

World Day against Trafficking in Persons - July 30, 2017

The Canadian Federation of University Women continues the series highlighting significant days to facilitate the conversation about the Sustainable Development Goals. Our purpose is to overlay a recognized Theme Day with the SDG lens in order to shine a light on and bring the conversation to the grassroots level.

We believe change begins with consciousness. For this significant day, Trafficking in Persons we are intentionally making connections to SDG #4, #5, #16 and #17 (However, connections to any other SDG may be implied).



This initiative provides a critical opportunity to discuss the interconnections between SDGs for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

The 2030 Agenda is an agenda for all, and achieving it requires action at all levels. In the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, speakers from the grassroots, youth, International Non-Government Organizations have offered a perspective on the issue of Trafficking in Persons.

Human Trafficking

I was scrolling through my Tumblr account, and saw a post warning people about fake online ads for camp councillors. Kids show up for interviews, are offered drugged beverages and are taken. Similar schemes advertise tutoring. Students call the number for the address and when they show up, they're taken.

I was vaguely aware of the issue, but hadn't paid attention because I didn't realize how frequently it occurred. These posts made me realize how traffickers operate and how often it happens.

When our grade 8 class was given an assignment to create a Public Service Announcement, I decided to do mine on trafficking. It's a worldwide issue not a lot of people know about. When I handed in my topic, my teacher said no one had done trafficking before.

The first slide of my presentation said, "Human Trafficking" and some of my classmates asked, "What's that?" reinforcing the lack of awareness among my peers. I responded, "You're about to find out".

In my presentation, I touched on where to look out for it, ie. when walking alone, large events, odd sounding phone calls, and fake advertisements like the ones I mentioned earlier.

I added that it would help immensely to support the vulnerable in our society, including indigenous peoples, racial minorities and women, individuals with disabilities, homeless individuals, non-English speaking immigrants who aren't familiar with their rights in Canada. We need government to invest in developing education and training.

We need to talk about it more in school and at home.

Lucas Prokopowich, age 14

Grandson of Cheryl Ambrose, VP Advocacy, CFUW

Interview extracts from Trafficking Survivor Stories, [Equality Now](#)

To fight against trafficking, we must understand why and how this abuse can happen to thousands of women and girls all over the world everyday. To understand trafficking, we must start to listen to the voice of those who had to live it. These voices shed some light on the path towards change: change in the way women are viewed and treated, change in the opportunities they have access to.

"When people tell me that women choose this life, I can't help but laugh. Do they know how many women like me have tried to escape, but have been beaten black and blue when they are caught? To the men who buy us, we are like meat. To everybody else in society, we simply do not exist."

Ayesha

"Society's understanding of human trafficking and prostitution needs to change. In my country, people believe that prostitutes are criminals and buyers are the victims. This is wrong. When women are not given equal opportunities for employment or education, their options are limited and they grow desperate."

Alma

“Women are not slaves and traffickers should stop taking other people’s children. No one should be forced; buyers, pimps and traffickers are killing human beings and spreading sickness.”

Grace

**Shared by Joanna Manganara
President, International Alliance of Women**

“Bring her back when you’re done.” These, Sara’s words, introduced us to the reality of sexualized human trafficking. Sara was two years old when her mother dressed her in a pretty little dress—no panties—and her father sat her on his store counter. Smiling, Sara said, when he spoke to buyers, “Bring her back when you’re done.” Sara changed our lives. She grew up believing being “rented out” was normal as was being tortured at home and by the buyers. Sara is Canadian. But all over the world there are millions of Saras.

Denial has no place in our struggle to combat sexualized human trafficking. It is misogynistic, discriminatory expressions that objectify women and girls of many ages worldwide. Facts tell that women and girls predominately suffer sexualized victimizations—that human trafficking is linked to organized crime, to being prostituted, to child and adult pornographic exploitation.

A 2017 theme of the UN CSW was to leave “no one behind”. To ensure another Sara is not left behind we:

1. Do not say “sex trafficking”—we say “sexualized human trafficking” because it is never about “sex”—it is always a human rights crime.
2. Identify that sexualized human trafficking can begin with infants and ‘travel’ across the life span until escaping and finding informed caring support.
3. Say that sexualized human trafficking can involve torture by non-State actors.
4. Create educational pamphlets, i.e., Sexualized Torture & Human Trafficking (In English: <http://nonstatetorture.org/files/6613/8754/5025/NSTHTpamphlet.pdf> and in Spanish: <http://nonstatetorture.org/files/6314/5334/2157/spanishNSTST.pdf>) and advocate for national and international social and criminal justice.

Jeanne Sarson & Linda MacDonald, CFUW Truro

Morning Moon Rising

Have you ever witnessed a Coyote howl at the ruby red morning moon?

The sound is deep

It's barely a noise

A cry that cannot find tears

Where are the lost souls it cries

It is more a stance that has an echo than anything else

The day is new, full of possibilities for some

Others are trapped in the under world

The world of the tortured living-dead

Where is that place?

Will anyone fight for them?

Will any one release them?

The Coyote sees the trafficking of the stolen, lonely, trapped souls who once camped around pine fed fires roasting marshmallows on long weekends.

Have you wondered where Melinda, Belinda, Melanie, Iris and Tom have gone? No one has seen them since they went missing. Does the forest hold the secret or is it the asphalt highway with its iron caskets on 18 rubber wheels that knows where they are?

Who will bring them home so they can hike mountain trails with abandon and swim in woodland rivers. Must the moon and wolf change form or can the humans take care of the bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh?

Cheryl Hayles, VP International Relations, Canadian Federation of University Women