

Kansas Conference on Slavery and Human Trafficking (02/01/2013)

Advocacy Group - Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

The advocacy group included the participation of students (undergraduate and graduate), faculty, staff, activists, practitioners, and state officials. This advocacy working group focused on existing resources for advocates working to combat human trafficking, and participants shared success that they had in Kansas and in national organizations. The working group ended by brainstorming possible advocacy events that their non-profit organizations and student groups could sponsor.

Available Resources

The advocacy working group was eager to gain more information about local and national resources to combat slavery and human trafficking. Davina Durgana suggested that protocols for training emergency responders and health care professionals, including firefighters and nurses, can help to create a support network for victims of human trafficking that need medical assistance. National resources for victims of human trafficking include a hotline number, 1-888-373-7888, the Rescue and Restore Coalition, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Polaris Project Website.

Human Trafficking Recruiting Efforts

The advocacy group discussed efforts to recruit victims within local communities. Perpetrators of human trafficking sometimes lure their victims through gifts and promises. Once they are isolated, the “Bottom Girl” sometimes acts as a middle manager for pimps: working on the pimp’s behalf, but also enslaved by the pimp. Participants within the working group discovered that these recruiting efforts also take place within group homes/shelters for victims. The victims of human trafficking – still mentally tied to their captor – use the internet and phones of secure facilities to make contact with the Bottom Girls or pimp, as these controllers also use technology to maintain control over victims.

Promote Advocacy and Victim Support

Some members of the advocacy working group worked for not-for-profit companies that give shelter to victims of human trafficking that escaped. These participants had experience working with women, and who had little trust for men. The men had success overcoming this natural

mistrust by doing the things that they said they would do (take laundry, serve food), learning the terms/vocabulary that the victims used with one another.

Networks Exist But Face Hurdles

The working group shared failures that advocates against human trafficking face. One persistent problem that victims face after they are free is transportation. The advocacy working groups suggested that the seats that national airlines, bus lines, and train companies already provide *pro bono* to organizations such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) should have a national clearinghouse and database that would make these assets assessable to victims in crisis situations. A second fissure in the advocacy / non-profit support network is support for young men: men, 18 or older, have very few places to turn as victims of human trafficking.

Student Advocacy

The working group considered what concerned citizens can do to combat human trafficking in our communities and raise awareness. The group generated ideas and shared stories about successful awareness campaigns. Forms of advocacy can be fundraisers, 5k runs, clothing pledges (wear the same clothes for a month), screenings of women empowerment shows and/or documentaries, or book clubs. Two overarching problems about human trafficking are ignorance and apathy.