



Department of Justice
Canada

Ministère de la Justice
Canada

“From the Ground Up: Working with Survivors for Survivors”

Human trafficking survivors led initiative

Summary report

Background

As part of the 2016 Victims and Survivors of Crime Week “The Power of Our Voices”, FCJ Refugee Centre in partnership with East Metro Youth Services embarked on a project to provide a safe space for survivors of human trafficking to voice their opinion on services and protection available and a lack thereof. The initiative was funded by the Department of Justice Canada. Such project was long overdue as survivors are left out of the conversations and decision-making pertaining to accessing services and solutions to combat trafficking in persons. The ultimate goal of the project is to lay the foundation of survivor led and designed toolkit for service providers outlining promising practices and accurate support.

Through facilitated groups, survivors shared their experience in receiving support from community agencies and law enforcement. The project culminated with a roundtable on June 1st, 2016 with the majority of service providers from the Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network (TCHTN)¹ and the Human Trafficking Intervention Prevention Strategy (H.I.P.S.)². During the roundtable survivors shared the findings of the focus groups along with a discussion how to move forward. Approximately 40 participants took part in the event.

Methodology

We hosted two focus groups. One with domestic survivors of human trafficking and one with international survivors. Questions discussed in the focus groups are attached to this report. The two groups were peer led and facilitated. Summary of the findings are presented below.

1. Domestic group

- consisted of five participants³
- total of three meetings
- all cases represented human trafficking for sexual exploitation
- survivors were between the age of 15-24 years old when the trafficking situation happened

¹ The TCHTN is a Toronto based network of service providers, volunteers, community members committed to find solutions and offer support to trafficked persons.

² H.I.P.S. is a collaboration between agencies in Toronto to address domestic human trafficking

³ Two survivors took part only in one meeting due to personal reasons

2. International group

- consisted of seven participants. Two of the survivors were interviewed separately due to scheduling conflicts.
- total of two meetings with five survivors
- three of the cases were human trafficking for sexual exploitation; one was domestic servitude; two were forced labour, one was considered as forced marriage⁴.
- four of the cases the human trafficking took place in Canada while three of the cases of human trafficking happened outside Canada.
- survivors were between the age of 18-52 years old when the trafficking situation happened
- given that the forced marriage took place over a long course of time, her service provision is not included in the finding due to high likelihood of differential service model and practices.⁵

FOCUS GROUPS FINDINGS

I. Domestic trafficking focus group

A. Common findings:

- Recruitment and exploitation is usually facilitated by someone the survivor identifies as their boyfriend
- The emergency services most often used were for detox treatment in hospitals
- Most often first contact interactions outside the exploitation were with police through “knock and talk” visits
- Numerous referrals: bouncing around (e.g.: by police referrals, victim services, social workers and so on). “Feeling of un-belongingness because of all the shuttling”
- Long waiting lists for vital immediate services: e.g.: housing, counselling, detox treatment, psychiatrist
- No **specific services** intended to support human trafficking survivors
- The word pimp and human trafficking are glamorized. The two ideas are not linked together in a negative light; this disconnection provokes the false sense of glamour not abuse and keeps women in.

⁴ We reached to “I Do” project (www.idoproject.ca) to help us connect with survivor of forced marriage. The interviewed survivor experienced the forced marriage situation 23 years ago. The coordinator of the “I Do” project explained in the following statement why they cannot connect us with survivor with most recent forced marriage experience:

“The main focus of our project is preventing forced marriages from happening in the first place so the majority of survivors in our group, as well as those I help bring back to Canada because they have been taken abroad, have been at risk but have never been in a forced marriage. They have a lot of serious needs that are often not addressed by the community, by service providers, or by the government.

Those who have left a forced marriage are often in a better position because most of the survivors of forced marriage have had abusive marriages. Therefore they seek out supports for domestic violence services. While not usually enough, there are far more services available for women who have been in abusive marriages, and those services are easier to locate. Another factor is that for many women who leave abusive forced marriages, it takes them awhile to realize that their marriage was a forced marriage, as domestic violence services don’t often make those connections for them but concentrate instead on the abusive marriage. I can certainly connect you with women who have been at risk of forced marriage and have faced many challenges while trying to stay safe and to access services, but if you want to speak to women who have actually been forcibly married, they have all been out of the marriage for many years.”

⁵ Presently, the survivor is working as a peer support and social worker and shared with us that in her view services for forced marriage survivors are missing and inadequate. In addition, awareness about issue is inexistent.

B. Interaction with police

- Participants⁶ indicated “*the knock and talk*” technique as their first encounter with police (the Sex Crimes – Human Trafficking Enforcement Team (HTET))
- Police conduct was described as non-judgmental and reassuring. In one situation the police refused to leave without the person because of many red flag of exploitation. In this case the police offered a safe place as well as provided a victim support worker whom created a treatment plan.
- Generally members of the Sex Crimes – Human Trafficking Enforcement Team are knowledgeable and provide more support than the regular police officers. One participant pointed to 23rd Division officers who were interested only to press charges on her pimp than to attend to her needs.
 - One girl stated that she would visit occasionally the HTET in order “to talk with people who understand the game”.
 - One girl indicated that the HTET was supportive through the recovery process “went above and beyond and showed that they cared”.

C. Trafficker/boyfriend/pimp

- Tactics used:
 - distrust to police
 - dependence of substances such as drugs and alcohol
 - false sense of security such as providing food and shelter
 - benefit of person’s anxiety
 - isolation
 - psychological manipulation

D. Trafficked person

- Believed they were a sex worker not an exploited person. Once they realized the situation they were not sure what to call it (exploitation)?
- Fear and distrust towards police stopped them from reaching out for help
- False sense of security within the trafficking situation. Trafficker’s arrest would lead to insecurity, e.g.: homeless: “What is appealing about getting out of the game? How do you encourage it; because needs are being met and people are being cared for in the game.”
- Low self-esteem (due to trafficker’s influence): “...thought that I was not worth it to tell police”
- Feeling lost: “don’t know where to go and who can help.”
- Loss of supportive networks (family, friends). In one case family was subjected to emotional stress by the trafficker
- Felt a false sense of being a part of/ belonging,
- Familiar, became comfortable with the uncomfortable and feared the unknown of leaving
- Misuse of substances as means to survive the emotional turmoil: “Drugs and alcohol- not problem but solution”
- Instances of trauma before trafficking situation, e.g. in childhood

⁶ Only one participant said that she didn’t interact with police through “knock and talk”

- If not cut communication with the trafficker will still continue to work
- Feels shameful, embarrassed and accountable
- Needs emotional/psychological stability before interacting with police, lawyers, criminal system
- Feelings of loneliness- emotional and physical: “no one else could possibly have gone through this.”
- After leaving the situation:
 - PTSD, paranoia; fear of being outed and recognized; crippling feeling of not being able to go out/leave home
 - Confusion, lost ability to make decisions and perform ordinary tasks (e.g. grocery shopping): “Surviving was easy, living was hard.”

E. Services used:

- OW
 - Basic needs met but not enough. ODSP slightly better (special diet and understanding of barriers to employment)
- Hospital
 - Hospitals were mostly visited for emergency detoxification. Hospital personnel, especially registration desk staff and doctors, not helpful and aware of the trafficking in persons: “just another drugged girl”. Nurses more empathetic but not fully aware of human trafficking.
- Support meetings: all anonymous such as AA, CA, NA.
 - Helpful but sense of un-belongingness given the different experience
- Psychiatrists
 - Inefficient: only prescribed drugs, a wrong approach to person who has been misusing substances.
- Counselling
 - Fatigued of using counselling services (in many cases since childhood). Counsellors’ approach is to focus on the future ignoring conversation around sex trafficking life/experience.
- Detox programs/treatments
 - Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): many programs. Helpful to connect to various services. However again sense of un-belongingness due to different experience
- Community service agencies
 - 360 kids- different youth focused programs, shelter for trafficked youth (Hope program)
 - East Metro Youth Services- support, counselling, non-judgmental approach. “She [EMYS counsellor] was just there for me and saved my life.”
- Housing
 - Tendency to refer survivors to VAW shelters. However, the criteria for admission are not corresponding to human trafficking experiences: it is not considered domestic abuse; person must be away from their trafficker, must be drug free and “completely out of the game for a considerable duration of time. As someone who has been trafficked, you will not meet the criteria for abuse and violence...my only saving grace was my addiction because there

is actual support for that". In one case when application for emergency housing was submitted to Toronto housing, it was inability to provide proof of residing address with trafficker, ex. signed lease with trafficker.

- Criminal system:
 - a) Court proceedings
 - Victim support services unhelpful due to heavy workload and lack of knowledge on the issue.
 - Many judges lack awareness and understanding of human trafficking experience.
 - Court preparation: almost lacking. Survivors reported that it was done five minutes before the court procedure. Dissociation happens when statement is imposed and not talked through, leaving person unprepared to face "the worst questions". "Just be honest and do the best you can" is the advice given to the survivor.
 - During the court procedure the survivor is facing trafficker at all times. One survivor reported that she "needed to self-advocate so I did not have to sit in the same room as my pimp during the proceeding– the pimp should not be allowed to be remotely close to the survivor." She gave her testimony through video conferencing.
 - b) Convictions
 - One participant has pressed charges and is awaiting pre-trial
 - One participant has pressed charges on one of her traffickers, has testified at pre-trial and is awaiting next steps, and her other trafficker is wanted on charges but cannot be located
 - One participant has not pressed charges and is not interested at this time
 - Two participants have pressed charges, testified, and the traffickers were convicted of drug charges and weapons charges (instead of human trafficking charges)
- Employment:
 - Many gaps in the resume
 - OASIS offers services but the person must have an addiction issue.
 - York police have connections with a hospitality employer (waitress positions in a restaurant). Not so appropriate employment for trafficked person.

F. Promising practices, closing service gaps

- Aftercare and continuum care programs:

"After speaking to someone [in support services], I didn't know what else to do – THERE NEEDS TO BE AFTERCARE. I have no tools and nothing to do; there is no continuing program, no support groups for this. There needs to be a plan, a model, a busy schedule in order to distract me."

 - Drop-in Center for trafficked survivors
- Ongoing/ in need counselling:
 - Trauma counsellor on wheels (but wait is too long). Talk therapy is essential.
- Sponsor/ peer support worker
- Peer led group once a week – a drop-in with a similar idea as AA – no hierarchy (a safe haven)

- Meetings/resources for people who want to exit sex trade
- Sexual victim support worker for thorough court preparation
- Housing:
 - Safe houses
 - Flexibility in admission criteria in accessing shelter/other type of housing arrangement
- Health care:
 - Sexual health nurses. More trusted than authorities. When they are the first contact for the survivor, they should hand out information cards/referrals to access support.
- Life skills programing specific for survivors of sex trafficking. E.g.: grocery shopping, taxes, job search/resume building, etc.
- Police when used as a first contact: need to give assurance or at least information on how basic needs will be met once out of situation, e.g. financial assistance, housing, drug counselling, etc.
- Case manager/support worker who is consistent for the entire process: “Changing hands is always a pain and discouraging.” The HUB: there should be one point of contact, even if not all services are provided in-house.
- Public education and awareness about human trafficking
- Awareness focused towards trafficked persons about services and support available to them.

G. Service providers' approach

DON'Ts

- Give up on me
- LIE TO ME
- Crack jokes about the trade
- Rescue me if I'm not ready to be or don't want to be
- Think that every case is going to be the same, you can't treat me the same way you treated your previous client
- Assume all sex work is exploitation, or that I'm a victim
- Take notes while we are talking
- Have a bunch of service providers against me in one room
- Make assumptions about me and/or gather information outside of your case; feels impersonal
- Calling a person prostitute, hooker, streetwalker
- Judgmental tone of voice or motherly tone of voice
- Expressions/body language: it is not always what you say, but how you say it
- Tokenizing survivors. Don't ask me to tell my story because it's going to give “flare” to your presentation or conference. Human trafficking projects have to be facilitated by people with lived experience. Honorariums are vital.

DO's

- Support people where they are, stages of change/harm reduction
- Treat me like anybody else
- Treat me with RESPECT, patience, support, motivation

- Be unbiased
- Keep your word, be consistent
- Let me smoke or get some air, don't contain me or isolate me
- Make eye contact with me
- ASK me what I would like, ask me for permission to do something or ask something

Invasive/inappropriate questions

- SELF-SERVING questions. Must build rapport before asking certain questions.
- Get to know ME first before you ask questions about what I was DOING.
- How many clients did you served a day?
- How much did you charge?
- Where did you work?
- What positions did you use and what services did you offer?
- Did you have protected or non-protected sex?
- How much money did you give your pimp?
- What type of clients did you see?

H. Support services/ awareness materials design

- Telephone helpline
 - Text/live chat service would be more practical. "I was a texter or searching online...I was sketched out...talking was scary and awkward."
 - Distrust/suspicion about who is providing the helpline service. "I don't think I would ever call a helpline. I don't know who I'm talking to, I don't know who's on the other side... I would assume that the police are monitoring the phone calls. It's a different situation if a police officer gave me a card to contact."
 - Using survivors as a point of contact might be helpful to bridge the gap. "Sometimes police help, but more often people don't use the resource because it's from the police...there needs to be trust and a sense of security, something that peer workers could provide that counsellors, therapists, and police couldn't...because they have been through it and can vouch for someone like myself."
 - Purpose of the helpline: should not be only for emergencies. Survivor experience with 911: "When I called 911, I would get rerouted or I was told that my case wasn't an emergency; I just wanted someone to turn to; I don't want to be referred or rejected;"
 - Information about the helpline needs to motivate action and initiate the phone call. E.g.: "the suicide hotline [advertised] on the subway is unhelpful because it's not friendly and it does nothing to motivate action to not self-harm. It is also very inaccessible because there are only two free phones on the line that not everyone knows about."
- Awareness-raising materials (pamphlets/brochures, etc.)
 - Info materials geared towards community should display images of either great hope or great sadness that will incentivize people to take action.

- Info materials for survivors should be written by sex workers for sex workers – “somebody who understands and can vouch for lived experiences and realities.”
- It would be particularly helpful for victims to have information about available supports in hotel directory books. Hotels are most visited places while in trafficking situation.
- Material that include questions that require a yes/no answer are helpful. Wording on questionnaire in pamphlet should look similar to what is used by Alcoholics Anonymous: e.g.: if you answer yes to any of these questions, this situation is considered human trafficking and you should contact this (info).” The material should invite survivors to call if they are interested or if they want to receive more information not “call for help.”
- Materials should indicate who would be providing the support/information, e.g. peer worker, service provider, etc.
- Display places: more often than not drugs and alcohol are involved in human trafficking situations; therefore some info should be made available at the “Anonymous” meetings. However, the 12 traditions can be obstacle but if the info is referred to help from outside, it may work.

I. Success and challenges

a) Successes:

- “being off drugs”
- “able to have a voice to express myself, to say: “I’m having a really shitty day today”
- “confidence about professional life”
- “going back to school”
- “being back with family, rebuilding relationships”
- “more self-aware and self-educating”
- “to do what I did and walk away from my trafficker and put him in jail”

b) Challenges:

- “Feeling...the PTSD, feeling paranoid everywhere I went; every public space; fear of being outed and recognized; crippling feeling of not being able to go out/leave home;”
- “Anxiety, knowing that everyone around me doesn’t understand the issue (peers, family, etc.), needs to be so much public education and awareness.”
- “Fact that I have all these traumas and even trauma before the trafficking goes so deep; drugs and alcohol were not my problem but my solution; I had the tools but did not know how to use them “be honest, be responsible, etc.” someone yells at you and you just don’t want to do it; takes more work than just not doing the drugs.”
- “Surviving was easy, living was hard; how do I make a healthy decision for myself in every way; having affirmations; having somebody who is just like you; I have been in isolation; “This is how I feel...can you relate to this””

- “What is appealing about getting out of the game – how do you encourage? Because needs are being met and people are being cared for in the game.”

II. International trafficking: focus groups

- interviewed seven survivors
- conducted two focus groups with five survivors. Two of the survivors were interviewed separately due to schedule conflicts
- three of the cases were human trafficking for sexual exploitation, one was domestic servitude, two: forced labour, one: forced marriage⁷.
- in four of the cases human trafficking took place in Canada. The other two cases, human trafficking took place outside Canada
- given that in the forced marriage situation services were received long time ago and they most likely changed over the course of time, survivor’s experience with service provision is not included in the findings.⁸

A. Common findings⁹:

- Two main barriers preventing survivors to call authorities, including police: fear of deportation and language. Majority of the survivors were either with expired travel documents or didn’t have one. One person, even though they had few months before visa expiration, still were afraid to approach police.
- Lack of knowledge about services available and how to access them. One survivor shared that she didn’t deserve any services because of what had happened to her.
- Service providing agencies helpful for finding resources such as healthcare centers, housing, life in Canada;
- More information about human trafficking and available services needed in different language. Brochures/pamphlets should be displayed at easily accessible places. Immigration officers at the border were pointed as most accessible source and place to receive this information. Simple brochure with human trafficking information and contact number for help/support would prevent countless incidences of exploitation.

⁷ We reached to “I Do” project (www.idoproject.ca) to connect with survivor of forced marriage. The interviewed survivor experienced the situation 23 years ago. The coordinator of the “I Do” project explained in the following statement why we cannot connect with survivor with most recent experience.

“The main focus of our project is preventing forced marriages from happening in the first place so the majority of survivors in our group, as well as those I help bring back to Canada because they have been taken abroad, have been at risk but have never been in a forced marriage. They have a lot of serious needs that are often not addressed by the community, by service providers, or by the government.

Those who have left a forced marriage are often in a better position because most of the survivors of forced marriage have had abusive marriages. Therefore, they seek out supports for domestic violence services. While not usually enough, there are far more services available for women who have been in abusive marriages, and those services are easier to locate. Another factor is that for most women who leave abusive forced marriages, it takes them awhile to realize that their marriage was a forced marriage, as domestic violence services don’t often make those connections for them but concentrate instead on the abusive marriage. I can certainly connect you with women who have been at risk of forced marriage and have faced many challenges while trying to stay safe and to access services, but if you want to speak to women who have actually been forcibly married, they have all been out of the marriage for many years.”

⁸ However, the survivor, working presently as a peer support and social worker, shared with us that in her view services for forced marriage survivors are missing and inadequate. In addition, awareness about issue is inexistent.

⁹ It is challenging to summarise the experiences of the participants in the international trafficking focus group given the diversity of cases and experiences when in the trafficking situation and afterwards (e.g.: their immigration situation, border crossing, etc.

B. Interaction with authorities:

- **Police.** Various experiences:
 - In one case the police officer was intimidating and met the survivor's experience with disbelief. Male colleague was used to interpret. The focus was placed on person's passport and money not what happened to them.
 - In another case police was very helpful¹⁰.
 - Many survivors need time for emotional stability before overcome the fear from police and share their story.
- **Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA)**
 - In one case when detention was carried due to visa expiration the survivor felt secure in the immigration detention centre given the fear from reprisal by the trafficker. In addition, she was able to access health care and consult a lawyer. However, person stated that she knew the arrest will be for a short period of time.
 - The monthly visits to the CBSA¹¹ for one survivor is "a chance to prove that I'm a good person."
 - In another occasion where there was interaction with the CBSA it was impersonate and intimidating.
- **RCMP**
 - Intervened only in one case and was ultimately unhelpful. Instead of investigating the case they suggested to submit the report to the authorities in survivor's country of origin, where there were no laws tackling human trafficking at that time.
- **Immigration system**
 - Immigration status: some participants made refugee claims; some applied for Temporary Resident Permit (TRP); two applied for TRP and submitted an H&C application after some establishment.
 - Refugee claims: all participants¹² who submitted refugee application were denied at first instance.¹³ Two of the claims were based on human trafficking experience, one was based on Partner Based Violence (PBV).¹⁴
 - Experience with immigration authorities described as frightening. The fate of the person is in the hands of one immigration officer.
 - Following deadlines: high amount of pressure is put on the community case workers. Difficulty to meet deadlines while also being mindful of pace of survivors.

C. Traffickers

- **profile**
 - In one case it was a boyfriend. The second case trafficker was a woman

¹⁰ Not regarding the investigation but found shelter for the survivor.

¹¹ In some immigration cases, as an alternative to detention CBSA makes arrangement with person for weekly/monthly visits to CBSA to present themselves.

¹² Three of five survivors submitted refugee claim.

¹³ Two lodged appeals; the third survivor was denied at the appeal as well (this case was before the IRPA changes in 2012)

¹⁴ In FCJ Refugee Centre's experience in working with trafficked persons, IRB members as well as immigration lawyers have little understanding of human trafficking as well as additional issues, including trauma, fear of trafficker and so on.

- In one case was the staff in the recruitment agency who brought the person in Canada
- In one case was the husband
- In the rest of the cases it was the employer
- **tactics used**
 - wage withholding
 - false promises of obtaining permanent residency
 - fear for the safety of family members abroad
 - distrust to police
 - distrust to community
 - constant surveillance

D. Trafficked person

- Unaware of support available to them
- Unfamiliar with legal, immigration system in Canada. “I didn’t know how to get legal advice, it took me so long because I didn’t know anything and didn’t know how the system works.”
- Lack of knowledge about their rights which creates vulnerability for entering a cycle of re-exploitation.
- Lacking support networks to help them settle and access assistance. This lack is fulfilled by community agencies.
- Fearful of police and immigration authorities.

E. Services used:

“I didn’t know how to access services...I didn’t feel like I deserve services.”

- **Housing**
 - Shelter for abused women and transitional housing (Sojourn house and FCJ transitional housing).
 - One survivor was constantly moving from place to place. Scared because of the immigration situation.
 - Transitional housing at FCJ: “...felt more like home.”¹⁵
- **OW**
 - Given the “temporality” of the TRP, the holders don’t have access to trainings/employment programs offered by OW.
 - OW. Lack of understanding from social workers on how trafficking situation have impacted emotionally the survivor. Some social workers apply lots of pressure to follow classes/appointments which is difficult if person is still dealing with immigration/emotional staff. “It is not only to put me in the classes and leave me there. If I quit how I will manage to survive.”
- **ELL classes**
 - TRP holders don’t have access to ELL or LINC language classes due to the “temporariness” of the permit. One participant accessed ELL classes due to mistake in her class admission paper. Currently, the same participant is in a

¹⁵ FCJ Refugee Centre provides transitional housing for survivors

- process of applying for PR after she received a positive decision of her H&C claim. One participant is attending English language classes in local library.
- **Hospital/walk in clinic** in one case due to trauma during trafficking situation.
 - **Counseling:** through CCVT, other counsellors.
 - For those going through refugee process counselling is accessed more easily, otherwise long waiting times. In one case 8 months.
 - Bounced around different counselors/therapists. Constant ups and downs.
 - Majority of trauma counsellors not experienced and know very little about human trafficking and the trauma experienced during the situation and after. “I was asking for help but got tired not finding the right help.”
 - **Translation:**
 - Easily accessible in Toronto. More difficult in cities outside Toronto. In one case police couldn’t help due to lack of readily accessible interpretation services in the region.
 - **Legal aid**
 - Participants who submitted refugee application used legal aid. Those within the TRP process are not eligible. One of the TRP holders who is in process of civil court proceedings to recuperate lost wages is struggling to pay the lawyer. She is working double shifts in order to assure ends are met. However, the outcome of the case is unknown.
 - **Legal support**
 - Preparation and accompaniment to TRP appointments with immigration officer.
 - Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds application (H&C): two applicants submitted H&C’s with help of community agency. One came positive, the second one is still in processing. Third survivor is in a process of submitting H&C with the support of a community legal clinic.
 - Applications for work permit.
 - **Court services:**
 - Victim services not helpful. Lack of preliminary preparation. In some cases interpretation was not available. There is no accompaniment to court (especially challenging if the court is outside Toronto).
 - Intimidating, stressful, scary, emotional. Survivors had to face the trafficker.
 - a) *Criminal proceedings*
 - Four criminal investigations were undertaken. All of the survivors collaborated with the investigation. In one case, police didn’t lay charges. For the rest of the cases charges were tried in court.
 - b) *Convictions:*
 - In one case employer pleaded not guilty. Peace bond was negotiated. Employer was forbidden to hire any foreign workers for up to one year. Presently, there is a civil case for recuperation of lost wages. The outcome is still unknown.
 - In another case trafficker pleaded guilty. He was not convicted under section 118 of IRPA. Sentence is pending.¹⁶ Agreement also was reached to pay

¹⁶ More information on conviction and sentencing will be available in September 2016

back some of the owed wages. Before court proceedings the survivor submitted Employment Standard Claim through the Ministry of Labour to recuperate some of the unpaid wages. However, the claim was not successful because it was submitted past 6 month since the theft of the wage occurred.¹⁷

- One case ended up with peace bond.

- **Employment**

- Challenging to work due to coping with trauma.
- Lack of information about rights at work, minimum wage, working hours, etc. which exacerbates person's vulnerability to enter again in a cycle of exploitation.¹⁸ Many participants were paid less than the minimum wage when entering the workforce after the trafficking situation. Few participants shared that they accepted the fact of being paid less given their lack of official immigration status.

"When I came first my first job was working in a factory like packing cookies and who took me to this job ... and later on I found out they paid me less than minimum wage and made me work much harder and travelled three hours every day from Scarborough to Brampton by bus; so they paid me less and I thought it was ok because I didn't have status so I have to accept what they gave me...later on I found out it was not ok."

- One participant said that for her "employment is easily available if you can take the hardship". Travel time for one was three hours every day (Scarborough to Brampton). Another suggested it took long time because of lack of skills.
- Language is a prevailing barrier to successfully land a job.
- Programs for accessing employment needed: "it would be great if the system do something in order for us to access work instead of just staying home and being more depressed."
- Skill training needed "to learn skills to do something so I don't feel worthless; they can give us opportunities to do something and gain a skill to feel like I'm learning and using my intelligence to do something and also that is helping us not to think about our situation all the time (need distraction from the hardship of life; makes us feel confused, sad, and depressed)."

F. Promising practices, closing the service gaps

- Access to skill/employment training programs
- Availability of legal aid
- Relaxed rules to access ELL classes
- Monthly peer support groups
- Have more and accessible services outside Toronto

G. Service providers' approach

a) Don't:

- "Push me to do things if I'm not ready. Provide me with support where I'm."

¹⁷ On the phone Ministry of Labour said that there is no exemption for survivors of human trafficking in terms of extending the deadline.

¹⁸ One participant was paid approximately 2\$ an hour at her new job (after she left the trafficking situation).

- “Be just my worker but also my friend/coach. I will feel more comfortable to face the issues.”
- Change the case worker every time

b) Do

- “Walk me through the process. Be with me through the whole process, until it finishes.”
- “Provide me with tools if you need me to do stuff. If I have to call/meet victim services arrange an interpreter.”
- “Follow up with me more closely. “I don’t need a babysitter” but someone to check on me because I feel vulnerable. In that way I will feel safer. “
- “Ask me how I feel.”
- “Discuss with me what the next steps are. I want to hear another point of view not directions. Then I will feel more comfortable to face the issues.”
- “I need coach/peer support and someone who can be my mentor/motivator.”

c) Inappropriate questions

General sense: When inappropriate questions are asked it feels if person did something wrong. “I felt I did something wrong everywhere they asked me those questions (at police, doctor’s office, service case worker). After a while I stopped talking with everyone.”

- Judgmental questions/behavior
- Blaming questions. “I felt that my counsellor was more blaming me. She was female counsellor from Latin America. I thought that she can relate to me but instead I felt intimidated and judged. “
- Why you didn’t leave? “How I suppose to answer this question: How I can go? No passport, no money, where to go? Toronto is far away.”; “I signed a contract. He promised me that he will get my permanent residence. I worked [very hard] to meet his requirement.”
- Why you didn’t call the police?
- Why you didn’t come before?
- Why you needed this information? “I was asking general questions about legal system. I felt that I’m doing something wrong.”
- Why you didn’t report? “I didn’t know that I can report. I’m even not a Canadian citizen. I didn’t think I was entitled.”
- Self-serving questions, not related to the case. “My therapists asked me questions such as what happened to my father. How he died? Those were too personal questions and not even related to my story. Why she asked them?”

H. Support services/awareness materials

- Phone line in different languages
- Awareness-raising about human trafficking and available services in different language. Brochures/pamphlets should be displayed at easily accessible places. Some suggestions include:
 - Public phones/booths. E.g.: public phones at the airport
 - Community centres
 - Convenience stores near the border as well as in the city

- Gas stations and washrooms along the road
- Places of prayer
- Transportation stations (such as Union) “because that’s where we go when we are lost.”
- 24 hours information booth at the airport about newcomer rights/responsibilities, etc. However, one participant said that if you arrive in a big group is challenging to stop at a booth because you are following the group and don’t have much time to look around
- Visa offices abroad. When your visa is issued the officers in the consulate should provide you with basic information on how to get help in case exploitation occur.
- Border agents at the Canadian airports should provide you with a brochure with basic services and places to call if person needs help/assistance.

I. Successes/Challenges in the path to recovery

a) Biggest success

- “Meeting people like you [peers in the group].”
- “I didn’t meet any friends, so all of you become part of my family and my friends. So after I came here I feel more comfortable sharing things with all of you and I hope you can help me do something in Canada so I can feel proud of myself. My English is not that good but I’m going to try very hard to learn it. I think my goal is work hard, make money so I can help people from Syria and others who have a hard life. I can make my English better and I can help others who need help, help the kids to buy supplies they need, for example.”¹⁹
- “I can go to work; I can go somewhere; I can learn so many things: how to find place to buy things cheap. I feel grateful for being more independent. Three-four years ago it was hard and I couldn’t. I can look for better jobs now.”
- “I am running a sewing workshop and in the future I want to grow and share with others and help other refugees; being able to teach others. I want to have my own store.”²⁰
- “I can help others. I am on the same table but on the other side because someone at some point helped me and I hope that if you want to do it you can do it one day.”

b) Challenges:

- “Coping with trauma. If I see a brown van my mind can blow off. Also my English.”
- “Trouble sleeping and coping with trauma. I’m sleeping 2-3 hours. This impacts my life like missing appointments with OW.”
- “My trauma. I start remembering and I get very upset. I try to get busy not to think about my pass.”
- “My son, looking at his pictures.”²¹

¹⁹ Immediate translation from mandarin.

²⁰ Immediate translation from Spanish

²¹ Immediate translation from Mandarin

- “Because what happen with me I have problems to socialize with people. Also the language.”
- “Not being able to see my children for five years. Wish there was a way they visit me while I wait my immigration.”
- “Surviving on my own”

Roundtable “From the Ground Up: Working with Survivors for Survivors”

June 1st, 2016

Highlights from discussion:

- Services/lessons from the refugee/immigrant service providers may inform domestic trafficking practices. As there is an overlap of issues in domestic and international trafficking (e.g. lack of trust in authorities).
 - Suggested use of term “uprootedness” when serving trafficked individual. “Uprootedness” from home in Ottawa; “uprootedness” of native woman from home in North; “uprootedness” from home in Mexico, etc. If support worker identifies uprootedness, they can identify support that is needed.
- Appropriate referrals:
 - Focus on identifying exploitation rather than type of trafficking, e.g. sex trafficking; identification of barriers, oppression, isolation as well as identification of classic intersectionalities rather than identifying the crime from the onset.
- Can the services/lessons from the refugee/immigrant service providers inform domestic trafficking practices? Some issues overlap – e.g. lack of trust in authorities
- Preparation for court:
 - Matthew House (refugee group) identified this as a general need for many of their residents; they are doing mock trial preparation. Should be contacted to possibly pair up and develop program specific for trafficking victims
- Help line: have to find ways to harness the service. In addition, start a text message service. Young people prefer texting. For many calling is intimidating.
- Training should be mandatory for everyone who serves people who have been removed from their social environments.
- New initiative of the Ontario Government: “emergency help”. Anyone, even people without status, in any circumstance can access a 15 days of financial support every six months. This can be used to get trafficked persons into social services, if they don’t otherwise have access
- There are programs for support groups & training for parents of trafficked persons
- Victims are consistently denied access to services because of definitions used. Analysis should be made on institutional barriers for accessing services. Compile suggestions for changes in the system that will be inclusive. E.g. proof of shared

address when accepted in VAW shelter; in immigration realm, trafficking victims often blocked at stage of permanent residency because they don't have ID

- Lacking support for male victims of human trafficking. East Metro will support men who are sexually exploited (but currently don't have any).
- Cycle of abuse is important to look at- traffickers may be trafficked themselves. Disclosure is even more of a problem when the victim is also victimizing someone else; they are committing a crime as well. That is why peer support workers are very important, non-judgmental advocates for clients.
- Criminal background as barrier for access to services. Most of the criminal charges are related with offences like addiction. Difficult to find job, exclusion from college internships.

Moving forward:

- Each organization should start moving forward: talk with MPs, e.g. asking for funding
- Address root causes of exploitation in school curriculum from grade 6 and up – talk to Minister of Education
- Ontario government is moving forward with addressing HT in the province. The Women's Directorate is consulting with organizations across Ontario.
- Crown is recognizing that they need more training and awareness on the subject. Suggestion to be made to the AG for Crown training, including sensitivity and moving cases forward.

Future initiatives:

- Survivor led toolkit on providing services to trafficked persons- FCJ Refugee Centre and EMYS are working on survivor led/informed promising practices to assist service providers in their work with survivors

STAY TUNED!

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire Survivor led/facilitated human trafficking focus groups

1. Who did you contacted first when you needed help? What was your experience with that?
2. Did you need emergency services at the beginning? If yes, how they were arranged for you?
3. What services did you receive during the process of recovery? Were they helpful? To what extend?
4. How did you hear about those services?
5. Were any gaps in the services that you received? Please, explain in details for every service.
6. Do you feel that important services are missing or that current services are not useful? Please explain.
7. What kinds of services should be included? Why?
8. How can existing services be improved?
9. Do you think that a phone helpline for survivors of trafficking where survivors and organisations can call in and receive immediate support and guidance over the phone would be useful? Why?
10. If you think the helpline service would be useful, what kind of support do you think the helpline should offer? (For example, information on available services, how to contact or report an incident to the police, on-the-phone counselling, safety precautions, etc.).
11. Are there any changes in the system you would like to see? Please, explain.
12. What the ideal response in terms of services should look like in your opinion?
13. What are your biggest challenges and successes in your path to recovery?
14. What was your experience with the authorities
15. What would you like people who offer you services to know so they can provide you with the appropriate support? List of Do's/Don'ts of service providers?
16. Can you give us example of questions/information that might be invasive to ask (off limits)?
17. Did you find enough information available that enabled you to seek help?
18. What suggestions do you have on how we can engage survivors of trafficking in future planning, decision-making and implementation of services?
19. Would you be interested to participate in future opportunities related to your experience as a survivor, e.g. advisory committee of trafficking survivors to offer/be consulted for input on different initiatives? Please, suggest initiatives/roles you might be interested in engaging?
20. If you want to be involved in such initiatives, what barriers or concerns you may have (such as time of meetings, child care, transportation, confidentiality)?
21. Do you have any other suggestions/things you would like to share?