed in admission requirements, referral processes, and mandatory participation in group activities.

All respondents proposed establishing a network and close ties with housing resources to facilitate referrals and ensure that frontline workers in these resources are aware and informed about the issue of human trafficking. A collaborative network could also help find housing when there are many victims simultaneously in

need of shelter. An informal or formal agreement to keep one or several beds available, when organizations are open to this option, has proven very helpful, particularly to police.

## Dedicated Staff and/or Lead Worker

There was almost unanimous agreement on the need to establish dedicated resources on which frontline workers could rely in potential trafficking cases: legal or police units with close collaboration with the community sector or social services; specific services within existing organizations; and dedicated staff, with expertise, to whom trafficking cases could be systematically referred.

Dedicated staff, where it exists, often means one or two part-time individuals. In most cases, working with trafficking victims is just one part of their work. This practice has proven effective: it allows adequate adaptation of existing services, by ensuring training and expertise within service provision organizations. This staff member has the necessary expertise, and trafficking cases are referred to them. They become resource persons for their colleagues. These frontline workers play the role of lead worker or liaison with other organizations and facilitate collaboration. They have a good knowledge of resources in the community (or in other regions) offering adapted services. They must obviously be able to count on the institutional support of their organization, including management, so that they have the flexibility necessary for their work.

In most cases, working with trafficking victims is just one part of their work.

These different strategies that have developed work well when organizations rely on relevant internal tools, developed in accordance with their organizational contexts and mandates. When time is scarce, coalitions and other collaborative bodies can also be useful in sharing existing intervention tools that they can then adapt.

This approach can be assured by designating a service worker to accompany the victim. This is commonly known as “case management”; the mandate being to defend and meet the needs of victims. A frontline worker in this way is present to help the victim navigate the system and ensure that, despite divergences of service provider mandates (police, legal, health or other), the needs they express prevail.

## Specialized Training

Another way to make existing services adequate is to develop and provide staff training. All respondents cited the positive impact of such training on awareness. The results are most positive when the training is developed and given by a trainer from the same intervention sector and the content is adapted to the specific context of intervention.

## INTER-SECTORAL COLLABORATION: A SOLUTION?

In all Canadian provinces, anti-trafficking coalitions and coordinating bodies have been set up to respond to gaps in service provision for trafficking victims. There is a consensus in the literature and among participants in this study that intersectoral collaboration is essential to providing services and support appropriate to trafficking victims and to addressing the gaps and lack of knowledge on the issue. The section on collaborative initiatives presented different models of coalitions, collaborative initiatives and coordinated action across Canada. Similar issues emerged from broadly diverse experiences. A key point raised was that government support and involvement in these bodies helps guarantee sustainability.

Respondents noted many positive results from coalitions and the coordination of services.

These bodies improve coordination of existing resources, strengthen collaboration, and facilitate a constant and up-to-date exchange of practices and experiences. Sharing good practices is essential, especially in emerging areas like trafficking. Moreover, these bodies help increase collaboration and networking among local or provincial coordinating bodies at the national level. They also improve coordination of services by facilitating referrals within a continuum of services from many sectors.

Coalitions and collaborative bodies have also created different response models and tools – more or less formal and elaborated – to guide or facilitate intervention. These tools to guide interventions have been adopted, used and appreciated by various organizations whose work includes trafficking only marginally. Coordination is necessary at all levels – local, regional and provincial. Different considerations come into play at each level. While it is important to engage with the relevant ministries, agencies and institutions at the provincial level, local intervention is primordial. Community sector services are provided by neighbourhood, city or region. A provincial coordinating body can hardly be rooted locally and have regional significance. Finally, the mobilization that accompanies coordination efforts greatly contributes to awareness and education (targetted or general).

### Coordination of Services: Issues and Debates

Many respondents stressed the importance of a regional or provincial coordinating organization, with a specific trafficking mandate, responsible for coordinating services for trafficking victims.

*Looking at British Columbia, there is an office. There is something that is central but works with lots of partners. So that's what should be identified. I think that there*

*has to be a coordinating organization, that there is a point of entry. A front door. Then there can be a lot of stuff, but you have to go through the front door. (Interview 31, Youth Protection)*

There is no consensus on whether this body should be governmental or not. However, government involvement is crucial to secure adequate funding.

*And I think the government has a responsibility to run it in some format, whether they finance it, whether they run it. I'd like it to be a holistic response-based group that are focused on victim response, whether they're a [...] human trafficking victim, whether they're an Aboriginal, whether they're a Hungarian, whether they're Korean. It don't matter. A victim is a victim and they all have sim— they all have similar needs. And, you know, I think that's the biggest missing piece in our puzzle here. (Interview 11, Law Enforcement)*

Those in favour of a centralized model of coordinating service provision, see this as a way of clarifying and formalizing mandates and responsibilities of the different actors. With the exception of OCTIP, Manitoba's provincial strategy to combat sexual exploitation and, to a lesser degree, ACT Alberta, provincial responses to collaboration are generally informal.

*That's what i would like to see happen in Quebec [...], government involvement. Because that would mean, an involvement like that, that would allow frontline workers, police, prosecutors to have a mandate to work on it ... Because presently there are no specific mandates for trafficking. So everyone does the best they can with the resources they have to add this to their workload. It's added to their workload. It isn't a precise mandate to say – hey, we just work on that. (Interview 34, Law Enforcement)*

However some hesitations were also expressed about a more centralized model. While there was unanimity on the desirability of collaborative action, some cited the importance of multiple points of entry to access services. This approach derives from the premise that a trafficking victim may be identified in any one of a number of sectors and that the starting point of their aid trajectory is contact with the first service worker they encounter, whether at an organization for sexual assault, conjugal violence, or migrant rights.

An intersectorial collaboration approach ensures that when a trafficking victim seeks help, she gets adequate support, whatever the intervention sector.

Moreover, intersectorial collaboration partially resolves the dilemma outlined above about whether to increase specialized resources for trafficking victims even though the needs of this group overlap with those of other populations. Intersectorial collaboration builds on the base of expertise developed over many years with clientele and populations struggling with related problems (conjugal violence, sexual assault, precarious immigration status, and labour precarity).

## TOWARDS A CONTEXTUAL RESPONSE

In conclusion, an important finding of this study is that no one type of service or organization constitutes a model to be adopted in all contexts. However, some practices are considered effective and appropriate and these may serve as models. It also seems useful to continue to exchange information about practices in order to benefit from different experiences and expertise developed in other provinces and localities. Obstacles and difficulties encountered are often the same. Moreover, many of the deficiencies in services and resources to help trafficking victims can also be identified in the case of other vulnerable populations. Other populations face similar access issues. This raises questions about the appropriateness of compartmentalizing the needs of trafficking victims from the needs of other people facing violence, abuse and exploitation. It is important to highlight the fact that despite the – legitimate and necessary – indignation raised against human trafficking, this issue should not be allowed to overshadow equally deplorable and important problems, which may face more difficulty in mobilizing sympathy and energy.

We also noted the absence of evaluation of new practices, programmes and services to protect and support trafficking victims. This is an important obstacle to identifying promising practices and suggests the need to undertake more precise studies of the impact and results of existing programmes. At the same time, it is important to recognize that there are still few organizations with expertise or experience in offering services to trafficking victims. It is thus often the same organizations who are asked to participate in studies. More funds for research will mean more effort and time demanded of the same organizations, who already can hardly meet needs.

# RECOMMENDATIONS ET CONCLUSION

This study leads us to propose that intervention in trafficking – intervention aiming to protect victims in full respect of their rights and human dignity – be grounded in an understanding that trafficking is exploitation of a person by one or more others in a global, socio-economic context of inequality of power and wealth. Our recommendations are drawn from the field experience of frontline workers across the country fighting to oppose this phenomenon without adequate financial support and in a context where there are few alternatives

for people who want to leave exploitation. These frontline workers nevertheless seek to move forward, despite the difficult context. Generally, respondents called for global, coordinated action on many fronts, including prevention, collection of reliable information, intersectorial coordination, identification of victims, and support for community-based initiatives.

All participants in the study agreed with the recommendation that the involvement of provincial and federal governments in the fight against human trafficking must lead to concrete support for resources directly helping and protecting trafficking victims. Many respondents appreciated federal government efforts to increase public awareness initiatives as well as opportunities for exchange between frontline workers in different provinces. However, these efforts are in many ways insufficient. While awareness is essential to increase victim identification, resources must be available to protect and support victims. Still on the issue of government action, many highlighted deficiencies in inter-provincial collaboration. It is known and documented that trafficking involves the frequent movement of victims; it is thus necessary to facilitate work between the different jurisdictions, provinces and municipalities. Another important finding is the need for a real involvement by provincial governments. Fundamental aspects of victim support and protection such as social and health service provision, aid and compensation for victims of crime, and labour standards are all provincial jurisdiction. Provincial government action is central to effectively responding to trafficking and protecting people affected by this crime.

As discussed in this report, current initiatives to fight trafficking and support victims are fragile and precarious. The lack of resources raises concerns about the sustainability of existing initiatives.

Provincial and federal governments must be proactive on the causes of human trafficking: poverty, discrimination, and racism. They must also further support programmes to reduce and eliminate demand (for forced labour and sexual exploitation), from a perspective of protecting and defending the rights of the victim.

Currently, two main trends can be observed in provincial governments. Some provinces have centralized their efforts and action strategies around the issue of sexual exploitation, excluding forced labour. This is the case in Quebec, where government involvement is focused on sexual exploitation, as is clear from the 2013 establishment of the *Comité interministériel sur l'exploitation sexuelle* (Interministerial committee on sexual exploitation), which is responsible for developing a government action plan (expected in 2015). Similarly, since 2000, Manitoba has been pursuing a strategy on sexual exploitation which includes resources, finances, programmes, and specific services. British Columbia has taken a different tack. The Provincial Action Plan (2013-2016) submitted by the Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons (OCTIP) in Spring 2013 prioritizes

both sexual exploitation and forced labour. The coming years will tell which approach prevails in each province: a global strategy encompassing all forms of trafficking, in line with Canada's international obligations under the Palermo Protocol; or a partial approach, aimed at one aspect to the detriment of others.

Here are some of the recommendations emerging from this study; they are offered to help guide action by different levels of government, frontline workers, and management of organizations working with this population. The practices identified here cut across many of the points discussed in the different components of intervention studied in this report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTION

### Victim-Centred Approach

An approach based on the needs of the trafficking victim, involving empowerment and taking back power over one's own life, must be promoted. A coherent right-centred approach will allow victims to receive the help they need without any obligation to participate in investigations or legal procedures against their aggressor.

### Awareness and Specialized Training

Both general public awareness and specialized training for different professionals and frontline workers must be continued. We are combining two types of intervention in this recommendation – training and awareness – which are often wrongly considered to be synonymous. While there are many public awareness programmes and information sessions for specific frontline workers (notably those developed by the RCMP), there is very little training developed by and for groups of professionals (that is, a more technical training adapted to specific intervention realities). Despite the many civil society organizations raising awareness and the numerous events organized on the topic there is a lack of awareness campaigns organized at the regional or provincial level capable of reaching a greater number of people. There is also a need for more targeted initiatives reflecting the specific realities of different forms of trafficking.

#### AWARENESS

- a.) Support awareness-raising projects which provide information on the multiple realities of trafficking and avoid sensationalism. Awareness campaigns at the national level should be developed.
- b.) Develop targeted awareness programmes:
  - Populations at risk: youth and sexual exploitation, indigenous women and youth, temporary foreign workers, migrant women in situations of marriage and sponsorship.
  - Sectors at risk and in a position to identify victims: taxi-drivers, hotels, etc.

- c.) Develop campaigns targetting demand for goods and services which result in or have involved exploitation and trafficking: this type of awareness campaign aims at consumers and those receiving services (for example, domestic work). This is not limited to demand for sexual exploitation, but extends to forced labour in all sectors at risk (for example, construction, agriculture, and domestic work).

#### SPECIALIZED TRAINING:

- d.) Support the development of specific and specialized training by and for front-line workers in different sectors. Key sectors and topics identified as priorities: health and social services, judicial (prosecutors, judges and legal services), community services working with various populations at risk, and legal and administrative issues relating to immigration.

## Multidisciplinary Services

Establish interdisciplinary and joint teams or projects, including:

- a.) Special law enforcement units including investigative teams, judicial and legal services, and a social worker.
- b.) Establish an integrated and multidisciplinary body within community and public sectors to provide adequate response to situations that aren't reported to police for various reasons.

## Support for Existing Resources and Services

Many already existing groups in each city included in this study have developed the skills and expertise required to meet the needs of trafficking victims. They need support to be able to continue to offer services and to develop them further:

Financial support for existing resources and initiatives to help them adapt or extend their services to trafficking victims (e.g. housing resources, community groups working with youth or women in difficulty, migrants, and First Nations).

Financial support for community groups providing services to temporary foreign workers. Temporary foreign workers constitute a significant group of migrants identified as being at risk of exploitation and there is currently no recurring funding source for initiatives to help them.

Support women leaving situations of violence, notably prostitution, and provide them with access to various services.

## **Support for Long-Term Social Reintegration and Recovery Programmes**

Support community organizations offering this kind of accompaniment; notably, support for returning to school, for social reintegration through work, and for skills development.

## **Health Services: More Training and More Partnerships**

- a.) Financially support training by and for health professionals.
- b.) Consult health professionals to establish and develop a service model or mechanism to facilitate collaboration with some hospitals.
- c.) Provide access to healthcare to everyone without insurance both as a matter of right to health and an opportunity for identifying trafficking victims.

## **Better Access to Specialized Mental Health Services**

Develop a mechanism for accessing specialized mental health resources which are not covered by existing government health programmes.

## **Housing: Support Better Access to Adapted Resources**

Housing resources should consult more about the issues raised by human trafficking and consider best strategies and practices to provide various housing options to trafficking victims.

## **Emergency Intervention: Create Emergency Fund**

Emergency funds must have a procedure to access money rapidly, have adapted admissibility criteria, and cover interprovincial, municipal, and international travel. Funds should also cover several nights of housing (for example, hotel stay) and other immediate needs (calling cards, local travel, etc.).

# **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Maintain proactive investigations into trafficking situations and prosecution of traffickers.

Ensure police protection of victims and access to aid, whether or not the victim lays charges.

Continue to support the work of community liaisons and outreach officers who develop trust with the targetted population outside investigations.

Ensure constant collaboration and liaison with one or more key community organizations providing adequate accompaniment and referrals to resources.

Provide more training within the judicial system (prosecutors and judges) to improve collaboration with investigators and social workers and improve accompaniment and support of victims.

Stop sharing information about the immigration status of potential victims with the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) so that trafficked people will be more likely to ask for help.

Provide people who have irregular status and have been identified in a criminal investigation related to trafficking with immediate access to an immigration lawyer if immigration officials have been summoned to intervene in the case.

Ensure that people who have been trafficked are not re-victimized by criminalizing them for acts committed in the context of trafficking.

Allow migrants with precarious or irregular status the possibility of regularizing their status.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT IMMIGRATION

Respondents made recommendations to improve immigration proceedings for trafficking victims. First, frontline workers need to be generally educated about the immigration system so they become aware of the legal and emotional issues related to immigration status and the importance of status for access to social and health services. Their recommendations:

Reinstate designated immigration agents responsible for TRPs and other immigration issues related to human trafficking and ensure they are well known to immigration lawyers, law enforcement agencies and human rights community groups.

Reduce processing times in the immigration system – these are currently very long in almost all categories, with the exception of asylum seekers. Specifically, accelerate the processing of TRPs, work permits and humanitarian applications in order to rescue numerous trafficking cases from legal limbo and thus reduce the vulnerability of people affected and allow them to focus on their future.

Offer confidential social services and legal representation to everyone in immigration detention and not leave it up to individuals to seek out these services themselves.

Stop police and all other public services (hospitals, schools) from communicating personal information about immigration status to the CBSA.

Lack of knowledge of the Canadian system sometimes partly explains people's vulnerability to trafficking and the difficulty they have in escaping. To protect the rights of these individuals, as many immigrants as possible, whatever their status (but particularly temporary foreign workers, people waiting for family sponsorship, and asylum seekers), must have access to general immigration procedures. The immigration problems encountered in human trafficking cases reflect the general context of immigration restriction and precarity in Canada.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLABORATION

Pursue action strategies addressing all kinds of trafficking so that all forms of exploitation are considered together; do not fragment a complex problem which very often intersects with different situations of exploitation.

Such a global approach must include a collaborative action strategy and the coordination of support and accompaniment services for victims. There is consensus that a strategy of intersectorial collaboration and a better coordination and integration of services is more effective in preventing trafficking and adequately responding to the needs of victims trafficked for forced labour and sexual exploitation. Intersectorial coordination and collaboration efforts and bodies should thus receive support to sustain them.

Identify a lead worker (case management) for each case. Trafficking situations are complex and a promising practice identified by this study is the role of a lead service worker to ensure there is follow up for the victim on all fronts. The lead worker's main function is to ensure continuity of services within institutions. Despite the importance of strengthening the coordination of services at the provincial level, it is important to maintain an approach based on multiple access points in a network of local services, rather than a single entry point. It is important to support organizations providing accompaniment.

## CONCLUSION

This research project was carried out at the same time as several other research projects on trafficking across the country. During our project and particularly during the editing process, several research reports<sup>2635</sup> on different aspects of the issue were published without our being able to integrate their results into our work.

This study must now be made useful to ongoing work on the ground. While it is useful to have this detailed portrait and analysis of action against trafficking to influence our choices of strategy, we note that it is easier to get funding for research on trafficking than to support those who are courageously striving to leave situations of exploitation. It is high time that federal and provincial governments seriously invest in services for marginalized and precarious populations who are the most vulnerable to human trafficking, which is an extreme form of a continuum of exploitation.

The networks of organizations and coalitions addressing trafficking in Quebec and across Canada are consolidating; they aim to increase their political power in the coming years in order to demand better protection of people subject to trafficking. We hope that our report can serve as a resource in this fight.

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## NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

CBC News, 7 January 2014. "Ottawa police shift focus to johns in sex-trade sweeps"

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-police-shift-focus-to-johns-in-sex-trade-sweeps-1.2486263>

BC CTV News, 15 October 2013, "B.C. man handed 18 months jail time in nanny trafficking case".

<http://bc.ctvnews.ca/b-c-man-handed-18-months-jail-time-in-nanny-traffic-ing-case-1.1497718>

La Presse, 28 January 2013. "Prostitution: le SPVM veut faire changer les mentalités."

<http://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/justice-et-affaires-criminelles/201301/28/01-4615695-prostitution-le-spvm-veut-faire-changer-les-mentalites.php>

The Globe and Mail, 27 June 2013, "Human trafficking conviction in nanny case a B.C. first"

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-man-convicted-of-human-trafficking/article12850990/>

The Globe and Mail, 2 April 2012. "How Hungarian criminals built a slave trade in Ontario". <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/how-hungarian-criminals-built-a-slave-trade-in-ontario/article4097573/>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For a more in-depth look at the concept of trafficking used in this research, see the last part of Section 1 on defining trafficking.
- <sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report, we use the term “support and protection services” to refer to the entire continuum of services available in the community which can help or support people who have been trafficked; including social services, health, human rights, psycho-social, policing and legal services.
- <sup>3</sup> Interviews were conducted in 16 Canadian cities from nine provinces: Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.
- <sup>4</sup> Articles 279.01 to 279.04 of the Criminal Code and Article 118 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA).
- <sup>5</sup> Trafficking charges are often withdrawn in exchange for a guilty plea on charges related to trafficking or withdrawn for lack of evidence and lack of cooperation by the victim (RCMP, 2013). The results are based on files gathered by the HTNCC between 2007 and 2013 concerning cases of domestic trafficking of persons for sexual exploitation only.
- <sup>6</sup> The federal government just adopted a new legislative framework for adult prostitution. This reform responded to the Supreme Court of Canada decision rendered on December 20th 2013 (Bedford v. Prosecutor General of Canada) ruling that three prostitution offences in the Criminal Code were unconstitutional. Opinions about the best legal approach to adopt diverge sharply and this report does not propose to enter into this debate. However, the forthcoming changes will have an impact on the perception and understanding of prostitution and its sometimes complicated relationship to sex trafficking.
- <sup>7</sup> For a more complete description of the mandate and activities of the HTNCC, see <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ht-tp/indexeng.htm>.
- <sup>8</sup> For more information, see the first progress report after the first year of implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsracs/pblctns/2013-ntnl-ctn-pln-cmbt-hmn/index-eng.aspx>
- <sup>9</sup> The training aims to better equip front-line service providers to identify and support trafficking victims. This training is free and is offered in French and English. <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/octip/training.htm>
- <sup>10</sup> In the fall of 2012, Public Safety Canada created an online consultation, which was followed by five regional meetings with frontline workers (in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Edmonton). Meetings with frontline workers and individuals also took place in Nunavut.
- <sup>11</sup> Respondents will be identified only by interview number and organizational mandate.
- <sup>12</sup> Municipalities are also involved: regulatory frameworks for sites used in the sex industry (massage parlours, strip clubs) vary greatly in different provinces and Canadian cities. In some places, people are required to hold a permit in order to work in a massage parlour or strip club.
- <sup>13</sup> According to the RCMP study published in 2010 that looked at all forms of trafficking, 90% of the cases reported to police were cases of domestic trafficking and sexual exploitation and the main victims were young women aged 14 to 25 (RCMP, 2010).
- <sup>14</sup> Wai Chi (Micheal) Ng was convicted in 2008 to 15 months imprisonment on different charges (falsification of documents, human smuggling, procurement, keeping common bawdy-house), but was acquitted of the charge of human trafficking. See RCMP, 2010: p. 16, Perrin, 2010: p. 132-34). The charge of human trafficking was brought under IRPA because at the time when the crimes were committed, the trafficking provisions in the Criminal Code didn't exist.
- <sup>15</sup> The RCMP's Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre, accessed 14 January 2014. In its latest report, the RCMP provided similar data for domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation. According to this analysis of investigated trafficking cases, in April 2013, 43 cases of trafficking had been settled and had resulted in convictions for human trafficking or related offences. (RCMP, 2013, p. 45).

- <sup>16</sup> Mr. Orr was sentenced to 18 months in prison for having exploited a Philippina woman working as domestic help. See several news articles on the story: *Globe and Mail*, 27 June 2013; *CTV News*, October 2013.
- <sup>17</sup> All examples cited in this section are from trafficking cases described to us by participants in this study.
- <sup>18</sup> In general, they felt that the group with which they themselves worked received the lesser sympathy and resources.
- <sup>19</sup> Some studies have identified and documented the main needs of trafficking victims (Aron, 2006, *Caliber*, 2007; Clawon, 2008b; Zimmerman et al., 2006; Surtees & Brunovskis, 2007; Oxman-Martinez, Lacroix & Hanley, 2006).
- <sup>20</sup> Other needs can arise; for example, when victims have a criminal record from acts committed during their exploitation, or if they need to get custody of their children.
- <sup>21</sup> One exception is the Domotor case (Operation Opapa), a significant forced labour case in Ontario. It is described above in Section 1. See also Kaye (2013) and Hastie and Yule (2014) for an interesting discussion of the failures of this case in the area of victim protection.
- <sup>22</sup> A study carried out in Calgary analyses the negative impact of sensationalist media coverage of the phenomenon of trafficking (Quarterman, Kaye & Winterdyk, 2012; Kaye, 2013).
- <sup>23</sup> For a more complete analysis of the legal framework and the issue of sexual exploitation of minors, see Ricard-Guay, A. “Exploitation sexuelle au Québec: perceptions et interventions” (forthcoming).
- <sup>24</sup> Meaning that the person has no right to enter Canada legally and will face rapid deportation without the opportunity to pursue other recourse such as a refugee claim or TRP.
- <sup>25</sup> Police forces are organized by different levels of government: federally, there is the RCMP; some provinces have their own police force (Quebec, Ontario and Newfoundland); and some cities have municipal or regional (combining several municipalities) forces. There are also some indigenous police forces.
- <sup>26</sup> Several units said to be dedicated to the issue of trafficking have been created. However, the term “dedicated” needs to be heavily nuanced, because in the majority of cases these are vice units (or more rarely organized crime) which have adopted a trafficking mandate and are primarily interested in sexual exploitation. The question of forced labour is not part of their mandate. Moreover, these supposedly dedicated units generally involve putting the most experienced investigators or the investigators with the most expertise in charge of these files, but their mandate is not limited to this issue. Finally, we met two police officers who had informally formed a dedicated unit which was recently dismantled, demonstrating the precarity of the mechanisms established.
- <sup>27</sup> The year of creation is noted in the parentheses. Please note that we did not interview a representative of each of these initiatives, but most of them.
- <sup>28</sup> ACT Alberta enjoys provincial funding that is rather unique among human trafficking coalitions: Alberta Justice and the Solicitor General’s Victims of Crime Fund, the Civil Forfeiture Office and the Human Rights and Multiculturalism Education Fund.
- <sup>29</sup> Of course, other coalitions and networks have also developed useful identification and intervention tools related to trafficking, including response protocols. WeFight in Windsor and the Ottawa coalition, for example, both offer interesting tools.
- <sup>30</sup> For a deeper analysis of these three provincial responses, see the doctoral thesis of Julie Kaye (2013).
- <sup>31</sup> The majority of the coalitions did not have a formal membership procedure. Organizations participate on an informal basis.
- <sup>32</sup> While CIC is not strictly speaking a law enforcement agency, it has sufficient decision-making power over international migrants’ status that it is seen in the same category as the police and CBSA.
- <sup>33</sup> The establishment of mechanisms or tools that facilitate referrals and the complementarity of existing resources. The development of intervention tools will be addressed in the following section.

- <sup>34</sup> This was echoed in many forums for exchange and discussion about trafficking in Canada in the past years.
- <sup>35</sup> Among others, two studies supported by the Canadian Women's Foundation: "Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Aboriginal Women and Girls: Literature Review and Key Informant Interviews" by the Native Women's Association of Canada, October 2014; "No More Ending Sex Trafficking in Canada – Report of the National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada, Fall 2014.