

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ICELAND

A Report on Current Manifestations and Eradication Initiatives

2018 - 2019



Stop The Traffik: ACT Iceland

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About Us:

STOP THE TRAFFIK was set up in 2006 in London, U.K. to

Educate: raise awareness and understanding of human trafficking and what can be done about it

Advocate: engage with communities and professionals to create an environment where it's harder to traffick, hide and exploit people.

Fundraise: financing STOP THE TRAFFIK projects and anti-trafficking activities around the world which work with advocates, those vulnerable to and those who have been, trafficked.

STOP THE TRAFFIK now has more than 1000 member organizations in 50 countries and tens of thousands of activists all over the world.

STOP THE TRAFFIK: ACT Iceland is the Icelandic member organization. ACT stands for Active Communities against Trafficking, and STOP THE TRAFFIK's ACT program has allowed for local groups all over the world to stop the traffick in their own communities.

The original STOP THE TRAFFIK:ACT Iceland team was established in 2013 and campaigned against international child trafficking in the chocolate industry. STT:ACT Iceland was interviewed in the media about their campaign and also held events such as a slavery-free chocolate fondue evening in partnership with Kaffitár. They gathered a number of petitions to send to the three main chocolate companies in Iceland, demanding the companies switch their sourcing to slavery-free beans. There was some success as the chocolate company Nói Sírius then adopted the Cocoa Horizons program dedicated to social responsibility and sustainability to source their beans. After this success the original group was largely inactive for the next few years after some of the team relocated overseas. In 2018, we re-activated the organisation with some former members, including editors of this report Simon Turner and Jess Canode, as well as welcoming some new members including editor Eggert Sigurðsson, and the report's author Logan Sigurðsson, trafficking survivor working and studying in the field for 5+ years. Together we recognised new opportunities to join the fight against human trafficking in our home of Iceland and, with the help of our volunteers, set out to reinvent our organization. We have done a few awareness talks this past year at Kynjaþing and Bjarkarhlíð, but our priority this year has been to research the current standing of the issue, of which we have collaborated into this report.

Human Trafficking In Iceland?

Human Trafficking may not immediately seem like an issue when it comes to Iceland, but unfortunately this is a crime happening at a global level in every country. Especially within the last few years with the influx of tourism, trafficking has been reportedly on the rise in Iceland and has frequented the news. There has only ever been one conviction of a human trafficking case in Iceland, but as the report below will carry on to show, the conviction rate is not an accurate depiction of the crime's prevalence.

What is human trafficking?

Within the field of human trafficking there are variances in definitions. Human trafficking has been coined as a "modern day slavery". Another way it's often simplified is when others are taking action to control and exploit others. Simplifications can be helpful to develop an understanding of a very complicated crime, but the exact definition we are using comes from the United Nations.

The full definition of human trafficking from the United Nations is found in Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons:

"The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons [the "act"], by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person ["means"], for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs ["purpose"]."

The ACT, MEANS, and the PURPOSE can similarly represent the "WHAT" the "HOW" and the "WHY" of Human Trafficking. Essentially you have the actions that traffickers are taking, *described under the ACT*, and they are able to take them because of the control they have over that person, *listed under the MEANS*, and then the trafficker(s) are doing all of this in order to benefit themselves in some way, *which is the various forms of exploitation listed under the PURPOSE*.

So as you can see, there are many different possibilities that could fit within this definition that portrays trafficking in a very broad way. However, there are a lot of misconceptions about trafficking that miscategorize it into a very narrow profile. This narrow profile may constrict human trafficking into a single narrative of an abduction by a large international crime group that has constant control over their victims, such as being chained up in a hidden location. Of course there are cases of this happening, but there are so many additional manifestations that do not fit into this profile, but still do fit into the definition.

One major issue with this narrative is the limited view of control over another person and how power is not always violent. You can control people through both compelled and consensual compliance. Compelled compliance includes the more obvious coercion, or threats and force of physical abuse, but on the other hand, consensual compliance includes positive inducement, reference to benefits or an authority or obligation. Some examples of consensual compliance may include a child feeling compelled by an authority figure, or someone in poverty feeling like they have no other opportunities than to comply with abuse to survive.

So while there are cases of trafficking where someone is being abducted and tied up, it is important to understand other forms of control exist. Sometimes, for a trafficker, it can be easier and pose less of a risk to target someone who is already vulnerable, because then instead of keeping them tied up and hidden, they can simply manipulate that vulnerability into a dependency so they do not have to worry about their victim trying to escape, even when they are in public.

Therefore, when it comes to trafficking, certainly those with pre-existing vulnerabilities are more at-risk of being trafficked due to the power-imbalances already in play. In the case of Iceland these power-imbalances exist particularly with those who have a looser ties to the welfare state such as asylum seekers, non-residents, and other foreigners. This explains why much of the news

circulating in Iceland speaks of human trafficking as being primarily an issue for immigrants to Iceland. However, as we have been speaking with others in the field, we have heard stories of vulnerabilities in Icelandic natives such as those suffering from trauma and/or abusive relationships, those affected by substance abuse, and runaway teens to name a few. Trafficking knows no single demographic, and happens to adults and children regardless of age or gender.

There is also the misconception that trafficking equals gang activity, but it can be easy enough to manipulate and take advantage of others outside of this. There are also many individual opportunists who do not necessarily have to be of a certain status, within a group, or possess any specific skills. Traffickers may not even be strangers but could be an abusive partner for example. Furthermore, within those abusive relationships of victim and trafficker there is no limitation on the extent of the crime either, meaning it could be one act of trafficking or could be ongoing for years. Then there are also the payments and negotiations that do not have single profile either, people could be trafficked for money as well as other items or favors as long as there is a benefit to the trafficker at the expense of the victim.

One example we have frequently used in awareness presentations to demonstrate the variance of the core elements of Act, Means, and Purpose was a human trafficking case from our team-member's home state of Kentucky,

U.S. in which a foster father forced his foster daughter to perform sex acts with a man in exchange for his couch. So when it comes to trafficking, certainly those with pre-existing vulnerabilities are more at-risk to be trafficked due to the power-imbalances already in play, but trafficking can have many manifestations that need to be approached in a comprehensive way. Many cases can look very different, but still include the three core elements the Act, Means, and Purpose, making it a case of human trafficking.

While the case from Kentucky is good to demonstrate these three elements, it is important to note that neither the U.S. laws nor the Icelandic laws on trafficking are an exact match the definition of trafficking set by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. International law only applies to those communities who have chosen to

abide by it, although Iceland did officially join the United Nations on November 19th, 1946, and signed in agreement to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons in December 13, 2000. In December of 2009, Iceland amended article 227a of its criminal code with aims to align further with this definition. Additionally Iceland is also a member of both the Council of the Baltic Sea States, and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings that use the protocol's definition. A common concern that is revealed in this report is that the current legal definitions need to be extended to further align with this protocol. Therefore when we, the Stop The Traffik: ACT Iceland team, refer to human trafficking, we are abiding by the UN protocol definition.

Purpose of This Report:

This report is a compilation of information we have collected over 2018 in an effort to identify areas of intervention for 2019.

The first section of the report consists of a range of interviews we conducted with individuals and groups who are in some capacity connected to the issue of trafficking in persons within Iceland. With these varied perspectives we hoped to better develop an up-to-date understanding of the scale and manifestations of trafficking in Iceland today. In this process we have mapped a network of groups and individuals working to combat trafficking within Iceland. Connecting with others involved in the issue is an ongoing venture we hope to continue entering 2019, as we were pleasantly surprised by the abundance of effort being taken to combat human trafficking and general exploitation, abuse, and violence. Some of these individuals and parties were better connected than others, and it did seem to us that every time we met someone new, they recommended us to another new person, and so on. We wanted to meet with others within Iceland so we do not reinvent or repeat measures or actions already in place, but discover how we could support the efforts of others and identify our role within the effort.

One role that was pitched to us in the beginning was that we could create some sort of awareness campaign. So throughout the report we sought feedback on this in particular, but also other ways we could be active and the general needs in regard to anti-trafficking efforts on the whole in Iceland. At the end of the interview section is a collaboration of all the main points from each interviewee.

In addition to the interviews of those in or connected to this field, we also did an analysis of anonymous written testimonies to identify obstacles that interfered with sex trafficking victims reaching support. Following that is a related section discussing patterns in those who have experienced labor exploitation based on written testimonies. Finally there is a section detailing a test-run we conducted on an outreach program for sex workers in Iceland.

We intend to use this report to take informed, evidenced based action. This action is detailed at the very end of the report in a section about our next steps. In the process of writing it we are happy to have developed connections in the field we hope to develop into long-term partnerships to complete this work, and we hope that the information we have collected will be of some help to others in the field as well as the general public.

MARGRÉT STEINARSDÓTTIR:

Margrét is the director of the Icelandic Human Rights Centre and has been providing immigrants with legal counsel for over 14 years. Margrét has worked with over a hundred cases of human trafficking, as well as many other cases that have showed indicators of exploitation or vulnerable circumstances at risk of exploitation. She is also on the board of Stígamót, the first organization in Iceland to raise awareness for human trafficking victims with whom she has been attending trafficking conferences in various countries since the 90s, and Bjarkarhlíð, a family justice center for survivors of violence.

Defining Trafficking in Iceland:

Margrét advocated that we think of human trafficking cases in a broad way, and that it can manifest in many different forms. She emphasizes this later in the interview by discussing the many ways in which cases are handled on a case-by-case basis depending on the particular individual's circumstances, and how diverse these cases can be.

However, she says the Palermo Protocol's definition of human trafficking is how cases of trafficking are classified in a legal context. Nonetheless, she says her personal definition of trafficking, based on the experience she has with the matter, extends further beyond the Protocol. The Protocol does not mention that exploitation can be other than for the purpose of financial gain. She argued that there are many other benefits that a trafficker can obtain by exploiting their victim. In many cases that she has encountered, the sexual exploitation

itself can be a benefit to the trafficker, as in the many cases of abusive husbands controlling and abusing their wives.

Manifestations of Trafficking:

Concerning the demographic of those victimized by trafficking, Margrét reported that in her line of work with immigrants, the vast majority of the individuals involved in these cases have legal residence, and many are here in Iceland for family reunification, as in the case of wives coming to live with their husbands. As a counsellor for immigrants, she has not taken a trafficking case that has involved an Icelandic victim. However, she says she has heard of Icelandic women being in vulnerable circumstances and exploited, mentioning that women affected by drug addiction were particularly at risk.

She recalled one case of an Icelandic woman that was trafficked to North Africa, where the victim suffered from a drug dependency and this vulnerability was manipulated by a man she met in

Iceland who then brought her to Northern Africa to be exploited.

Regarding how these cases are manifesting and operating in Iceland, Margrét said most of her cases concern labor exploitation. Many of these cases have come from the tourist industry. She gave examples such as restaurants providing misinformation about rates, and construction agencies overcharging workers for poor, industrial shack-like housing, tools, and clothing.

She described the commonality of cases involving a “middle-man”, noting that the middle-man role was rarely an Icelander but typically a foreigner, who would bring an individual to Iceland, then entrap that individual into debt for bringing them to Iceland. She described one case occurring in this way which involved an Asian man who was being forced to pay off a 1,5 million kr. debt in a production job in Iceland. Margrét also talked about the use of a middle-man, where an Icelandic man would be paid for marrying a wife from overseas. After the marriage and the woman is brought to Iceland, the middle-man demands that she pay him for expenses incurred and sometimes the Icelandic man threatens to report their marriage as fake to Immigration and have her deported if she does not pay him more. She says there have been many cases of women abused by their husbands, not understanding their rights, and being generally isolated.

Margrét also described how the influx of tourists has also brought, to

some degree, sex tourism. She told us how she recently reported a website to the police that was targeting tourists traveling to Iceland. The website stated that prostitution is illegal in Iceland, but that if you contact them, female company to travel with could be arranged, alluding to sexual services.

She explained to us in the interview that the banning of strip clubs was a very progressive step forward, and that many of the women working there (primarily from the Baltic states) had been victimized by trafficking. She said that previously these workers were entrapped in debt by the strip club and were expected to, in addition to stripping, perform sexual services for clients and employees in order to pay off their debt. She described that some of these women came to work only temporarily; working only a few days or a few weeks, only to be later moved. However, some women allegedly had been put into arranged marriages with Icelandic men by club employers in order to keep them legally residing in Iceland. Margrét said that these women were not in control of their own lives, even if they were able to leave the strip club, because creditors would come after them for debt imposed on them by the club and they would still be paying it off.

The reason we have included this section of the interview in the report, despite the fact that strip clubs are no longer legal in Iceland, is because the nature of these cases is still relevant today. Margrét described how these

women were given misinformation about their rights, and how hard it was for these women to escape and get aid. She said she only had very few of these Strip Club cases due to these interferences, and described how in one circumstance a woman from Eastern Europe came in asking for help because she had obtained a passport from a well established EU country. She told Margrét that she felt they could not treat her this way any longer because she was no longer in the same position as the other girls from her country, but that she had a new nationality. She had the belief that her rights had changed, which is why she had the right to seek out help.

Margrét noted that difficulties in intervening in these cases may be the reason why she has never had a case with gentlemen's clubs (which is what these clubs became known as following the change in the laws, where the club can no longer profit from the staff's nudity). Yet she is concerned with the implications that come along with places like these, where foreign female workers are still being employed, especially when it comes to Champagne clubs; which are still legal in Kópavogur. Champagne clubs have found a way to get around the law that employers cannot profit off the nudity of their staff by having nudity at "social gatherings" where customers pay for access to the area where the girls are dancing by purchasing drinks such as a bottle of champagne. Margrét warns

that sexual services imposed by employers could be taking place in private places.

Margrét stated that cases of brothels in Iceland were known, and that sex trafficking within Iceland is a vital concern just as labor trafficking, but interferences of misinformation held by victims and the isolation they experience, in addition to police being overworked and undermanned make rescue difficult.

Victim Assistance:

Cases often come to Margrét through friends and coworkers. She gave the example of Icelandic construction workers being upset after discovering their co-workers were being treated unfairly and they brought them in to get assistance. This perhaps shows the value of awareness campaigns being targeted towards whole industries rather than just immigrant workers themselves, as it seems that, in Margrét's experience, Icelanders are often the window of opportunity for many who are victimized.

She also talked about how Iceland has only had one conviction, and how cooperation with police is often difficult to accomplish. She described how those victimized by labor exploitation are typically more interested in moving on quickly and finding a new job, rather than getting involved with law enforcement and seeking retribution. She also talked about how cultural

beliefs and traditions may affect this cooperation such as an individual's previously held impressions of police from their home country, or other reasons such as the example she gave of a recent trend of Nigerian women not wanting to report their cases because they had been threatened with voodoo if they sought help. Once threatened like this, victims may favor moving on to avoid provoking their offender by pressing charges after just recently reaching safety.

As these cases come to her, she said that if separation from the offender was necessary, restraining orders were available, and the women and children could also stay in the women's shelter. However, there is no shelter for men, and in the recent case of the Asian man mentioned above, Margrét talked about how social services and a labour market union deposited money to him in order to pay for housing on his own and meet his basic needs such as food. Margrét stated that there is no set procedure for how to provide assistance to victims, as every case is so different and they all have different needs. Instead she described to us how assistance is administered through a network of different services and ministries and unions that pull together on a case-by-case basis.

Recommendations:

Margrét's main recommendations to combat trafficking in Iceland were that the law be updated to address larger manifestations of exploitation, especially when it comes to exploitation not always including financial gain. Additionally, she stated that some judges may benefit from further information on the nature of trafficking cases.

As far as recommendations for an awareness campaign, she explained that society's awareness of trafficking needs to develop to include more common forms of trafficking, such as cases of an abusive husband, and not be limited to circumstances portrayed in the media. To do this, she recommended we first target young people for a generational shift in attitudes about healthy sex and relationships, especially concerning the commodification of women, noting the success of this new-generation approach in anti-smoking campaigns that targeted young people. Other profession-targeted campaigns could be directed towards many, but a good start would perhaps be hotel staff and cab drivers. She added that she has examples of trafficking involving cab drivers who were perpetrators in sex trafficking their foreign wives, but also suggested how trained cab drivers could be helpful bystanders to recognizing trafficking indicators in customers.

ALDA HRÖNN JÓHANNSDÓTTIR

Suðurnes Police Force

Alda is currently a police prosecutor working at the police department of Suðurnes. Alda studied law at the University of Iceland and joined the police in Hafnarfjörður the summer of 1999. She has since then worked as the Chief Attorney at the Office of the Police Commissioner in the Greater Reykjavík Area, and as a deputy police officer in Suðurnes. Much of her work has concerned improving the procedures and organization of domestic violence, sexual offenses, and trafficking in human beings. She was on the investigation team that handled the only human trafficking conviction Iceland has ever had in 2009.

KARL STEINAR VALSSON

Metropolitan Police Force

Karl Steinar Valsson is the Chief Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police Force since January, 2018. He was the head of the police Narcotics division between 2007 and 2014, after which he became Iceland's liaison officer with Europol in the Netherlands.

Penal Code:

During the interview with Alda and Karl it was stressed to us that there are not enough resources to adequately combat trafficking in Iceland. They explained the penal code is not currently comprehensive, and that changes must be made to meet all the forms of exploitation included in the EU directive.

Alda further explained that victims are not receiving proper aid because the penal code does not cover their type of trafficking case; giving the example of a recent case including a teenage boy who was coerced into burglarizing for his trafficker, and then

was not recognized as a trafficking victim by current laws.

For every trafficking case, it must be proven that there was an ACT, a MEANS, and a PURPOSE (defined by the EU directive).

Cases:

Concerning the types of cases, Karl works with metropolitan and Alda within Keflavik Airport so they have varied experiences with trafficking. Karl's work within the city of Reykjavik concerns mostly prostitution cases and runaways. He explained that there are many foreign victims but certainly Icelandic victims also, and that most of these past tips were concerning the

sexual exploitation of runaways. Karl elaborated that there have been quite a lot of runaways in Iceland but that they were not so much focused on these incidents also being considered trafficking cases. He stated that since Guðmundur Fylkisson was appointed to find runaway children two years ago, relocating them has been very successful.

When we asked them about if they had any cases for gentleman's clubs or champagne clubs, they were aware of the suspicions but explained to us that they had no proof (this is prior to the Shooters club investigation, Karl was interviewed by RUV on this issue¹).

The only successful human trafficking conviction Iceland has ever been able to achieve was Alda's past case in 2010. This was a prostitution case of a Lithuanian woman whose panicked behavior was noticed on her plane to Iceland, and the police were able to intercept her for questioning to assure her safety before she was met by Lithuanian traffickers waiting for her arrival in the airport terminal. When the woman was returning to her country, she was wondering why she could not be driven rather than taking a plane, demonstrating how very little information victims sometimes have

about their whereabouts when entrapped by a trafficker.

Alda's cases since then have mostly been of foreigners and asylum seekers. She explained to us that the cheap flights and general influx of tourism in Iceland has led to Iceland being a final destination, but more frequently a short-term transit destination, for human trafficking to occur.

In regard to asylum seekers, Alda gave a rough estimation of 80% of asylum seekers that have used smugglers to arrive in Iceland. These smugglers have typically been of the same nationality of the asylum seekers, and the asylum seekers also have stated in the past that they need smugglers and there is often no other alternative for them to reach safety.

Alda explained further that cases involving asylum seekers can be particularly sensitive because they do not wish to be seen as victims, and that they are first and foremost concerned about their asylum. When authorities have suspicions of human trafficking within these smuggling cases, cooperation with police to report occurrences of exploitation can be especially challenging when asylum seekers fear that cooperation could potentially sabotage their opportunity for international protection

Challenges:

Cooperation with victims was explained to us as a frequent challenge

¹ Shooters investigation article, Karl interviewed by RUV
<http://www.ruv.is/frett/trafficking-and-prostitution-at-shooters?fbclid=IwAR2TuLebtJ4BjByJ3jU4z9YW7GH3oMrN9Sdvn--palNSGi1qDg92ipB8jG4>

when assisting them. For example, in another past trafficking case involving a victim allegedly forced into prostitution at Hotel Adam, there were high indications that trafficking occurred, but the case did not go forward largely due to the victim returning to her home country instead of seeking retribution. (Please note after this interview with us, the victim talked to Stundin about her experience with reporting the incident that provides her perspective².)

They explained that often indications are high but proof is not, and that victim cooperation would have significant effects on this but it is no simple matter. Karl explained that due to threats of violence, many victims often prefer to remain silent rather than seek retribution in fear of their safety.

However, when cases can be established, there are no set procedures. For example, in the conviction of the Lithuanian traffickers, the Lithuanian victim had to go into an unofficial victim protection because Iceland does not have a formal victim protection procedure. The police also then had to work with the embassy to allocate funding to return the victim to Lithuania.

Repeatedly Karl and Alda explained there were not enough people working on this issue, and they noted the increase of special procedures that have been successfully initiated for

domestic violence and that meetings concerning this platform met once a month. On the other hand, they relayed that it has been two years since there was a meeting concerning human trafficking with the Ministry of Justice.

Alda and Karl are hoping after this summer to re-start a conversation with the government on the need for a higher prioritization towards human trafficking in Iceland. In the meantime, they told us briefly how they have taken steps to try and work with Icelandic airlines to help identify cases.

Recommendations:

Throughout our talk with Alda and Karl they stressed to us the need for the government to prioritize human trafficking more highly, and to allocate adequate funding, resources, and manpower.

The law needs to be updated to match the EU directive on trafficking in persons, and a current Action Plan must be established and implemented. As far as the public, there needs to be a greater awareness of human trafficking, and in order to accomplish this, there must be more voices demanding the crime receive adequate attention.

Alda and Karl also had many helpful recommendations concerning trainings. They noted that the Red Cross Human Trafficking hotline has received funding to integrate trafficking training but never managed to get it up and running, and they were uncertain as

² <https://stundin.is/grein/7112/>

Interview with woman who pressed charges against owner of Hotel Adam

to why that was the case (We interviewed the Red Cross later and included it in this report).

They also noted that the bus companies that transport travelers from the airport to Reykjavik would also be helpful to target, similar to airlines, in a way that the bus staff could benefit from being able to recognize the signs of trafficking.

Similarly, it was mentioned during the interview that public prosecutors may also benefit from a training to properly identify trafficking cases, as current understanding on the matter is quite varied.

They also shared their concern about the lack of victim cooperation with police. Victims typically use Bjarkarhlíð, a victim support center with expertise on human trafficking where victims can receive help with their needs, but Karl suggested there be an additional specialized social service that would be trained in handling trauma and educated in the nature of trafficking cases. This service would be able to serve as a middle-man between police and the victim to gather information that could be used in investigations.

Karl elaborated on this that there is a great need for quicker action to be taken in case investigations to ensure success. Currently the rate of communication with the police and the Welfare Ministry is not meeting this

ideal pace, and a lower-level social service may be more beneficial for these time-sensitive instances.

As far as a public awareness campaign, it was recommended to us to observe the domestic violence campaign from Bjarkarhlíð, and that it would be timely to find a way to bring out the topic of human trafficking more directly into the current #Metoo movement in which some testimonies with trafficking indicators have already been shared but not necessarily been labeled as such. Karl recommended that an awareness campaign should be forward, concise, direct, and repetitive.

They suggested that it may be helpful to have a website with current and intelligible information. Currently the Ministry of Justice hosts information on human trafficking on their website, but they noted room for improvement; adding the police website could be updated as well.

Karl and Alda were also interested in more frequent meetings with those working to combat trafficking in persons. They expressed concern that the Ministry of Justice had not held a formal meeting on the issue in two years, but were also interested in meeting with other parties involved, such as STOP THE TRAFFIK and other organizations and individuals connected to the issue who may not typically be a part of the meetings with the Ministry of Justice.

STEINUNN GYÐU- OG GUÐJÓNSDÓTTIR

Steinunn is a board member and fundraising coordinator at Stígamót, an Education and Counseling Center for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence. She also worked in Kristínarhús, a now closed shelter that was formerly operated by Stígamót, which assisted women exiting trafficking and prostitution.

Sex Trafficking Then and Now:

Steinunn told us that the nature of trafficking is often misunderstood in Iceland particularly when it comes to the deep realities of coercion and captivity.

Steinunn gave us some background on the issue and spoke of the strip clubs in Reykjavík in 2000, and the women working in them who showed signs of human trafficking. The staff at Stígamót met with some of the women, who experienced wrongful or broken labor contracts, inappropriate work environments, signs of forced prostitution, and with some, an obvious lack of freedom. At the time, Stígamót was actively campaigning against these clubs up until 2009 when it became illegal to profit off the nudity of employees. However apart from these clubs, the sex industry in Iceland has persisted.

Years later, to test the magnitude of prostitution, Steinunn put a fake advertisement with codewords for prostitution in an Icelandic newspaper linked to a burner phone. Over that next weekend she said she received over 100 calls, many with secret unlisted numbers, but at least 50 that were traceable. She described how disturbing

it was to be able to look up the phone number in the phone book, and then see these men on Facebook with their spouses and children, and whether or not they shared mutual friends.

Steinunn talked about how in more current cases, prostitution is occurring often in Airbnbs and hotels, and being advertised on websites such as City of Love (currently with over 750 listings in Iceland as of Oct. 2018), backpage, and cracker.com. However, she explained to us that it is difficult to crack down on these ads because the girls move so quickly.

At Stigamot, most of the survivors of prostitution who seek help are of Icelandic descent, but when it comes to those that are identified as possible victims of human trafficking, most of them are from Eastern Europe and Western Africa. When it comes to demographics on traffickers, she told us that there were many “ongoing investigations” but not a lot of solid leads, and therefore not a lot of information on who they are. Steinunn said that Iceland is probably part of a bigger network of trafficking.

Stígamót's Role:

Stígamót offers help to sexual abuse survivors struggling with anxiety, depression, and other effects of trauma. Currently their services are in a high demand as Steinunn described them as increasing within recent years, with a 6 week waiting list for your first visit and in between visits because they are so over-booked. Steinunn also explained that there is no timed treatment for an individual because every case is so different, but that prostitution trauma can be especially difficult to open up about, taking quite a bit of time for many due to the shame and stigma surrounding prostitution.

In this past year, Stígamót served 28 individuals healing from prostitution and 21 individuals healing from trauma related to pornography. Stígamót also provides a specific group therapy for women affected by prostitution called the Swan Group. Most of these women are Icelandic, and some others are at least fluent in Icelandic, as this is the language used in those group sessions.

Stígamót employs 11 full-time staff members of which 8.5 serve as counselors, that are trained in both counselling and gender studies. One of the counselors is male, and he helps attend to the 15% of their visitors which are male. Steinunn tells us that a few men definitely do experience human trafficking but usually it overlaps with labor.

Stígamót is not for emergency response cases, it is for survivors who come to them ready to work through past trauma and begin a healing process. In 2011, Stígamót had created a shelter for more urgent cases of women exiting prostitution and escaping the dangers that came along with it, called Kristínarhús (Kristín's house).

These women, Steinunn described as completely different. The shelter was often full of women in need of help and understaffed. Steinunn also talked about how many of these women also had children that they were too traumatized to take care of on their own, also adding that the children had experienced trauma as well. The women in the shelter were foreign women, some of whom showed signs of trafficking and some were identified as trafficking victims. Often practical obstacles, such as immigration status, interfered with assuring foreign victims received comprehensive care, and while many were not able to stay in Iceland, Steinunn recalled most of them wanting to stay permanently. There were also Icelandic women, many of which were affected by substance abuse and trafficked by their male partners. Kristínarhús closed due to a lack of funding. Women with these issues are now assisted by the Women's Shelter.

Steinunn also told us that about 10 years ago, Stígamót had created a hotline as a way to reach out to those in the sex industry and let them know that

there was help available to them, but they were not able to keep it running around the clock. This hotline is no longer advertised but Stígamót is reachable by phone.

Stígamót is engaged in campaigns that intersect with trafficking and prostitution but has not done anything specifically aimed at this issue since the illegalization of profiting off of nudity in 2009.

Recommendations:

Steinunn talked about how the police have picked up some of the initiative to educate on trafficking largely in thanks to the new chief of police dedicating more attention to prostitution and trafficking, and to individual police officers' enthusiasm.

Nonetheless, the Ministry of Justice has not taken initiative, Steinunn explains, and there are few answers available as to why that is the case. The Ministry of Justice is responsible for the government's action plan against human trafficking, but the last plan expired in 2016 and it is still

unclear how the ministry is going to fulfill its obligations. The Ministry of Welfare has had some meetings in this absence concerning victim assistance, but there is more to be done.

Two thirds of Stígamót's funding is sourced from the government and the other third from private donors. Yet Stígamót's counselling services have long waiting periods, and perhaps an increase in funding could help them meet their high demands.

Steinunn suggested that awareness campaigns should target the demand and encourage people not to buy sex. Campaigns would also do well to address the nature of trafficking and coercion.

Lastly, a large concern Steinunn had was the need to bridge the gaps for the cases of asylum seekers who might be victims of trafficking. Their immigration status should not interfere with their basic human rights, and if there are indicators of distress and exploitation they should have access to proper care. At a minimum, campaigns and information could be available in more languages.

RAGNA BJÖRG GUÐBRANDSDÓTTIR

Ragna is the Project Manager of Bjarkarhlíð, which is a family justice center for survivors of violence, and has a Masters degree in social work. She has a long history of working with those victimized by violence. She has worked with Trafficking survivors in Copenhagen with the organization Reden International, as well as Barnahús where she worked on a pilot project for children who witnessed violence in their homes

Services and Challenges:

Bjarkahlíð is a service center for adult victims of violence. There, individuals are given the opportunity of interviewing and consulting with social workers, police, and lawyers free of charge on their premises as a joint project of the City of Reykjavík, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of the Interior, the Police in the Capital Area, the Federation of Women's Welfare, Stígamót, Drekaslóð, Iceland Human Rights Office and the Women's Advisory Council.

Ragna elaborated to us on the role of Bjarkarhlíð in victim assistance and the investigations of trafficking cases. As opposed to the police station, Bjarkarhlíð is a comfortable environment and a safe place for victims to talk, and police to collect the information they need to build a case. This way, talking to the victims of violence does not feel like an interrogation, but is more considerate of the victim's welfare and personal wishes. Staff at Bjarkahlíð are knowledgeable in

trauma and how to mindfully address victims and deal with sensitive topics. Ragna explained that at first the victims do not want to talk, it is a process that takes time to build trust. Bjarkarhlíð's "mild approach" takes an approach that considers the victims wellbeing, but the process also takes time simply due to the ways in which trauma affects the brain and its ability to process information relating to the traumatic events.

For victims of foreign origin, a six month visa is available to identified human trafficking victims. While this could be helpful to both the process of collecting information and the victim's overall welfare, Ragna told us that they are unfortunately sparsely granted. Yet, when it is possible, during those six months, Iceland can provide housing and daily counselling at the women's shelter where at least one staff member is always stationed, around the clock. This at least is available for women that are victims as men do not have such a space. In the event of a man needing housing, as reviewed elsewhere a few times in the report, the Ministry of Welfare does what it can to allocate

temporary housing and then additionally counselling can be granted elsewhere, such as Bjarkarhlíð.

A major concern was that once this six month period was over for these foreign victims, they are often sent back to their home country without knowing if they will continue to get the support that they need. They do not have the infrastructure to connect to other NGOs in the victim's home country. Therefore, there is always a concern that a victim may need more assistance than a short six months can provide, and there may even be a risk of re-victimization if little has been done to intervene in their original circumstances.

About the Victims:

Ragna told us that people are sometimes preoccupied with talking about trafficking from abroad, but we have people here in Iceland being trafficked within the country. She added that this is not only labor trafficking, men and women in Iceland are being forced into prostitution as well, but notably it seems to mostly be women.

She also said that there has been a lot of talk lately of trafficking within the labor market, but the same cannot be said for prostitution in Iceland which lacks a public dialogue. However, sex trafficking is here she asserted, and in particular she mentioned it often taking

place in AirBnbs in larger populated areas.

In Ragna's experience, many of the women that have come to the center with issues concerning prostitution, have histories with trauma and/or sexual abuse. Often these histories triggered a spiral into self-destructive behaviours leading to prostitution. One of the more common examples of this is seen in Icelandic women suffering from substance abuse who turn to prostitution to support their addiction.

Reaching the Victims:

Ragna told us that there is trafficking everywhere, but we need to prioritise making ourselves available for the victims. There has been a lot of talk about human trafficking in the labor market, but not when it comes to prostitution. Most people working in the field have a pretty good knowledge of the situation in Iceland according to Ragna; the situation being that trafficking is indeed everywhere. Public awareness would only help to educate the general public which is not as familiar (if at all) of the circumstances of trafficking in Iceland.

However, one of Ragna's major concerns seemed to be that there is no prevention work. Bjarkarhlíð primarily receives people at the center through the police response. Bjarkarhlíð has a resident police officer, Berglind, who works full time at Bjarkarhlíð on abuse and trafficking cases, to serve as a

bridge between the center and law enforcement.

Nevertheless, there is still no outreach being done. Ragna urged that we need to make ourselves available for the victims, not just hope they find us. There is need for improvement and for a greater teamwork in identifying victims. Currently this is the sole job of the Police, but it needs to be expanded.

Ragna made us aware that there have been some recent intersectional efforts to combat violence in general, and gave a few examples. One being a social media campaign consisting of a series of Youtube videos promoted by the Women's shelter in coordination with Bjarkarhlíð in June, called "Þekktu Rauðu Ljósin," or "Know the Red Lights". This campaign urged people to not look other way at the signs of violence and addressed the issue that often women recognize the signs of violence only when it is too late. The message was: "Get help, you don't have to do this alone". Another example referred to was Blátt Áfram, a child sexual abuse prevention organization connected to US charity Darkness to Light. They have courses for people to get more tools for awareness of child abuse, using a bystander approach. Lastly we were referred to Stígamót's successful campaign against abusive relationships, Sjúkást, that also took a Youtube series approach.

Other helpful information on responses shared with us included that City Council Representative, Heiða

Björg Hilmisdóttir, is organizing a conference about prostitution in February.

Additionally we were told that the Red Cross seems to be starting something in regards to human trafficking, but were supposed to start a hotline in 2017, and it was unclear what was currently happening with that now. Furthermore Ragna told us that Bjarkarhlíð is waiting for an Action Plan against Violence from the Ministry of Welfare, and that they will be a part of this plan.

Recommendations:

As far as recommendations for an anti-human trafficking campaign, Ragna encouraged us to consider how get people on board in the fight against violence. She gave her suggestions on both audience, delivery, and location.

Often she said the concern is that this fight is often stereotyped as a women's fight, but that we really need everyone involved to combat trafficking and other forms of violence. We need to encourage men to step up as well. Especially because men's attitudes towards prostitution can decrease the demand for it altogether.

As far as the delivery, she recommended social media, explaining that having some brochures is good for a campaign, but generally people today receive information through their phones and an online source may receive better, especially through videos.

We were also advised to be in contact with the ER at the hospital in Fossvogur where both the Rape Crisis Unit and Domestic Violence unit is located, and that it would be an ideal

place to provide some information about trafficking. Similarly information may also be useful to airline staff and in airports in general.

KRISTJANA FENGER

HANNA RUTH ÓLAFSDÓTTIR

SANDRA BJÖRK BIRGISDÓTTIR

Kristjana works at the Red Cross in the Assistance and Humanitarian division and is a Lawyer that specializes in Asylum seeker cases.

Hanna and Sandra both work at the Red Cross in the domestic division and are project coordinators working on the Red Cross helpline in Iceland.

Developing the Hotline:

Kristjana, Hanna, and Sandra from the Red Cross spoke with us about new developments in their national helpline to aid those victimized by human trafficking. They informed us that in 2015 the Red Cross had an international conference and collectively pledged that they would make an effort to combat human trafficking.

While this is good news, they further explained that there was no infrastructure set up to meet this goal in Iceland's headquarters. There really was no single Red Cross officer overseeing anti-trafficking efforts, and instead the work fell into different departments and they have been doing their best to address the issue collaboratively.

Their current goal is to advertise the current, general hotline and develop anti-trafficking trainings for their hotline volunteers, an estimated 90 to 100 people, in addition to their staff. The hotline is available as both a 24

toll-free number, and an online chat. Currently their hotline has a broad scope, not specific to a certain type of problem, but the hotline volunteers and staff do receive required specialized trainings, in issues such as suicide and child abuse for example, through seminars and online courses.

They hope to add some seminars this January specific to human trafficking. They have been working with Polaris, a U.S. nonprofit organization operating the U.S. national human trafficking hotline, to develop this. Some Red Cross officers have also been to seminars on trafficking that have helped with the development as well. In the seminars themselves, guests are also invited to assist on topics they specialize in, such as representatives from the domestic violence shelter. We also chatted about the possibility of some of our team members from Stop the Traffik adding our insight to some of these seminars come January.

Challenges and Recommendations:

Kristjana, Hanna, and Sandra also discussed with us some obstacles they have faced with properly assisting those who come to them, and some of their proposed solutions.

When it came to aiding trafficking survivors of foreign origin, they referred us to the work conducted at the Rósa Project, located in Oslo Norway. This non-profit works to aid sex trafficking survivors by giving them a safe space and support in order to reflect on their circumstances before diving into a police investigation. During this time the Rósa project would also help with career oriented classes to help with rehabilitation and provide them job skills to prevent re-entry into trafficking. At the end of this reflection period, the survivor has had some time to process and decide what they would like to do for their next steps such as if they want to return to their home country or press charges against their trafficker.

They then explained to us their concerns that Iceland does not have a restorative period such as this, and that short-term visas granted for trafficking survivors of foreign origin do not allow for such a reflection period the way they are currently used, but instead are typically for the purpose of enabling further cooperation with police. Even then, they are rarely granted. Rather, if the visa's criteria took a more

victim-centered approach, the victim would not only benefit personally but the quality of the information for cases may also improve. The idea is that the victim may not only provide clearer information for cases after being granted the time to recollect and process the often traumatizing details, but also, trust is built. Trust takes time to develop, and without it, cooperation with authorities can be extremely challenging.

Another issue we discussed was a lack of a men's shelter. When a man comes to the red cross with an issue, they have to contact the Ministry of Welfare which is only open during limited business hours, to relocate them to an apartment. The women's shelter has staff available around the clock, available not only to accept women in need of help into the shelter, but also to support them during their stay. There is room for improvement in men's cases.

Referring asylum seekers to aid becomes even more complicated. When the Red Cross receives asylum seeker complaints they are then referred to the asylum system, which they explained to us was not exactly an exact fit. Many asylum seekers have no knowledge of navigating the system themselves, and are often battling PTSD as well, making it even more difficult to get the care that they need. Due to the limited capacity of assistance, and no perfect fit to refer them to, warning signs of trafficking or other signs of distress can become lost. The municipalities can assist those who

have kennitala, but for non-residents there is no money or capacity for such assistance. Immigrations screenings are in place to look for warning signs, but are perhaps inconsistent, and the Red Cross does not have access to the results afterwards.

We also discussed confidentiality laws in Iceland as well. Even if there are signs of trafficking, there still needs to be victim consent to contact the police. They told us that hospitals are having cases where people seem to have been abused, and are sometimes accompanied by someone in the hospital that seems to possibly be involved, but they have no legal ability to refer it to the police.

The Red Cross does however have a contact they call in cases of recent violence, Hrönn Stefánsdóttir, a nurse working full time as a Project Manager at the Rape Crisis Center at Landspítali University Hospital and part time at the hospital's Emergency Department, who has been advocating against this and trying to develop a sexual violence protocol. In these cases Hrönn has encouraged them to always call her if the victim has reached out, and that she can help them at the hospital to build a case with medical records. If the violence is not as recent, the Red Cross then refers them to Bjarkarhlíð. However, it is difficult to perform risk

assessments such as ones provided by organizations like Polaris, then not be able to take action once you discover someone may be in danger.

Many of these issues stem from perhaps their largest concern that they shared with us, the absence of a formalized National Referral Mechanism. In other words, if the Red Cross comes across a potential trafficking victim they can do their best with the connections they have, but nowhere is there a clearly defined procedure for their role, or the role of any other institution in handling that emergency.

Other issues we discussed were about proactive outreach. Perhaps, labor trafficking is being addressed more recently, but we discussed sex trafficking as having been largely left behind. There needs to be more initiative to find those being trafficked to bring them to services, rather than services waiting idly for victims to seek them out. Ideally the hotline in the future would be advertised to be available for trafficking aid.

Lastly, they were concerned by the apparent lack of interest from the Minister of Justice in this field. There is a real need for both action and coordination in order to combat human trafficking adequately.

DRÍFA SNÆDAL

ASÍ (SGS at time of interview)

Drífa Snædal is the newly elected president of the Confederation of Icelandic Labor Unions (ASÍ). She has served as the Managing Director of the Women's Shelter, and was also the Managing Director of the Federation of General and Special Workers in Iceland (SGS) from 2012. She has encountered numerous cases of trafficking throughout her career, both at the Women's shelter and at the Labor Unions and is a passionate advocate in tackling the issue.

MARÍA LÓA FRIÐJÓNSDÓTTIR

ASÍ

María is a specialist in workplace inspection at the Confederation of Icelandic Labor Unions (ASÍ).

Demographics:

The victims of labor trafficking in their cases are never Icelanders, Drífa and María explained, however there are cases of wages being stolen from Icelanders. There used to be lots of recruitment taking place in Poland, Drífa described sometimes there were recruitment offices in the airports seeking labor for Iceland, though it seems Polish people collectively are becoming more networked in Iceland and much more aware of their rights. Now, recruitment is taking place more in Eastern Europe and trafficking victims are increasingly more often of Romanian, Slovenian, or Albanian descent. Drífa and María also discussed exploitation of the asylum seeker community in Iceland, and the issue with many of them wishing to find legal work but denied the permits to do so.

Sometimes within labor trafficking cases there are adequate paper trails of contracts and payslips, but there may be other illegal, undocumented debt imposed on the victims, such as costs for being brought to the country, which can make cases challenging to prove without records to build a case.

However while debt entrapment is occurring as a form of coercion, this is not the typical case. More frequently, labor trafficking victims are just blatantly lied to about their rights or wages. Drífa stated that these cases are occurring within blue-collar work noting specific industries in particular such as restaurants, hostels/hotels, tourism, and construction. However forced begging was also mentioned in the interview as a manifestation of

trafficking, which is a new form of trafficking that we have yet to hear of occurring in Iceland.

Furthermore, there has been plenty of exploitation in volunteer work as well and the unions also handle these cases. Volunteering is illegal when the work is producing goods and services. A pattern they are currently seeing is when foreign women, typically one or two, are offered to stay in a hotel (often in the countryside) in exchange for work but instead when they arrive they are deceived into running the hotel themselves, sometimes 16–24 hours a day. This is deceptively explained to them as volunteer work in exchange for their accommodation.

Another issue we touched on was how intertwined sex trafficking and labor trafficking can be. Many times exploitative labor can develop into or from an abusive relationship. False relationships have also been used by traffickers to hide exploitation; such as claiming a person is a significant other who is simply helping out, but is not actually a paid employee.

Social Dumping Phenomenon:

Drífa and Maria also brought to our attention the harmful attitudes that mitigate the volunteer exploitation and general social dumping occurring in Iceland today. These included employer sentiments such as “Who am I to deny volunteers to work?” and “foreigners are grateful for any type of work”. These

attitudes can also inhibit victims coming forward themselves, as many who are exploited come from places where conditions are not favorable either, and therefore there is the attitude that they will not cause any trouble over the mistreatment because they do not foresee better options.

These ideals were explained to us as part of a larger “social dumping” trend being observed in Iceland. We were told the topic was being covered by a RÚV documentary in which María is accompanying the film crew to see where suspicious trucks are taking asylum seekers in Iceland. The show featured in the Fall 2018, but before the release a decision was made to extend the number of original episodes, because it was a much larger issue than the crew originally had thought. We were told future episodes would include volunteer exploitation as well.

Intervention:

At SGS they are working to educate inspectors to know the signs of trafficking as inspectors are often what she called “the first responders”. Typically, inspections are done at random and information is distributed. The informed victim will then come seeking help at the union the following day. People do not really say much on the spot it seems, but they do seem to come forward themselves after an initial intervention.

Once a case starts, the unions seek out claims for wages and the police handle the rest (*They added that SGS is actively working to build a better relationship with the police*). The SGS inspectors are trained using handbooks that teach them the signs and correct questions to ask during inspections. Inspectors also provide workers with pamphlets available in multiple languages including Icelandic, English, Polish. Currently other eastern European languages are also being developed for these materials.

Moreover, SGS also held a conference to educate healthcare and frontline workers with members of the police and Reykjavík municipality

Recommendations:

SGS continues to lobby for changes in forthcoming years. These changes were outlined in a copy of a “Call to Action” letter Drífa gave us from November of 2017 that she and her colleges in SGS, the Police department, and Department of Welfare arranged for the legislative and executive powers in Iceland.

One of the proposed changes is for a national coordinator and/or team that could add some structure to the loosely defined lines of responsibility and generally lacking overview within the field. An action plan is another essential, but so is the accommodation of adequate funding to implement it properly. A funding increase was also

recommended for law enforcement in order for trafficking cases to be more efficiently investigated as they are both time consuming and cover a wide scope. Legislative changes discussed included the lifting of anonymity in prostitution cases, and implementation of the EU directive’s new forms of exploitation into the Icelandic Penal Code.

The letter also spoke of a need for a closer surveillance of the labour market and some coordination concerns. Currently surveillance is shared across several agencies and organizations who have varying levels of capability and data collection methods. The lack of communication between these agencies and organizations was written to allow for ineffectual and arbitrary surveillance, and one concern in particular was noted in this proposal about the impossibility of monitoring worker accommodations arranged by employers. This was noted as a real cause to “increase, tighten and bolster surveillance of the labour market, give greater powers, and coordinate and harmonise action.”

Drífa further explained to us that the SGS does not have equal coordination with the unions in her federation and that each union has different ways of doing things. This can then allow for variations in trainings and investigations that could be better coordinated as well.

Other concerns we discussed included the formal human trafficking group not meeting in two years due to

inaction from the Minister of Justice.
There is very poor overall awareness, so
there is a real need for people to

understand that human trafficking is
happening here in Iceland.

ANNA MARJANKOWSKA

Anna has a background in Critical Theory and Culture Management, a representative of foreign workers as a board member of Effling, and a proud member of Iceland's Polish community. She also does extensive work at Andrými, a volunteer-run community centre, and is a dedicated activist for the working class.

Challenging Victim-Blaming:

In Anna's work to protect and empower workers in Iceland, she has seen first hand how deeply a toxic work environment can affect a person. When an employer exploits an employee, the result is more than just an unfair transaction but an abusive relationship. There is plenty of the public backlash in Iceland today against workers claiming to have experienced some form of exploitation including criticisms such as, "If you didn't like your job, why didn't you find a new one?". Statements such as these victim-blame workers for their employer's crimes. Anna offered us an example demonstrating factors that rushed judgments such as these fail to consider.

This example was from an experience she had assisting a worker report a case from a farm in Snæfellsbær involving 5 workers. The farm was family owned by a father in his 80s and his daughter, approximately in her 50s, managed the workers. The farm was isolated so that all information about work and rights went through the family to the workers, and without Icelandic knowledge, it was difficult to question or discuss the terms of work. The older

man and his wife were said to pretend as if they did not understand any English, and were also frequently in conflict with the daughter. With the social isolation and language barriers, the workers were then swept into these family matters frequently.

On one hand, Anna explained, the workers sort of felt as if they had become part of this family by being included in some family matters, and on some level this seemed like a good thing to have a sense of community away from home. On the other hand, the lines between employer and employee became blurred, and the employers repeatedly exploited this ambiguity as it suited them. This resulted in the employees not having decisions on the farm even in any of the matters that affected them - as this was a decision for an employer, yet they were dually expected to share their farm's problems - as they were a part of the family.

For example, when family members were in conflict, the daughter would often pressure the workers to make-up the extra hours lost as a result of the family members spending their time arguing instead of doing their own work. Sometimes during these family conflicts, the daughter would lash out

and enforce strict rules that sometimes violated labor laws. In one instance the daughter decided to not pay a worker full-salary because he had been “listening to music while he worked”.

Anna tried to explain how difficult it was to get help for one worker from the Snæfellsbær farm, because over two years of developing this complicated, abusive employee/employer relationship the worker was concerned for the well-being of his employer over his own. Anna seemed to remember this particular worker fondly, but recalled similarities in the case to Stockholm Syndrome as she emphasized his reluctance to leave the abusive situation. He was afraid the elderly man would be overworked and die were it not for him picking up the rest of the work, even if he was not being paid or accommodated properly. Anna described a sort of good cop and bad cop situation that developed between the family members that was then directed towards the workers. The daughter that managed them would be strict and unfair, then her father would be kind and convince the workers that they were truly the only ones that cared for him and he would be at a loss without them.

Yet regardless of the true feelings between everyone involved, it is undeniable that the family was profiting off the labor of their workers at their worker’s expense who worked full time every day of the month, with

the exception of only 2 days off, for 180,000 kr. in total.

Anna argued that it was a combination of isolation and psychological factors that kept these workers from “just leaving to find other work”. She even said that one of the workers did try to leave and find another job in Reykjavík but ended up returning to the abusive situation at the farm because they could not find a quick alternative and the unfamiliarity of navigating a foreign job market was overwhelming. To truly understand the abundance of labor exploitation in Iceland, you really need to thoroughly consider the worker’s experience.

A Worker’s Perspective:

Anna tried to explain further these perspectives of the workers, particularly the immigrant workers that these exploitation cases predominantly affect. One issue she brought up was the differences in work-culture, providing an example from her home in Poland. “In Poland you are what your occupation is”, Anna explained. She further explained that in her work-culture, that your work is a sense of pride in yourself and can be very personal. Anna then gave the example that if a supervisor were to tell a Polish woman that something of hers is untidy, she may take it very personally, as if to interpret it as saying *she* is untidy.

Anna described Polish work-culture as having a strong work

ethic. When some Polish workers then come to Iceland and are treated unfairly by their employers, going and simply reporting the issue becomes complicated when their resilience and quality of work is a part of their sense of self. Certainly this can be said of many different people, not only the Polish, but reporting unjust conditions can be extremely challenging and take a personal toll.

By reporting, you could be accused of complaining because you are “lazy”, or you are simply “weak” from not being able to handle the work. You may even fear isolation by your coworkers for introducing tension to the workplace or mistreated or fired by your employer. Reporting injustices in the workplace is a complicated issue, and then when you add wage comparisons it only becomes more complicated.

“It is easy to compare payments between countries”, says Anna. She continued to say that when you make more here than you do at home, and you have family depending on you back in your own country, the work and accommodation not being favorable is not the priority. When people are making more than they make at home anyway, sometimes it is difficult to persuade them that they are entitled to more.

This phenomenon is often referred to as social dumping, in that employers are exploiting underprivileged workers for cheap labor. When you have left your home for the sole purpose of a job, and challenging

your employer seems to only lead to tension in the workplace or losing the job all together, you are right back to where you started, trying to find work. This is exactly why social dumping continues, and workers cannot just simply put their foot down and wait for something better to come along. Immigrant workers unfortunately do not often have the luxury to just wait in limbo without assured financial security.

Anna also elaborated on what she called a bubble of information. Immigrant workers talk to other immigrant workers. The language barrier in Iceland is not only limiting in labor, but also limiting who you interact with day to day. In the service industry in cities: construction, restaurants, hotels, housekeeping, and other blue collar jobs are often occupied by other immigrants. Also, if you work in farming or in a hotel in the countryside, you may be working with immigrants in an even more isolated environment. Immigrants then network with each other about information, so if information about rights is limited within that network, you could go a very long time without correct information getting into that bubble.

Then Anna also added on how she has seen when sometimes workers are working too many hours to have time to stop and think about these things; she referred to a recent case with some construction workers from Romania

that were kept so busy that there just was no time to question it.

Anna also spoke of another challenge of labor exploitation in Iceland, and that is the idea of Iceland as a Utopia. Sometimes foreign workers will hear of Iceland as a progressive country in human rights and that, combined with the higher wages, can mislead workers to believe they need not be careful of scams. Anna talked about how people can be trusting when they come to these jobs, and it simply is not in many people's nature to automatically be suspicious. And so people are taken advantage of because they trust that they do not really need a contract and take their employers word on regulations and wages without investigating it further themselves.

However, she says awareness is growing in Poland. She noted especially parents of young girls being concerned of the risks and that cautioning abroad scams, particularly for lone girls, are becoming a common household conversation. However, recruiters can still be convincing, and many people of different nationalities still come to Iceland with similar ideas of trust.

Anna shared some other stories such as trends in work and accommodation deals that were often corrupted. For example a full time maid being paid 160,000 a month then charged 100,000 for a room in the hotel which would leave the maid virtually nothing to live on or send home. She also described cases of 8 to 12 people

sharing a room, and they would be charged ridiculous amounts just to have a bed. These situations develop into not working to live, but living to work, Anna explained. Breaking out of these circumstances is complex, and Anna is working diligently with Efling to effect change and give the working class in Iceland the treatment they deserve.

Taking Action:

Once a claim for wages is made, the company has 10 days to pay or negotiate a claim with unions. If they do not do this, a lawyer takes the case and it can take a month to six weeks to investigate depending on the lawyers and the parties' circumstances involved. Then the case is in progress, which could take a year or more as lawyers from the companies and unions exchange information and possibly involve the court.

Anna explained how it can sometimes be difficult to build cases without any records, and actively encourages workers to keep track of their own. For instance, a workers diary (written or typed hours by the worker alone) is valid in court, it does not have to be official documents from the employer. In your case you can also include emails and social media conversations as records. So for example, if you had a verbal conversation with your employer, you can later send them a message to clarify the agreements in writing such as

saying “according to our last conversation” for example, to have some record.

Anna also wants workers to know that the unions are indeed there for the workers, and that they have to represent you as 0.7% of everyone's salary goes to the unions for their services. It seems to be a common misconception that if you are paid off the record (commonly known in Iceland as being paid in “black”), you still have the same rights as any other worker in Iceland. Being paid black is illegal, but only on the part of the employer. She also mentioned that workers do not need to go to their specific union for help, and if they do not know which union they are in, they can just go to any union, or the union umbrella organization Alþýðusamband (ASÍ), and talk to them about their concerns.

Anna has also been part of the effort to reach out to workers too. As a member of Andrými, a volunteer-run community center that aims to provide a space for grassroots and non-governmental organizations to organize and host events to support intersectionality and combat oppression, she has taken part both there and through her work in Efling in trying to organize and empower workers in Iceland.

She also talked to us about how she is part of a collaboration in making a “black list” of companies and

employers that have a history of labor abuses. She explained how often it is too easy for a company to fall into a scandal, then simply change their kennitala and name and move on as if nothing happened. She hopes the black list will help warn workers of scams.

Anna also advocates the importance of a “trúnaðarmaður”, or a representative of the union, within companies. Every company over 6 people, Anna told us, is legally required to have this person that workers can go to, to inquire about their rights. Anna is this representative at her work in her part-time job, and therefore is able to represent her fellow co-workers and combat the “bubble information” effect that foreign workers often find themselves in.

Today in Iceland, unions are pushing for workers' rights and are demanding an increase from the minimum wage to a living wage, and Anna's work to organize and empower workers through awareness efforts is a fundamental component in this ongoing workers' rights movement in Iceland. Additionally, Anna's insight on the factors that affect the daily lives of immigrants, as well as the obstacles they face in securing ethical and safe labor and assistance as they need it, are all components that we believe need to be thoroughly considered when developing effective anti-trafficking work in the future.

Eva Dís Þórðardóttir

Eva is an Icelander who worked as a sex worker in Denmark roughly 15 years ago. Since then she has advocated for a change in Iceland regarding toxic societal attitudes towards sex work and better protections for both sex workers and human trafficking victims.

Eva does not personally identify as a human trafficking survivor. However, her story gives invaluable insight into how an Icelandic woman can enter the sex industry, and what it is like to live this way.

Eva's experience with sex work took place in Denmark, however she was recruited within Iceland. Yet many elements of the prostitution world are trans-national, and have enabled her to speak out about similar circumstances in Iceland. When she first shared her story, she was contacted by women in Iceland with similar experiences, and she has tried to give them a voice in the public sphere. She states that perhaps, had her experiences taken place in Iceland rather than Denmark, that she would not be comfortable coming out with her story in the way she has. She noted the difficulties of Iceland being a small country, and that women here do not always have the security of having enough distance from their clients and/or trafficker(s).

With Eva's interview, we hoped to get some recommendations on what can be done to create better help for people in such circumstances, including insight on what would make an awareness campaign effective.

Societal Shifts:

One of the points Eva stressed the most was that there needs to be a societal shift in how we look at the sex industry, and the real damage it does every time someone pays for sex. She quoted the book "Space" by Rachel Moran, explaining that only when sex work can be an option at a job fair, could we call it a profession. She assured us that this is not something you would get involved in if you were not desperate, as prostitution is one of

the most life-threatening "professions" out there, if it can be considered as such, with higher death rates than police officers and firemen. "The truth is that you are putting yourself in danger", she explained.

In the media we sometimes see sex workers who are portrayed as having total agency and who sincerely enjoy their work. They are not shown as having any underlying issues forcing them into the work, and although they had other options they preferred their choice.

Eva addressed this within her own context by explaining that of course you have to tell yourself that you love it, and it is the job for you, because this is how you will survive it. We would like to further her point by emphasizing that the nature of trauma is something that has to be considered in these topics. Disassociation is a common symptom of trauma. Especially in cases where a victim undergoes a prolonged period of being threatened and forced into a survival mode, a victim's brain may rely on disassociation in order to push forward. This is why it can often take years to heal from trauma disorders.

When we chatted about this, Eva shared that she now reflects much differently on her experience than she did at the time, which is a common phenomenon of people who have had such experiences. With this in mind, it is easy to understand how challenging trauma misconceptions are to sex workers and trafficking survivors seeking help.

Eva discussed that in Iceland's Welfare State, there is a centric belief that everyone should have equal access to healthcare, education, and opportunity. On the surface then, it may look like prostitution in Iceland is a choice. Yet this generalization does not factor in the individuals who are falling through the cracks of the welfare system. Foreigners are affected for various reasons, but Eva has also advocated that Icelanders are also affected, such as in cases of financial

strain due to rising inequality and also by those with other struggles such as drug addiction.

Eva told us that drug use has been an existing issue in Iceland for decades now, and that those with substance dependencies often engage in sex work (although they may not identify it as such at the time) as currency to support their addiction. Despite being recognized by the World Health Organization as a disease, it is still controversial for many to consider addiction as anything other than a choice. This can be a major challenge for those whose substance-related vulnerability was exploited, to seek help.

Eva wishes that Icelandic society would grow to accept that the prostitution world has undeniable intersections with vulnerability and exploitation, and hopes that people will come to realize that they are doing real harm when they pay for sex - both to the victim and to themselves. There is an aftermath to the commodification of sex and intimacy that is not always in plain sight. In her experience, Eva told us she did not believe her clients came to her just for sex, and that it was often something much more than that. She suspected there was something missing in her clients' lives that they would be trying to compensate for when buying prostitution. Without trying to define a "normal" person or behavior, she explained that clients sometimes wanted to feel control over their lives, or seemed to show an emotional disconnect.

Targeting the Demand:

She expressed similar concerns when speaking about Icelandic men, whom she recalled the police stating as the primary clients of sex trafficking in Iceland at a conference she had attended on the matter. Buying sex in Iceland is so much more expensive than buying sex in the other Nordic countries, she explicated, and that is why it is not a popular sex tourism destination and the majority of the client base is Icelandic.

Additionally she noted that there is a lot of pressure for sex from peers that influence men into paying for sex. Eva hopes in the future to see the peer pressure go in the other direction, and that instead of the buying of a prostitute being something to brag about, it would rather be “so shameful that you wouldn't even be able to tell your friends about it.” A cultural attitude in how we view masculinity, gender roles, sex, and intimacy will need to be addressed for change. As Eva stressed, it is the

demand for sex that enables sex crimes, so this is why it is essential that we target the clients if we want to make change in this industry.

Lastly, Iceland's legislation on prostitution is set up in a victim-centered approach that allows traffickers and clients to be arrested and charged for a crime but not the sex worker. This is based on the Swedish model. However, Eva pointed out that while clients are arrested, they get protection in the media as it is illegal to name those who are being charged for purchasing sex because of a closed court policy. Eva explained that revealing the identities of these offenders publicly would likely create stronger incentives for the offenders not to re-offend, and create a higher risk to deter first-time offenders. Removing offender anonymity in these prostitution cases therefore could significantly alter the culture and shift public attention towards the true source of the industry.

Andrés Ingi Jónsson

Member of Parliament

Andrés is an MP for the Left-Green Party (Vinstri-Grænn) since 2016 and has been advocating for increased attention to Human trafficking in Iceland during his time in the Parliament.

While Stop The Traffik does not support any one political party, and we are more than willing to support anyone across party lines working to combat human trafficking, we were referred to Andrés in particular this past year. His Left-Green Party in the past has supported the ban of prostitution and stripping and supported the Swedish model currently adopted in Icelandic legislation today. The Left-Green Party has a number of policies on human trafficking and social dumping, but as an individual Andrés in particular has supported the cause of increasing anti-trafficking efforts and we were recommended to meet with him by other interviewees. When we did, we had a discussion about the issue, but he also referenced us to quite a bit of material, some of which we're going to include first for some context.

REFERENCES:

--- *THE ACTION PLAN* ---

Immediately Andrés started with saying that human trafficking needs to be prioritized as state issue, but there is a lack of budget allocated to approach the issue currently. As we commonly hear about an Action Plan to address Trafficking in Iceland, even if a new one is made, adequate funding needs to accommodate it in order for it to have any real effect. At the time of this interview there was still no draft of an

Action Plan ready³, and Andrés has written multiple questions to Ministries inquiring how the work on an action plan was proceeding.

In December 21st 2016 he wrote a question to the Minister of Interior. Then, as a new minister came into office in January 2017, he reintroduced the same question to the Minister of Justice on 24th of January 2017. Ministries have 15 working days to respond to

³ The Ministry of Justice published Government's Action on Anti-Trafficking and Other Forms of Exploitation in March of 2018 <https://www.stjornarradid.is/lisalib/getfile.aspx?itemid=08996e0a-5237-11e9-9439-005056bc4d74>

questions. Yet Andrés pointed out to us that his question was not answered until

months later on the 5th of April. That response is below.

1. What plans are there for the continuation of the Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings but the plan for the years 2013–2016 expired at the turn of the year?

Work on the preparation of a new action plan will begin in mid-2017.

2. What procedures are in force regarding the treatment of human trafficking in the judicial system?

According to information from the Court of Justice, cases that hold prosecution authorities are subject to criminal law according to treatment according to the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Act, cf. Article 1 Act no. [88/2008](#) . No specific procedures have been set regarding the handling of human trafficking within the judicial system. Trafficking is a prosecution based on the provisions of the Criminal Code and is governed by the above-mentioned comparable treatment and other criminal cases.

3. How was the training of police officers, prosecutors and courts dealt with trafficking in human beings during the period of validity of the said program, and in which office did the employees receive training? 4. How many police, prosecution and judicial staff attended a briefing in connection with the action plan? Answer requested itemized by office.

No detailed information is available on how many police, prosecution and judicial staff have attended educational meetings in the context of an anti-trafficking action plan and how they are exchanged by officials.

Steering Committee on the Implementation of the Action Plan formed an educational team consisting of representatives of the following offices: the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Welfare, the Metropolitan Area Police, the Suðurnes Police, the Professional Union of Iceland, and the City of Human Rights Office.

In the spring of 2014, it was decided to start with an attempt at regional education. Called together those professionals who, in one way or another, could

possibly get in touch with the victims of human trafficking; police, health institutions, social services and trade unions / unions. The reason for calling this party together was primarily to bring together and strengthen the networks of these parties by geographical area. The first meeting was held in Selfoss in May 2014 and it was so successful that it was decided to continue with the education.

There have been around 70 meetings with over 2,000 people from various organizations and NGOs. Education has also been provided for companies that have requested it. Snorri Birgisson, a police officer at the capital city area, has led the education along with Alda Hrönn Jóhannsdóttir, chief lawyer at the same office, and Edda Ólafsdóttir, social worker at the city of Reykjavík. In the education, the main characteristics of human trafficking are reviewed, emphasis is placed on different manifestations and, where appropriate, the remedies available to victims.

According to the Court's information, the Council has not provided special education on human trafficking. The Judicial Council is not aware of whether any individual district court judges applied for such instruction outside the courts.

5. *How much money was spent on projects related to trafficking in accordance with the action plan? A response is requested broken down by years and tasks where, among other things, how much was spent on education.*

In 2015, the Ministry of the Interior was estimated to be ISK 10 million. kr. for projects related to human trafficking. Of this amount, ISK 4 million was kr. allocated to full-time equivalent positions in 2015 due to human trafficking. In 2016, the Ministry had about 6 million. kr. at disposal for human trafficking, and these funds were spent on full-time positions in the field, partly to follow up the implementation of an action plan against human trafficking and international relations in this area. International relations have included holding the Presidency of the Baltic Working Group on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in parallel with Iceland's Presidency of the Baltic Sea Council in 2016–2017. This forum has been used, among other things, to bring together domestic and foreign experts.

The Ministry of Welfare has compiled the amounts devoted to projects in the Ministry's spheres of affairs for human trafficking. It should be noted that it cannot be asserted that complete information is involved, but that victims of trafficking in

human beings may receive assistance from social services and / or health services without the issue being recorded as trafficking in human beings. The cost of healthcare at the Capital Region Health Care is not included in these figures, as the Ministry of Welfare has not received information from them. However, it is known that several survivors have benefited from maternity and infant care under the auspices of the Health Care Center.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	All
Agreement with Kristínarhús, a refuge for women on the path of prostitution or trafficking	25,000,000				25,000,000
Contract with Women's Shelter		2000000	200,000	200,000	2400000
Financial assistance to victims	2498711	1519510	1316981	58478	5393680
Travel expenses of victims				193986	193986
Health Service (LSH)	3801664	2820480	1158311	2108856	9889311
Education for employees and foreign co-operation		45241		431415	476656

Year Totals:	31300375	6385231	2675292	2992735	
				All Totals:	43353633

6. Does the Minister consider that it is possible to have sufficient resources to remove the victims of human trafficking from such situations, such as by ensuring that they are able to support themselves by pursuing employment while they are being treated in the judicial system?

The Ministry of Welfare is responsible for ensuring physical, social and psychological assistance to victims of human trafficking, irrespective of whether the person is allowed to stay in Iceland or not. In response to this point the inquiry was consulted with the Ministry of Welfare and received the following information:

Municipal social services have provided extensive services to victims of human trafficking. It is not possible to assess whether the remedies are suited to bringing the victims out of the circumstances, but the aid should be assessed on the basis of the victims' premises with the objectives of the Municipal Social Services Act, no. [40/1991](#) , as a guideline.

The aim is to ensure financial and social security and to promote the welfare of residents on the basis of co-operation, as stated in Article 1. Act. This should be done, among other things, by improving the living conditions of those who are at a disadvantage and taking action to prevent social problems. In carrying out the social services, care should be taken to encourage the individual to take responsibility for himself and for others, respect his self-determination and strengthen him for self-help. The aim of this is guided by the fact that the person may not be domiciled in Iceland.

All the victims of human trafficking are loyal support. Those who have registered legal domicile in Iceland are assisted on the basis of the municipality's rules on financial assistance. Victims of human trafficking who are not domiciled domestically in Iceland enjoy financial support on the basis of rules on municipal financial assistance, in special cases, with foreign nationals, outside the EEA, who

are not domiciled in Iceland, no. 203/2016, which is issued on the basis of Article 15. of the Local Government Social Services Act. They are also guaranteed health services, cf. regulation on health care services for those who are not covered by health insurance under the Health Insurance Act and their payments for the health service no. 50/2017.

Those who receive a permit for a residence permit for human trafficking are not permitted to work in Iceland, ie. it is not possible to obtain a work permit in parallel with such a residence permit. This practice is in accordance with the legislation of neighboring countries in Iceland, where a work permit is not granted to the victims of trafficking in the country on the basis of a permit to leave while their case is being investigated. It cannot be asserted that a work permit for victims of human trafficking is a prerequisite for bringing the victims out of human trafficking situations. Social support and empowerment are crucial, not least social activity alongside social counseling.

Nor can it be said that the granting of a work permit for traffickers cannot increase the risk of cross-border trafficking.

7. *How does the Minister consider that the treatment of two women who had the status of victims in the alleged trafficking in human beings in Vík in Mýrdalur has harmonized the action plan against trafficking in human beings?*

The Minister does not answer questions on individual cases. However, it is clear that there has been considerable awareness raising in this area recently, and the police in the capital area have, for example, placed special emphasis on human trafficking and prostitution with changes in its research department. Police research into the human trafficking that has occurred in Iceland has therefore been very extensive. The police have also participated purposefully in collaboration with trade unions, labor inspectorates and the tax on workplace inspections and surveillance. The police system was also modified to better manage the trafficking of human trafficking that comes to the police.

The welfare ministry's executive team has also been activated, but it provides assistance to victims.

It should be noted that it was originally stated within this response that revising the Action plan was to start in mid-2017, but with still no draft

a whole year later, the Ministry of Justice reiterated on their website in July of 2018 that work on the action plan was now a priority and a draft was promised that Fall. We met Andrés in the fall, and to the best of our knowledge, there is still nothing new to report on this revision

--- VICTIM SUPPORT ---

Andrés also has posed questions to Ministries concerning the mechanisms for human trafficking victim support on

March 8th of 2017. Below are the questions and responses from the Ministry of Justice.

1. Does the Minister consider there is reason to change the law so that a residence permit given to victims of human trafficking can enable them to pursue employment in Iceland, if they so choose?

In the opinion of the Directorate of Immigration, the Ministry of Justice and the Minister, this point of the inquiry should be directed to the Minister of Social Affairs and Gender Equality and his ministry responsible for the service of victims of human trafficking. Foreigners' law on employment rights is also subject to the Minister of Social Affairs and Gender Equality.

2. The Minister considers that with the activities of the Directorate of Immigration in Hafnarfjörður there is an adequate reception system for applicants for international protection as provided for in Article 27. Act no. [80/2016](#) , about foreigners?

The Directorate of Immigration operates at Bæjarhraun in Hafnarfjörður, on the one hand, an office for employees of the reception, service, priority and Dublin teams, but in addition, the staff of the Department of the National Commissioner of Police and now the police in the capital area and the Suðurnes work in the same building. However, there is accommodation available for applicants for international

protection which is used as the first reception. The Directorate of Immigration operates more residential facilities for applicants, such as at Arnarholt, Víðines and elsewhere, but applicants are also stored by municipalities on the basis of service agreements.

The reception measure in Bæjarhraun was established in connection with the increase in the number of applicants for protection in the fall of 2015 and was not considered a permanent remedy. In the opinion of the Directorate of Immigration, the receiving remedy in Bæjarhraun is not satisfactory, it can only host 35-45 individuals at any given time, cannot adequately address certain groups of individuals in a vulnerable position, such as unaccompanied children and victims of human trafficking, or certain family combinations, such as singular women who have semi-mature boys or single fathers with young children or teenage girls. Other temporary measures have been needed for these individuals, for example through the placement of unaccompanied children in foster families. The receiving remedy in Bæjarhraun is not large enough and does not handle a diverse group of applicants for protection as a reception center needs to do.

It is the intention of the Directorate of Immigration to use a reception center that meets the needs stated here and can host many more individuals than Bæjarhraunið does today. It should be emphasized that the overall reception system needs to be flexible and able to both expand and contract as needed. Last fall experience shows that a sharp increase can affect the services and housing that needs to be available.

The Minister agrees with the Directorate of Immigration with regard to the need for an acceptable reception center to be used, which meets the various needs of asylum seekers at any given time. The implementation of a reception center in Iceland is under constant review with respect to budgetary resources at any given time.

3. *Are there plans to operate more than one reception center for applicants for international protection?*

According to a draft regulation on foreigners, two types of remedies may be operated, on the one hand, a reception center under the auspices of the Directorate

of Immigration and, on the other hand, residential remedies under the auspices of the municipalities. The Agency considers this a good arrangement. In the opinion of the Directorate of Immigration, it is important that a concurrent reception center be provided with special remedies for unaccompanied children, mentally ill persons and individuals who cannot be saved in other remedies for accessibility problems, but these groups need different and more specific services than are provided in the reception center.

4. What special resources are available to victims of human trafficking, cf. Article 27 the law on foreigners?

Article 27 the Act does not provide for special remedies for victims of human trafficking. Article 27 provides for: According to the Act, a reception center should, where appropriate, be open to victims of human trafficking and foreigners in need. Agreements have not been concluded with the Directorate of Immigration on services to victims of trafficking in human beings; of the Act and in the draft Regulation on Foreigners (Article 24).

The Ministry of Welfare handles services for victims of human trafficking and therefore directs to a member of parliament to look for a more detailed answer regarding the remedies available to victims of human trafficking.

Andrés also questioned the Minister of Social affairs:

How is social assistance provided to victims of human trafficking, and how is social and financial support for them?

Local government social services provide victims of human trafficking, and those who are suspected of being victims, with extensive services, and the need for assistance is always evaluated based on specific criteria. This entails ensuring financial and social security and promoting welfare on the basis of social assistance in accordance with the objectives of the Local Government Social Services Act. This

should be done, among other things, by improving the living conditions of those who are at a disadvantage and taking action to prevent social problems.

The legal domicile of the victim of trafficking in human beings carries social services to the person concerned. When a legal entity is not registered in Iceland, the residence municipality provides the service.

All victims of human trafficking are guaranteed living and secure housing. Those with registered legal domicile are assisted on the basis of the rules of the relevant municipality on financial assistance. The victims of trafficking in human beings who are not registered domiciled in Iceland enjoy financial support on the basis of rules on municipal financial assistance, in special cases, with foreign nationals, outside the EEA, who are not domiciled in Iceland no. 203/2016, but the rules are laid down on the basis of Article 15. of the Local Government Social Services Act. They are also guaranteed health services, cf. regulation on health services, to persons not covered by health insurance under the Health Insurance Act and their payments for the health service, no. 50/2017 .

The Ministry of Welfare will reimburse municipalities for expenses incurred for services when they are not domiciled in Iceland and also for those who have been domiciled for less than two years.

The Ministry of Welfare emphasizes getting information about victims of human trafficking as soon as possible so that they can ensure timely necessary assistance. The needs of victims of human trafficking for welfare services are assessed on a case-by-case basis. When cases come to the throw of the Ministry of Welfare, it often calls together a so-called construction team, which includes representatives from social services, healthcare, law enforcement, women's careers and trade unions. Depending on the nature of the case and the needs of the victim, what partners are called for. When the team is called on, professionals come together from different partners who work with the victim each time. At the beginning of the case, the role of each representative in the team is reviewed, and the construction team has also met after the cases have been completed and experience of this has been good.

The Ministry of Welfare has entered into an agreement with the Women's Shelter, which guarantees female victims of trafficking and their children, if any, refuge and security. Male victims are guaranteed similar assistance.

The child protection authorities are always informed when a child is involved or is involved with the victim's trafficking. If a child is involved, its case is done by the child protection authorities. An agreement between the Ministry of Welfare and the Icelandic Human Rights Office on legal advice to immigrants is also in force. Victims of human trafficking are advised to seek out there as well as individuals of foreign origin.

--- MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND THE U.S. TIP REPORT ---

The last question from Andrés that he referred us to was in response to the Minister of Justice's, (Sigríður Andersen) criticism of The United State's Trafficking in Persons report, or TIP report, that assessed Iceland's efforts to address trafficking as decreasing from 2016 to 2017 and noted areas for improvement.

Andersen accused the TIP report as having an invalid methodology that does not accurately reflect the criminal justice system in Iceland. After her public criticism of the report, Andrés questioned her to better justify that opinion of hers. The query is as follows:

1. What does the Minister consider to be that, in the annual report of the United States Trafficking in Persons Report, published in June 2017, Iceland falls into another category for action against trafficking in human beings and differs from others Western European countries about this? Does the Minister consider that the correct picture of the state of human trafficking in Iceland in the report is given? Does the Minister believe that the facts of the report are being misguided and then how?

The US Government's report on trafficking in human beings reveals, among other things, that many things have been well done and achieved during the audit period, but that charges, prosecution and conviction were lacking. The number of human trafficking studies has also decreased between years. The Minister considers it cautious to regard it as a special measure of performance, how many charges, prosecutions and convictions have taken place during the period. Many other factors can play a part in that. It should be pointed out that the report is not the

result of traditional international co-operation, but involves the unilateral assessment of the authorities in one state. Information in the report does not seem to imply that prosecution is in significantly more cases in the United States than in Iceland, considering the population.

2. How many human trafficking cases were investigated by police in 2013–2016? The answer is broken down by years.

The following information was received from the police.

Number of cases where trafficking in human beings was registered (cf. Article 227a of the General Penal Code) and cases investigated as such, in 2013–2016.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
Trafficking , number of registered offenses	5	2	6	6

The data is based on information from the police case file system on October 16, 2017. The year is based on the year in which trafficking is registered.

This is a number of cases where trafficking is recorded as a violation. There is no violation where at some point human trafficking is suspected, if it has not been recorded or investigated as such.

3. How many police officers handle human trafficking and how many are full-time staff?

The following information was received from the police.

The police in the capital area has three full-time equivalent positions and three employees dealing with human trafficking.

At the police station in East Iceland there is one police officer who handles human trafficking when they come up with other jobs, roughly 25% full-time equivalent.

No particular employee handles human trafficking in other police forces in rural areas, but keeps police officers or police officers alike as well as other cases when they come up. ¹ It should be pointed out that the rules of procedure of the National Commissioner of Police regarding human trafficking are available. *From the police.* Police in East Iceland: One police officer handles human trafficking with police officers in East Iceland along with other jobs, approximately 25% full-time equivalent. The police in the capital area: The police in the capital area have three full-time equivalents and three employees who handle human trafficking.

The police in the north east: No full-time equivalent is specifically due to trafficking in human beings, but the detectives do this if it comes up, as well as police officers on duty.

The police in the Northwest: No full-time equivalent is due to human trafficking.

Police in South Iceland: The police in South Iceland handle pointers and information relating to a potential trafficking in human beings in a similar way to other serious criminal offenses and use the manpower available at each time according to the nature and scope of the case.

The Department of Research has four detectives, as well as a police officer and a police officer, a total of six full-time equivalent positions. The research department, among other things, conducts research on human trafficking that arises in the district.

Police in the Suðurnes region: There is no special full-time equivalent for human trafficking in the office of the Chief of Police in the Suðurnes region. But with an enormous increase in the activities of Leifur Eiríksson Air Terminal, which is unprecedented, one would need a full-time equivalent for research into human trafficking.

The police in the Westfjords: These cases are processed by the research department of the office. There is no single specific employee who performs this issue.

Western police: No job equivalents are specifically related to human trafficking. Such a case would be dealt with by the staff of the research department.

Andrés said that by the time the next report came out in 2018, the minister was prepared with a better PR-ed response:

„The US Government's review and report do not surprise me, as fully consistent with their conclusions from last year. The main criticism remains as to the number of charges in human trafficking in Iceland and that conclusion must be based on their ignorance of Icelandic law. Charges are not released unless more than less likely to be convicted. By comparison, about 1,000 US human rights charges a year are published, which must be considered a low percentage of the population. Law enforcement has been greatly strengthened in Iceland recently, and more emphasis has been placed on education for those who deal with such cases. We are now working on a new action plan for trafficking in human beings that will be submitted this fall. It will emphasize that actions are realistic, timed and well-defined. There is also a need to promote awareness among the public about this type of case so that they do not thrive in the shadows and rather clash with police authorities. It is unacceptable for individuals to be enslaved for whatever reason and the Icelandic authorities will do what they can to prevent and eliminate such violations of people's freedom.“

--- COALITION AGREEMENT ---

Andrés referred us lastly to the government's current coalition agreement that tackles trafficking in a "catch-all" paragraph. A "catch-all"

paragraph of course is not ideal, although Andrés noted this was "definitely better than nothing".

"Provisions on chain liability covering subcontractors in a range of occupations must be introduced; work must proceed on abolishing the gender pay-gap and combating social dumping, human trafficking and the practice of companies switching ID numbers, and steps must be taken to have more effective monitoring of safety and health in the workplace.

DISCUSSION:

When asked about the current state of human trafficking discussion in Alþingi, Andrés explained that Alþingi does not discuss the issue of human trafficking much and described it as an emerging criminality. He told us that human trafficking is not something the mainstream Icelander is exposed to on a day-to-day basis. So as a result, the variances of understanding the nature of trafficking and its causes and solutions along with the lack of public pressure have resulted in the issue not being very high up on the political agenda. It is not an issue of there being a denial of what is going on or a push back from a particular party.

Andrés elaborated that within all parts of the political spectrum, there are connections to trafficking. For example he stated that left-wing politics is more interested in labor exploitation, while

right-wing politics carry a strong sense of justice, and that many within the party have backgrounds in policing that make them feel very strongly about trafficking cases because some of them have even seen it first hand. He encouraged us that if we are to lobby for better anti-trafficking policies in the future that we bring together these connections and also make contact with every member of the Judicial Affairs committee.

That being said, in regards to expanding the penal code to better address trafficking, Andrés says the government would do well to listen carefully to the trade unions and prosecutors who are coming up against walls when trying to pursue trafficking cases.

Andrés also advocated for a multi-ministry approach and a stronger collaboration for victim response than we are seeing now for trafficking

victims. Concerning the Vík case of two people trafficked in a knitting sweatshop, Andrés believes we failed these victims because they left Iceland with no means to support themselves, leaving them vulnerable for re-victimization. Easier access to residence permits for victims should be explored, and ministries and professionals need to coordinate more efficiently to prevent future victims from falling through the cracks.

As far as the use of funding, the previous Action Plan carried differences in opinion on whether or not resources were allocated appropriately. Iceland is currently moving finances more into

trade unions, health, and law enforcement, and perhaps with the current lack of resources, that may be best for the moment.

An awareness campaign could be a future project of the state, and Andrés speculated that it should not be that hard prioritising it. In the grand scheme of state finance, he did not really see costs as an issue.

Andrés did say there is perhaps a role for a well organized NGO that could assist specifically in the care of victims, providing financial and psychological support, and running awareness campaigns to targeted areas.

INTERVIEWS : MAIN POINTS

Legislation:

Everyone we spoke to that worked with the penal code told us it was not comprehensive and interfered with building cases, and urged that the trade unions and prosecutors who are coming up against walls when trying to pursue cases be listened to in order to develop more effective legislation. The general consensus from our talks was that the penal code must be expanded to further include other forms of exploitation, and that convictions were failing because current legislation does not entirely represent the ACT, MEANS, and PURPOSE elements. One interviewee also told us that they would like to see legislation include benefits to the trafficker other than financial gain, in order to better represent cases where victims are exploited for other forms of benefits, such as sexual gain.

Confidentiality laws were also seen as a frequent challenge. Even with signs of trafficking, hospitals are not able to go to the police without consent from the victim. Health care providers have expressed their frustration to us about the limitations of violence protocols when they are unable to take action at the warning signs they have been trained to recognize.

There is also controversy concerning the confidentiality laws of those being charged for purchasing sex.

Due to a closed court policy, offenders receive protection from the media. It was advocated to us is that in revealing the identities of these offenders publicly it would create stronger incentives for the offenders not to re-offend, and create a higher risk to deter first-time offenders. We were told Iceland is the only country in Europe where paying for prostitution is illegal but anonymity for sex buyers is tolerated by the courts.

As far as labor concerns, an employee's work visa is issued through their employer. This process was criticized to us as restricting foreign worker's ability to report mistreatment or change jobs, as it could pose a threat to their immigration status.

Additionally, the the penalties for labor violations are frequently not enough of an inconvenience to businesses to make them change their practices. If a business does have a scandal, the same owners can easily change the kennitala and name of the company and continue to run a nearly identical operation.

The National Action Plan was perhaps one of the highest priorities within our discussion; the last plan having expired years ago. The Action plan needs to be more than a piece of paper with goals, and so the government needs to implement it properly by

allocating adequate funding, resources, and man power. Generally people that we spoke to seemed very dissatisfied with the implementation of previous Plans and were skeptical about a future Plan's effectiveness, although how additional funding and resources should be allocated varied depending on who you asked. The absence of the Action Plan seemed to commonly be believed to be the result of both a lack of leadership and public pressure. (Please note the interviews were completed prior to an Action Plan being released in March 2018.)

In addition to the laws themselves, there also seemed to be a common concern that those working within Iceland's legal justice system had varying understandings of the nature of trafficking, coercion, trauma, and captivity. Particularly judges were mentioned to us regarding these concerns.

Manifestations:

Manifestations of trafficking occurring in Iceland were reported to us primarily as labor trafficking or sex trafficking. Labor, reportedly, is only happening in the blue-collar sectors, notably the tourism sector, including hotels, construction, and restaurant and other service oriented jobs. We were told that sex trafficking and labor trafficking has been sometimes intertwined, and that there have been cases of traffickers claiming their

victims as significant others. An example of this given to us was an employer claiming his victim as his partner who was just helping out at his work, but not a regular employee needing a paycheck.

Everyone we spoke to recognized labor as a form of trafficking in Iceland, and some even said it was more of a concern than sex trafficking, while others claimed sex trafficking is being wrongfully left behind. While there is an abundance of symptoms of sex trafficking, everyone agreed that it would be beneficial to have more information on the matter.

However, in the cases of sex trafficking, the conversation typically described sex trafficking manifesting as forced prostitution in connection to organized groups or various types of employers, but also quite a few times that it occurred within an abusive relationship, with one person mentioning foreign brides being purchased by Icelandic men. Sex trafficking victims were speculated to us as being sometimes difficult to intervene with because the victims would only stay in Iceland for a few days, as Iceland is a popular transit country, after which they would be relocated to their permanent destination.

When it comes to the sex industry in Iceland there seems to be quite a bit of public suspicion with the connection between gentlemen's clubs and prostitution. Beyond this conjecture, all

that could be definitively said in regard to potential trafficking cases in our interviews were the recollection of testimonies from years ago when stripping was still legal. It should be noted though, that very recently after our interviews, RÚV released footage of the club Shooters which is now currently under investigation for criminal activity including possible prostitution and human trafficking.

Prostitution was also reported to us as being advertised online at City of Love, backpage, cracker.com, and einkamal.is. Prostitution is then said to be taking place in Airbnbs and hotel rooms. *Our team has spoken to some of the women in these ads and feel that while we have learned a great deal, we have only scratched the surface of this industry. More of this will be discussed later in the report, but it is worth considering that some of the information in our interviews may be outdated or unconfirmed.*

Also in our interviews, Everyone seemed to agree that organ harvesting is not a form of trafficking occurring in Iceland, but there were contradictions on forced begging. Out of the few that mentioned it, the majority stated that it had occurred. There was also an instance of a trafficking case where someone was forced into robbing homes for their trafficker's profit although the current Icelandic laws did not recognize this as a trafficking case.

A pattern of trafficking is also seen in the "volunteer" industry, where scams will lure tourists into visiting

Iceland in exchange for volunteering, not knowing that volunteering is illegal when the work is producing goods and services. A pattern we heard a few times was of foreigners, particularly women, running hotels in the countryside in exchange for accommodation.

Frequent forms of control included lack of understanding of rights (examples: residency, wages and unions), debt entrapment, isolation, and physical violence. There have been threats of voodoo in some cases. Being lied to about rights was explained to us as the most frequent form of coercion in labor trafficking cases seen by the unions, and debt entrapment less so, but in these cases of debts imposed on victims there are not always documented paper trails of contracts and payslips, which make it complicated to get convictions.

Demographics:

--- Sex Trafficking ---

Victims were always described to us as foreigners, but Icelandic women struggling with drug addiction were also frequently mentioned. We were told that many sex trafficking survivors, as well as survivors of other abuses within the prostitution industry in Iceland, have histories of trauma and/or sexual violence, and often display patterns of self-destructive behaviours such as drug use. Prostitution can then be used as a means for someone to support their drug habit, or a drug dealer can use an

addiction as a means to coerce someone into prostitution, and so on.

In our discussions it seemed that services were mostly being provided to Icelanders exiting prostitution, but we were told that trafficking was an issue for foreigners. These foreigners were often explained to us as being from Eastern Europe or Nigeria. Most stated that victims were women, but in a few cases we heard that while it predominantly affected women that some men were affected also. In the cases involving sexual exploitation of men, we were told there was typically an overlap with labor exploitation. Children were never mentioned as victims in sex trafficking cases.

Concerning the sex industry in Iceland in general, we tended to hear that sex work in Iceland had direct correlation with the tourism increase and that clients of sex workers were often foreigners, but we had conflicting reports on this. We were also told that despite tourism having increased the volume of the sex work industry in Iceland, prostitution had long been an issue but not at the same scale it is today.

We heard that Iceland both was and was not a sex tourism destination, arguments including prostitution in Iceland being comparably more expensive than other destinations. Nonetheless, many did believe that because Iceland is a major transit destination, there was at the very least a demand for sex within layovers.

However we were also told on multiple occasions that Icelandic men were the primary clients. Regarding the sex-traffickers themselves, there was very little information available. We heard that Icelandic victims were typically trafficked by their significant others.

--- Labor Trafficking ---

In Labor trafficking, we were told that Icelanders had their wages stolen from them sometimes, but all labor trafficking cases so far had been foreign victims. We were told that tourists were sometimes lured into a volunteer or work/accommodation scam as a means to support their short-term travel. Foreign victims typically refer to those either with residency or seeking residency.

Recruitments were often believed to be from abroad agencies, but we also heard of ads within Iceland that turned out to be scams. These trends of foreign recruitment agencies exploiting workers were explained to us as taking place mostly in Eastern Europe; cases are increasingly being seen with victims of Romanian, Slovenian, or Albanian descent.

We were told that while Polish workers are often the stereotype for labor abuse victims, the Polish immigrants are on the whole becoming more informed of Iceland's labor laws and more interconnected in Iceland than they used to be, so recruitment trends in Poland have decreased. We

were told recruitment agencies in other countries for Icelandic labor were decreasing in Poland and increasing in Romania, Slovenia, and Albania correspondingly.

We were also told by one person that many of their cases involved middle-men that were foreign. But we got the impression that generally, cases where employers of companies used trafficked labor, or at least whose workers have sought assistance, have usually been Icelandic, with a few exceptions

Labor trafficking victims were explained to us as being both men and women, with one example of a child (a male minor).

--- At-Risk Groups ---

We were told by nearly everyone that asylum seekers were particularly at risk of being trafficked in Iceland. We were told by one person that the vast majority of asylum seekers had used smugglers to enter Iceland, and due to their tentative immigration status and trauma, working with asylum seekers who have been victimized is particularly challenging.

Runaways in Iceland were also mentioned to us as being an issue, and while their return rates have been generally good and increasing within recent years, the issue is not currently considered a trafficking concern, but there was some concern in our discussions of them being at risk.

Concerns in Victim Assistance:

We were happy to meet many dedicated groups and individuals doing great work to provide assistance to victims with the resources they have available. Evidence of such is throughout this report. However, with utmost respect to those parties doing great work, this section below only concerns what we have heard when it comes to the current state of victim assistance.

For instance, we have heard a great concern for a lack of prevention and outreach. Many have shared that they wanted to see a greater teamwork in identifying victims and that services need to make themselves available to victims and have some efforts to find them, not just hope they find their way to the services.

We heard about a variety of obstacles that trafficking victims often experience which need to be addressed because they interfere with them reaching services themselves. Of these obstacles mentioned, one was fear tactics such as threats of violence against them and their loved ones. Most commonly though, we heard of psychological factors paired with isolation that kept people from leaving.

We were told about multiple factors that facilitate these interferences, some of which were differences in work-culture, harmful attitudes towards immigrants and social dumping, myths of an Icelandic

“Utopia”, and fears of negative consequences of reporting mistreatment. We were also told that Immigrants experience a “bubble” of information where they only learn of their rights from the few others that they can communicate with (in some cases this may only be their employer) which limits their ability to learn otherwise if they are mistreated.

For the victims that do manage to reach help, we have been told frequently that they typically do not come themselves, it is often their concerned coworkers or friends that notice something is not correct and take action. This was with the exception of when victims came themselves to unions following a labor inspection the union had conducted. In these inspections we were told victims never spoke up in person among their coworkers and employer but would rather come privately the following day.

We were told victims often do not cooperate with police to seek retribution because they do not see the benefit of it and they want to move on quickly. They may have preconceived ideas of the police or the process, or they simply may not feel safe doing anything due to fear of retaliation from the trafficker. For labor trafficking victims, their primary concern is often moving on to the next job.

Human trafficking visas previously did not allow you to work, but you can now apply for a work visa with a human trafficking visa. However,

we frequently heard that human trafficking permits were seldom granted, and not victim-centered as a rehabilitation period, but mostly as a way to give authorities more time to cooperate with the victim. It was suggested that a reflection period be granted for the victim’s welfare and for trust to be built with authorities for a better investigation. Trauma can play a major role in how victims process information and they could provide better testimonies given some recovery time. There were also worries that if a victim returns home too soon without the support they need, they would still be vulnerable and at risk of being trafficked again. There is no infrastructure to follow-up with abroad organizations to ensure their continued care.

We were also told that there is no set procedure for how to handle human trafficking cases, and we have been told that cases are operated with people pulling together to do what they can on a case-by-case basis. This has been said to be positive in the way that cases can be very different so it can be customized to each case. For example, Iceland typically has no witness protection program, the women’s shelter is at an anonymous location within Reykjavik which covers some of this issue, but when necessary, we have been told that witness protection has been organized for individuals. However, there was much criticism in this approach as well as this methodology for victim response

only works when there is collaboration between these different parties. That collaboration is not currently overseen by any one individual or particular group, and the lack of overview within this field was a common complaint we heard that enables some victims to fall through the cracks. A National Coordinator or Committee of some kind was recommended or speculated to be a good idea quite a few times, or at least many seemed in favor of developing a smoother multi-ministry approach that defined clearer lines of responsibility between stakeholders.

The Ministry of Justice, has not held a formal meeting on human trafficking in two years and we have frequently been told that these meetings should resume and would aid with coordination. Through our interviews we often heard that the Minister of Justice, Sigríður Andersen, did not prioritize trafficking accordingly. She has however recently resigned in March 2019 after the European Court of Human Rights found her appointments of judges to be illegal. Þórdís Gylfadóttir has taken over the position for the time being. There has been some speculation that Sigríður will return to her post in time but that is yet to be confirmed.

In the absence of the formal meetings, many people we met with had taken it upon themselves to try and meet with other relevant parties. We also heard a suggestion that further meetings with connected organizations and grassroot activists may also be helpful,

even if they would not have originally been a part of the Ministry of Justice's organized meetings. We were told that the Ministry of Welfare may have tried to meet this year in the absence of the original meetings, but many said it would be helpful to coordinate more frequently.

Another fault in coordination seemed to be with different groups working on different time frames. We were told that cases were time sensitive, and police needed to act quicker than the working pace of the Welfare Ministry. Unions also said they were being rushed by police, but they need time to build a case for it to have a chance in court. Yet they also expressed frustration that even when everything is in order, these cases are not leading to convictions anyway. Nevertheless, it was suggested in one of our talks that it may be helpful for an additional, specialized social service to step in to be a middle man to ease coordination. We were told that unions and police were actively trying to develop a smoother working relationship.

We were also told that surveillance of the labor market was also shared across several parties that had various levels of surveillance capabilities and data retrieval methods. This incompatibility was criticized to us as being inefficient leaving many blind-spots such as the impossibility to monitor worker accommodations organized by employers.

There was additionally great concern in the gap between the cases of asylum seekers and the care for asylum seekers. We heard that the process of referring asylum seekers to aid can be quite complicated. Asylum seeker complaints are often referred to the asylum system but it was explained to us that this was not an exact fit for many issues including potential trafficking. Municipalities can assist those who have kennitala, but for non-residents there is no money or capacity for such assistance. Immigrations screenings are in place to look for warning signs, but are perhaps inconsistent, and afterwards service providers do not have access to the results of those screenings. Many asylum seekers have no knowledge of navigating the system themselves, are challenged by language barriers, and are often battling PTSD as well, making it even more difficult to get the care they need independently. Due to the limited capacity of assistance and lack of referral mechanism for their immigration status, warning signs of trafficking or other signs of distress can become lost. A starting point suggested to us is that more information and campaigns become available in languages commonly spoken by refugees. For example, labor rights pamphlets are currently available in Icelandic, English, and Polish and we were told Eastern European language options were in development, but there could be more availability, including Kurdish and Arabic to name a couple.

A very common concern also brought to our attention is the lack of a men's shelter. There also does not seem to be a good fit currently for people transitioning out of work scams in general as we heard that often these people, which did seem to be men in particular, were appointed emergency housing through the Ministry of Welfare. This housing would either be in Airbnbs or hotels on a case-by-case basis, and the Ministry would then cover the expenses. Unfortunately the Ministry of Welfare can only allocate housing for these individuals within limited business hours, which we were told can be a real challenge in emergency situations. A major worry for cases such as these is that hotels and Airbnbs may solve basic shelter but there is no additional support following potentially traumatic events as opposed to the 24 hour assistance and on-site care the women victims have access to within their shelter, Kvennaathvarfið.

In 2011, there was a specific shelter for women exiting prostitution in partnership with Stígamót called Kristín's House, that we heard from two previous staff members was often fully occupied. While it was perhaps understaffed and had room for improvement, it had a lot of potential and was filling a need. It was discontinued due to lack of funds, and now women in crisis are generally directed to Kvennaathvarfið, which we are told is also often at full occupancy. A specialized service for those in the sex

industry may need to be explored today alongside concerns of the current state of prostitution. Currently Stígamót has a group therapy session called the Swan Group specifically aimed at assisting survivors of prostitution, but this group is for healing past trauma and not a form of emergency response and only in Icelandic. We were told there is no outreach available aimed at those currently within prostitution. This is with the exception of prostitution cases that overlap with drug abuse harm-reduction programs run by the Red Cross, but there is nothing explicitly for current sex workers.

There were also concerns for a hotline. Ten years ago, Stígamót had created a hotline to reach those in the sex industry and let them know that help was available to them, but they were not able to keep it running around the clock. This hotline is no longer advertised. Many people said they would like to see the Red Cross utilize the funding they received for a human trafficking hotline. We have spoken to them and they have said they intend to integrate human trafficking trainings to their volunteers of their general 24 hour hotline. However in regard to this they shared that they are worried about the absence of a formalized national referral mechanism.

Campaign Recommendations:

We were recommended that public awareness campaigns would have

potential to increase government prioritization, and that they would do well to include broad manifestations of human trafficking. Other recommendations were that it should be forward, concise and repetitive. Concerning the delivery we were highly recommended to take to social media and consider video campaigns, as well as locating information in targeted areas such as the Rape Crisis Center at the Landspítali University Hospital and airports were specifically mentioned. We were also advised by quite a few to model other anti-violence campaigns that intersect with trafficking and try to push the trafficking elements further. As well as it was suggested to find a way to integrate anti-trafficking initiatives into the larger Metoo and Labor rights movements currently developing. Quite a few people we talked to showed interest in partnering on future campaigns.

Another recommendation was a need for a website with current and intelligible information on trafficking. We were told there is room for improvement for the Ministry of Justice's and the Police's website, that could also serve this purpose.

Many advised us to target young people for a generational shift in attitudes about healthy sex and relationships, especially concerning the commodification of women.

Profession-targeted awareness campaigns were recommended to us towards cab drivers, airport staff, and

bus shuttles especially. We were also frequently recommended to refer to hotel staff and airline staff, but were told that other groups were looking into these areas already. The only conviction case was done by a bystanders noticing a distressed victim on a plane and responding. We have been recommended to add bystander training components to campaigns that involve how to respond in addition to how to identify. There are multiple intersecting anti-violence bystander campaigns available currently that intersect with trafficking but could perhaps do more to inform on the nature of trafficking cases specifically.

As creating an informed awareness campaign was one of our original goals when creating this project, we asked what recommendations specifically those interviewed would like to see in a campaign. Much of these recommendations concerned addressing popularly held misconceptions. These misconceptions generally covered four topics including trauma and victimhood, people of foreign origin, substance abuse, and the sex industry.

General misunderstandings of trauma inhibit effective rescue and rehabilitation. It was suggested to us that an effective campaign would address the idea that victims of trafficking would not necessarily come and ask for help, so how to recognize and react to signs of distress would be helpful tools to provide. The campaign

could also do well to inform the nature of trauma and address misconceptions about coercion.

Another major concern is that victims seemed to often be those who have a greater tendency to fall through the cracks of Iceland's welfare system. In most cases the concern here was for those of foreign origin including immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Occasionally however it was mentioned that there are also Icelanders who are strained financially due to rising inequality, and who struggle with substance abuse which will be discussed in more detail below. Yet the larger concern seemed to be that of combating the phenomenon of social dumping and the general discrimination that foreigners sometimes face. One way to combat this was by simply bringing to light the experiences of foreigners in Iceland to the general population who may be unaware of their unique struggles.

As far as substance abuse, it was said to us that substance-users may carry negative connotations and they could sometimes be overlooked as victims or even face discrimination in care. The association with these individuals is often more in relation to criminality over victimhood where even a combination of the two seems contradictory. A campaign could potentially display experiences of those who have experienced these situations and the intersections, such as untreated childhood trauma, violence and abuse,

and prostitution. A campaign that explains how all these situations come together and influence one another could potentially improve intervention and rehabilitation practices that would allow for equal access to care.

Lastly the prostitution world has undeniable intersections with vulnerability and exploitation, and we commonly heard the notion that the act of paying for sex is harmful to the victims but also to their clients as well. Many are not even aware of the scale of sex work in Iceland, let alone its existence. We plan to do further data collection project(s) on the subject to map this industry more, which we cover further in the “outreach-test” section below. There seemed to be support for a campaign that advocated for a societal shift in how we look at the sex industry in Iceland and its workers.

However, much of the advice concerned a need for a campaign that targeted the demand for sex. We were told it is the demand for sex that enables sex crimes, so it is then essential to target the clients if we want to make change in this industry. It seemed in our talks that prostitution, for clients, is perhaps about much more than just sex, but about compensating for other things missing in their lives. We heard theories that clients seem to be emotionally disconnected with trouble

expressing themselves, suggesting toxic cultural attitudes in masculinity, gender roles, healthy sex, and intimacy. A campaign concerning these issues may then be an effective one. We had the specific example that a campaign of healthy relationships and peer pressure aimed towards young people may be very successful with these issues. Nonetheless, while these sex industry campaigns are largely male-targeted, it was expressed to us how essential it is to have male involvement in these campaigns, in order for them to be successful. Men, predominantly, create demand for sex trafficking and could significantly change the culture, but human trafficking is a men’s issue too, as they are also victims of both sex and labor trafficking themselves. Their involvement and visibility in the matter therefore is of utmost importance.

Finally, beyond these four topics mentioned to us, there were the more obvious misconceptions that need to be tied into campaign as well. The major issue being that much of the public is unaware of human trafficking and what it means. A campaign including how to identify and react to trafficking could help break the commonly held misconception that human trafficking is not an issue that Icelanders could encounter in their day to day lives

METOO TESTIMONIES

Some of the testimonies in Iceland that came forth during Metoo campaigns were from women who experienced human trafficking. Within a statement released in January 2018 from “#metoo Kvenna af erlendum uppruna” (#metoo Women of Foreign Origin), a Facebook group of 660 women in Iceland, there were testimonies of gender-based violence and discrimination⁴.

Among the statement were 34 testimonies of 1st and 2nd generation immigrant women that shared their experiences with domestic and sexual violence, and discrimination. Within these stories, 11 of them indicate signs of human trafficking.

I went through these testimonies and identified 8 major themes that interfered with victims accessing the help they needed. I then coded for these themes in hopes that we could use the information to better understand not only the nature of cases but how to develop effective outreach according to the perspective of victims.

It should be noted that there are limitations to working with previously written text, as opposed to an interview

for example, where you can follow up with additional questions for clarification. Also it is important to know that by no means am I trying to label these as definitive trafficking cases. However, each of these stories showed indicators of control and exploitation in alignment with the UNODC’s definition of trafficking’s elements of ACT, MEANS, and PURPOSE listed earlier in this report.

Therefore my reasoning was that insight for anti-trafficking work could be drawn from these testimonies because, while the full context is not available, the experiences demonstrate shared criteria that minimally classifies them as at-risk.

⁴ Frásagnir Kvenna Af Erlendum Uppruna
https://kjarninn.overcastcdn.com/documents/Frasagnir_kvenna_af_erlendum_uppruna.pdf

The categories used for coding were the following . . .

Terminology: Selected if author identified as a trafficking victim or use comparable terminology that indicated they were aware of the nature of trafficking cases. Examples: slave, hostage, “owned”

Misinformation: Selected if the author indicated in their testimony that they previously had been given false information or stated they had misunderstood their rights. Also selected if the author wrote about their rights inaccurately.

Social Isolation: Selected if the author indicated that social isolation affected their ability to seek and/or receive aid.

Discrimination: Selected if the author indicated that discrimination affected their ability to seek and/or receive aid.

Culture: Selected if the author indicated that cultural beliefs or traditions affected their ability to seek and/or receive aid.

Child Welfare: Selected if the author indicated that threat of their child's welfare affected their ability to seek and/or receive aid.

Help: Selected if the author indicated they had help from the police, shelter, or another aid-providing professional (friends and other general members of the public excluded). Then it was color coded based on whether the author reflected this help as a positive or negative experience. Red was selected for negative. Green was selected for positive.

Victim-Blaming: Selected if the author indicated that they had experienced victim blaming from others, or stated they had previously blamed themselves for their victimization. Also selected if the author used language that indicates they feel that they have done something wrong, feel guilt or shame, or find fault in themselves for their victimization in the present tense. “A” was used to represent it was the author who used victim blaming to describe themselves, while “O” was used to represent others who directed victim blaming towards the author. “A” was also color coded for past and present tense. Green was used to indicate past-tense victim-blaming that the

author stated they now see differently. Red was used to indicate present-tense victim-blaming.

An “X” was used to select categories that applied to the victim testimony. A category was left blank because the category either did not apply or there was not enough information. Best efforts were made to

try to stay true to the author’s narrative and only code things mentioned explicitly, however it should be noted that blank themes may or may not still apply to the author of the testimony

Data Results:

Testimony	Terminology	Misinformation	Social Isolation	Discrimination	Culture	Child Welfare	Help	Victim-Blaming
1	X			X	X	X	X	O
3		X			X			A
6	X		X			X	X	A
12	X			X				A
13	X						X	O
19								A
20		X				X		
22		X	X	X			X	
23						X	X	
24			X					
25	X		X	X			X	A,O

DATA DISCUSSION:

It seems that when aid was received in the testimonies, about half were satisfied with it and the other half were not. The half that were satisfied with their help all seemed to be well-informed. All of the satisfied group either used terminology indicating they understood themselves to be victimized or had some understanding of the nature of trafficking crimes, and none had indicated that they had been misinformed of their rights.

However this was not the case for the unsatisfied group. For example there was one person, testimony 22, who was misinformed of their rights and indicated they were unsatisfied with their aid. Author of testimony 22 described directly, “I am illiterate in my native language and it is difficult for me to learn to read and write English or Icelandic. I don't understand my rights as nobody has explained them.” despite being in contact with “social services and child protective services” she indicates that her life has been more or less dictated by her Icelandic spouse and

his family and that they are making decisions for her on her behalf. The author of this testimony describes that she feels “powerless” because she lacks the language ability to navigate society and expresses a general misunderstanding and suspicion of how her affairs are handled because service providers are not dealing with her directly. As the demographic of Iceland changes to be more diverse, language barriers can be very challenging to address but it is essential that victims be able to fully participate in their own care. This issue also comes up in testimony 1 where the author states: “Maninn minn talaði meira íslensku og þá var að tala við hann enn ekki með mig enn samt var ég victim.” (“My husband spoke more Icelandic and they would speak to him instead of me, despite me being the victim”) when describing how law enforcement did not speak with her over a domestic violence dispute and her offender instead spoke on her behalf.

In these cases you can see the importance of victims being able to

participate in the matters that affect them, rather than being spoken for, in order to not overlook their needs. Law enforcement and other services must have access to and utilize resources that enable better communication to allow this, such as translators or social workers.

Another recurring theme was Social Isolation. Social Isolation was often indicated as preventing access to care, such as testimony 1, because the only channel to the outside world the victim has while undergoing the abuse was through the offender. In testimony 1, the author indicated she lived in the country, she was controlled in her day-to-day activities and not allowed to learn Icelandic in order for her offender to maintain this control. A concern for rural victims, brought up elsewhere in the collective Metoo statement, was that shelters are only available in the capital area and how to go about finding a safe place in the countryside can be a real challenge. For victims like the author in testimony 1, being restricted to their offender makes it extremely difficult for intervention to take place.

At some point foreign victims must come in contact with immigration services for the residency process. For many, this could be the only window of opportunity to give foreign residents information about their rights and where they can turn to for help. Extended outreach, particularly in rural areas, may help widen this window.

Another significant factor was Child Welfare. Multiple testimonies indicated they had children that were involved and sometimes affected by the author's experiences. Some authors even indicated that their offender similarly victimized both them and their children. Not all these testimonies mentioned their family situation, but 4 out of the 11 cited explicitly that their ability to access care was complicated by the welfare of their children, and that they were concerned that their children's' safety and well-being would be at risk if they were to try and escape their offenders.

This occurred in testimony 23, when a failed attempt to receive care led to the angered offender threatening to kill the victim and her daughter if they

tried to get further help. The initial attempt, the author describes, is when the 11 year old daughter was sexually assaulted by the offender and the mother called the police. In the testimony, the police did not take any action, provide a translator to the mother, or speak with the daughter at all.

It is hard to imagine why this case was handled so negligently, and again, no real communication took place with those who had asked for help and those who were obligated to try to and provide it. This was an alarming pattern in the testimonies, and it should go without saying that successful intervention will need to be more thorough.

Discrimination was also a major issue that seemed to inhibit access to care. Discrimination within the testimonies only seemed to occur from a professionals employed to assist victims, as opposed to a general member of the public, in one case within testimony 1 where the author states, “Einu sinni lögreglan sagði við barnavernd kona að

við búam eins og villidýr. Hann sagði það hjá mér og börn.” (“Once the police said to the woman from child protective services that we live like wild animals. He said it in front of me and the children) In other testimonies, like number 25, similar language was used by the author “Not even my neighbors helped even if they heard my screams or his even when things went bump and bang from our home. One time a woman who lived underneath us stopped me and said. "You live like an animal letting him treat you like that either have some self respect and leave him or the two of you move home to your country. We don't want it here!" My children were standing with me when she said this to me. I still wonder why she never called the police or helped me in any way.” In testimony 12 the author further discusses xenophobic discrimination, “we are gonna tell some stories that are gonna make people notice us and know its not our fault and only our problem. This society has to change. Too many people are angry for the wrong reason. If those people who treat us bad for being immigrants have to live like some of us

and feel like less than human sometimes, maybe they could soften up and care for more than themselves and be kind.”

Treatment of victims as if they are sub-human alienates victims from care by not only giving them the impression that it is their problem, but that society and services are not there for them. Not to say that many Icelanders are not welcoming, but a single interaction with one individual when you do not know many others can be especially significant, and so services must be vigilant to provide an inclusive narrative to bridge trust with foreign victims. The Discrimination coding was not necessarily intended to be only coding for xenophobic or racial discrimination, but that did seem to be one of the most prevalent types.

For the victim-blaming coding, it seems most testimonies where the author used victim blaming in the present tense also did not receive help. This is another area where services need to be proactive by affirming healthy messages to combat victim shaming and stigma. It was fortunate to see that the

one author who used victim-blaming in the past tense, testimony 6, noted that they had had a positive experience with aid. However much of the victim-blaming language in other testimonies was used in the present tense.

Culture, although it only came up twice in the coding, was a factor that felt necessary to consider due to the different cultural associations and expectations of crime and care.

For example in Testimony 1, the author states “Ég get ekki og má ekki fara frá manninn minn það er bara svona hjá okkur menning.” (“I can not and may not leave my husband, that is just how it is in our culture”) This author indicated that when she seeks help for her and her children there is no component of cultural sensitivity, and that she is just treated as if she is irresponsible with a simple choice. The author explains, “Þegar ég fara til viðtal hjá barnavernd ég sagði að manninn minn þarf hjálps hjálps hjálps hann geri mig ofbeldi mikið ofbeldi. Börn þarf hjálps og ég þarf hjálps. Þau bara spyrja af hverju ert þú ekki að fara til læknis þegar hann meiddir

þig það er ekki skrá af hverju ert þú ekki að hringja lögreglan.” (“When I went to the interview with Child Protective Services, I said my husband needs psychological help, he does violence to me, lots of violence. The children need help and I need help. They just asked, why aren’t you going to the doctor when he hurts you, there is nothing documented, why are you not calling the police.”)

When danger seems immediate, immediate action may seem straightforward. Yet in this case the author seemed to have felt like she was not being heard and judged rather than helped. Successful aid needs to then be able to provide active-listening that makes an effort to understand where the victim is coming from, and is mindful of possible differences such as cultural norms.

Additionally in testimony 3, culture was coded for due to the author indicating that their shame extended to their family, and so they couldn't speak to them about the assault. This is another example of how cultural backgrounds can affect reporting and

aid. Effective outreach should always then be cautious of unforeseen struggles, and work to empower victims rather than rush into judgements on their behalf.

Language-barriers seem to be the most frequent commonality across all of these testimonies that may have resolved many of these issues. Had a translator been appointed to the victims in many of these cases, the outcomes could have gone quite differently.

Language barriers can cause extreme limitations on engaging with the world around us. If you do not speak Icelandic well in Iceland, and furthermore if you do not speak English well, your network for information shrinks dramatically. Continuing to develop and provide information in different languages is crucial. Also of utmost importance is just taking the time to assure victims have an opportunity to speak on their behalf and never accepting a short-cut of having them spoken for. As these testimonies have shown, denying victims the dignity of being heard is reckless and dangerous.

To sum up, this was an attempt to try to better understand a victim's experience and try to help identify ways to improve victim assistance based on their perspective. It seems that while abusive situations can vary drastically, there are common themes, such as victim agency and inclusivity for example, that are missing in many of

these testimonies. We hope the incorporation of these themes in our anti-trafficking work will enable us to reach and connect more efficiently with those who need it.

LABOR SCAM TESTIMONIES

Just as stated in the analysis of the MeToo testimonies, we're hoping to incorporate the experiences of victims in the development of our anti-trafficking work. The MeToo testimonies were written by women and mostly dealt with sexual abuse, but labor abuse cases also deal with very similar themes, such as isolation and discrimination for example, that can be applied then to all anti-trafficking work. That being said, In order to be thorough I still wanted to include a discussion about some of the patterns that are appearing in testimonies of labor exploitation for further context.

This year a Facebook group Away from home - Scammed in Iceland was created. Similar to the facebook groups Away from home - living in Iceland, and Away from home - working in Iceland, this new group is aimed to be a community resource to foreigners protecting themselves from scams. A statement from an admin on their page reads "This group serves as an open platform for workers in Iceland to share their experiences with employers and workplaces where their worker's rights were violated. Cooperation like this helps all of us to avoid working in such places and forces employers to change their attitude and respect workers rights. Share your experiences and/or use the search button if you are not sure

whether the company you want to work for is reliable."

This group has allowed testimonies of exploitation to come forward, as members are posting either warnings of scams or asking about their rights. Admins and members have then been able to advise and offer information in multiple languages, invite members to worker-rights events, and there was even a survey about well-being of foreign workers posted in the group.

The frustrating thing about reading these posts, as was also echoed in our interviews, was that these scams often are reported and maybe the company pays something back to the worker, but generally the company carries on it's business. It seems fairly common that once a post is made about a scam, other comments join in also saying they have had similar problems with the same employer. Another issue is that some people are posting on the behalf of a friend, and because it is not their information but a friend's, they do not feel comfortable bringing it to the attention of the authorities.

Yet still Facebook has served as an effective way for immigrant workers to communicate and empower one another, and there are some similar patterns within the testimonies.

The most frequent scams posted usually involved an issue with not being

paid. Yet very frequently were issues of over-working, or being deceived into working much more than originally agreed upon. Seemingly all of the posters that did not mention going to a union within their post were encouraged to do so by other members and given information about the unions.

Many victimized are individuals, but sometimes a couple would be scammed together while looking for a job enabling them to travel, with hotels and the food industry by far the largest industries being reported. As far as demographics of reports in the group, men and women seemingly reported incidents at relatively the same rate, though we haven't been monitoring it intensively, the group seems very diverse at over 1480 members and counting. Admins also have been posting a few testimonies anonymously.

As stated earlier, similar themes as those in the MeToo testimonies we're prevalent in the posts. Foreigner's lives in Iceland are often restricted with misinformation and isolation. For example one testimony stated that as their first time in Iceland, they did not understand what their contract should have included, and while they signed documents, it did not indicate conditions or salaries and they only had their employer to believe. Another testimony stated that their employer threatened them if they did go to the unions, that their contracts would be changed to give them less pay and more physically demanding work.

Another testimony said their employer even threatened them with homelessness as they were a part of a work-accommodation program.

Foreign workers also showed patterns in themes of victim-blaming and discrimination. In one case a woman tried to ask others to try to understand the circumstances writing "When you go to a place and a foreigner is working, please think twice before shouting at them that they should be ashamed of how bad their Icelandic is - how they should go home when they just can't. I'm kind of ashamed to post this, and at the same time I shouldn't - things like that happen to your neighbors, that random guy in the bus, maybe your lover or friend and you don't even know about it. I know too many foreigners who have been exploited and it's just disgusting".

Challenges such as feeling that the country you are working in is not concerned with your welfare discourages victims from believing in the help that exists. And when victims have the courage to seek help, because of their immigration status, services do not always fit them and their circumstances. Such as the case in one example where a member wrote, "The union fought for us and we were eventually given the bare minimum amount due to us, but during this time we were homeless and paying for airbnbs at about £130 a night." On top of that another testimony indicated a lack of pay, abusive employers, and

inhumane living conditions were reported to their union, but for whatever reason the union did not get back to them about their concerns for a full month. Even then, it was written that the workers felt that unions comments were unhelpful. A separate member posted a similar occurrence where he was dissatisfied with the union's help, and multiple other members commented on the post advising the worker to visit the union in person, not over the phone or an email, and demand they listen before you can expect them to take you seriously. Otherwise it seems that quite a few have received dismissive and even discriminatory responses had they not gone directly to the union's office.

There is also quite a few instances of heckling from other users questioning the sense of those who have been victimized, and why they did not act differently under their circumstances. Yet of course, understanding that not accessing services is not always just ignorance that services exist, and there are multiple factors in play as to why it is not so simple to report the crime and move on. Fortunately it seems that the admins do their best to moderate to keep the conversations constructive and respectful, but victim-blaming has been a theme. Having a space like this Facebook group to share experiences and questions is brilliant and doing

plenty of good, but the prevalence of this victim-blaming suggests a larger societal attitude that it's the sole responsibility of the foreign workers to protect themselves from being scammed rather than finding fault in the real perpetrators - the employers breaking the law to exploit them. Anti-trafficking work will need to take care to put forward a more just narrative, so that undeserved shame and guilt will not interfere with victims seeking aid and retribution.

We know that trafficking affects Icelanders too, but what we have observed significantly throughout this report is that both sexual and labor trafficking is so frequently rooted in immigrant hardships and their disconnect to the aid Icelandic natives typically rely on. This disconnect really comes through in these testimonies as well as those in the MeToo statement. Further integration will be necessary to assure foreigners can have equal access to aid, as those with the loosest connections to the welfare system and a support network will always be higher at-risk for exploitation. We will be doing our best to incorporate these themes we have seen in the testimonies into our work, and as the foreign population in Iceland continues to grow, our team intends to continue to pursue testimonies of immigrant experiences to keep our work current and centered.

SEX-WORK OUTREACH TEST

As we were unable to find any form of outreach for sex-trafficking victims or sex workers in general within Iceland, we talked about this being a possible area for our future projects in the concluding “Next Steps” section of our report. We have witnessed efforts to combat labor exploitation in both grassroots activist and union levels which we hope to support in any way that we are able. However with the gap in efforts to address sex-trafficking, and the variances in awareness of sex-trafficking compared to the emergence in labor-trafficking, has urged us to explore this area further. We did this with what we have come to call the “outreach-test”.

We investigated one of the websites given to us from an interview and found roughly 750 advertisements for prostitution in the Reykjavik area alone. We set up an email account and wrote a concise message explaining we were a network of people sharing information about resources and rights to sex workers in Iceland, and that they were not doing anything illegal as only a third party or a client could face legal consequences, and then we listed resources such as the RedCross helpline, Women’s shelter, Bjakarhlíð etc. We also ended the message with letting them know contact us with any questions. We sent the message to

roughly 50 ads and got a total response of 6, but we believe if we do this differently in the future the return rates could be much higher knowing what we know now. Our initial messages were sent to the their corresponding email account connected with their ad, and via email we received a response of 2 within days. The remaining 4 responses were from when we later tried sending the same message via snapchat to 4 specific girls (more details about why below). Out of responses, all 4 responded within minutes.

The emails we used were hosted by the website used to post the ads, not personal email addresses. We could paste our message into the browser with our contact email, and it was only if we received a response that we could see the woman’s personal email in our inbox. The website offers the option to contact the woman this way, but in their personal text it seemed like they preferred you to call or send them a message on snapchat, and occasionally another social media app such as whatsapp. For this reason, we believe there is a chance that many of our emails were never checked. In the future we would utilize other methods like snapchat as well, but from the responses we did receive back, we learned quite a bit.

We got one response from a woman that said she was fine and thanked us for the support. We kept the conversation going, not discussing her work at all but just being someone to talk to, and after a couple emails she asked for us to reference her to a psychologist and we connected her to Bjarkarhlíð where she told us she did speak with someone. In the future we would like to see outreach open and ongoing in this manner to offer the girls involved some sort of support system. We've frequently heard from our interviews the need for trust to be built and the time that takes for someone to open up, seek help, or trust the help being offered to them. An outreach program could be an opportunity to serve this purpose.

We also got a response from a woman who said she, and the other women she worked and lived with, were ok. Instead she reported a case to us of another woman that was recruiting other girls. This woman wrote to us that she suspected the recruiter was exploiting two other girls, and she hoped we could help them. She shared with us that this recruiter was making their community of sex-workers feel unsafe. We did not know what to expect from our initial test-run and we did not have a protocol for if a case were reported to us rather than the authorities, as we had seen our role as sharing information. So upon this message we did seek legal counsel and ended up reporting the issue to the police. In the future we intend to meet

with the police to develop a better working relationship in the best way to provide them any information we find, as well as develop a thorough protocol for all what-if scenarios. What the email did tell us, was that there was supposedly a recruiter who was a sex worker herself that was knocking on doors of where other girls were living, and trying to convince them to come live with her and sell sex and drugs and give her a commission. The recruiter claimed that including drugs in the business would provide them a better profit. The woman that wrote to us said she knew of the two girls working under this recruiter from one of her clients who had told her he was kicked out of the apartment once he questioned the age of a very young-looking girl. The pictures of these two girls on the ads she sent us have changed over time, with the recruiter's pictures remaining the same but her picture is one of the few on the website where her face is blurred. The women also seem to change locations frequently in Iceland, but also once one went to Norway for a few days before returning. When we tried to reach out to them on snapchat they responded they were ok, which are 2 of the 4 respondents we included in our snapchat response rate, but one of the girls thinking we were an interested client at first immediately sent us some pictures of what we guessed was a girl in her teens that was clearly not the same woman used in the photos of her ad. At this point we gave all our collected

information to authorities in Norway and Iceland, as well as with another anti-trafficking nonprofit in Norway.

Lastly, the 3rd woman we made contact via snapchat we contacted specifically because we noticed two accounts with the same photos. The matching account was of the woman who was previously reported to us supposedly working under the recruiter. We contacted this other profile with the same photos on her snapchat and she said the other profile had stolen her photos. We sent her the same message of resources as well but the conversation didn't go any further, but we can see that she at least had received the information.

The 4th woman we reached via snapchat was not related to the report we received earlier. We noticed her photo description did not match the physical appearance of the women in the photos, which stood out to us as a similar occurrence in the case of a minor who's snapchat pictures had a different appearance than the photos from her ad. The English used in the ad was also impartial, as many of the other ads are as well, but some of our team could speak some of the native language listed from the description so we thought because the ad looked particularly suspicious and we may be able to communicate in her preferred language, that we should try to make an extended effort in this case. So we translated the message into the listed native language and also kept the english, but she did

respond in english. She thanked us, and said she was ok, and that Icelandic men in particular were real gentleman but that she was happy to know that if anything ever were to happen, that she knew who to contact.

While the response rate was not overwhelming, and it is worth it just in itself that women do know who to contact were something to happen and that we can at least see on snapchat messages that information is being received, what was really remarkable to us was the incredible amount of information we learned about the sex industry in Iceland just within little messages such as "Icelandic men were real gentleman". We have heard so much in interviews about speculation that clients are foreigners, but little instances such as that suggest to us that the customer base is also Icelandic. It is impossible to draw definitive conclusions from such a small response rate, but we've learned so much from their answers and the many ads we've read through and activity we have observed. This information includes that some women stay in Iceland for long periods of time, they are connected and sometimes live and travel with other sex workers, information is shared between workers and clients and they sometimes have long-term relationships, there is a lot of travel within the same apartments and locations, there is some organization between some groups of girls who share patterns in ads and photos, some

recruitment is occurring in Iceland, and there are drug trafficking connections to sex work in Iceland that we hadn't heard before in our interviews. Much of the information in our interviews stated very little information was obtainable about these girls and their circumstances, and what their traffickers are like, largely because they are moved so quickly and that Iceland is merely a transit point in a larger organized crime network they are already involved in. However just within the fragment of a glimpse we have from this test-run, we can see there is an immense amount of other information out there aside from the narratives we have heard from our interviews. Some of those previous narratives may fit some cases, but the scale of sex work available in Iceland and the contrasting stories we've heard from a few of the sex workers themselves, suggests to us that there is so much more to understand about sex work in Iceland than is currently available to the services in place that are supposed to be offering these same women assistance.

We have heard repeatedly the need for outreach initiatives and for a program that would connect those at-risk to the services that could support them, as there is currently nothing operating like this at all for sex workers in Iceland. A project with a similar approach could serve this purpose, but also could serve the purpose of collecting more information about the

sex industry in Iceland and the real experiences that these women face to help law enforcement crack down on sex trafficking cases and for service providers to offer more effective support to women who need it.

So currently we are moving towards a mapping project that could help us further understand the nature of this industry and help determine what kind of responses could be effective. This project would include reflections of this brief "outreach-test" as well as reconsiderations to our approach including the delivery of the messages, language used, and the development of a protocol for responses. We would also like to cover more ground in a future project, as we understand the results from this one international website may be widely different than an Icelandic site for example. Then as stated earlier, we also want to develop a working relationship with the police, but other services as well to ensure they are aware of the work and that the protocol runs smoothly.

One concern however, in this project may require our team to operate separately from Stop The Traffik, as Stop The Traffik is an international organization that works only on prevention and education initiatives as opposed to projects on victim services, rescue, and/or rehabilitation. We're happy to continue to have the support of Stop The Traffik headquarters in future prevention projects, but we would not be able to operate this project under

their name and would act independently. Then if our group eventually does begin to develop ongoing programs in that area there is a likelihood that we may need to create another organization at some point. At the time being, we see a definite need for further programs whether it comes from us or elsewhere, and the mapping project is what we can contribute to that effort now. So for the time being, we will maintain our membership with Stop The Traffik and explore our options to conduct the project independently.

Another concern would be allotting the appropriate amount of time in order to run this project effectively, which requires adequate funding. It would be irresponsible to go forward with such a sensitive issue without the proper resources and oversight. This issue is touched on in our concluding “Next Steps” section following this one.

Past these concerns, we see plenty of opportunity to further our efforts in combating sex-trafficking and offering support currently absent to sex workers. Going forward with all projects in this area though, we believe it is important to mention that we will remain an anti-trafficking organization, but we will be neither an anti-sex work or pro-sex work organization. Rather we will continue to be a pro-people

organization. In that we mean that we’ve come to understand there are a variety of opinions on sex work. Even the statement that sex work is separate from a sex crime, is not believed by everyone in Iceland as we have heard in our interviews, and just in general from members of the public, that sex work can be seen as inherent violence against women. This is perhaps why the only former efforts we have heard of in regard to sex workers in Iceland was for those exiting-prostitution, not those currently in prostitution. The issue with this though from anti-trafficking perspective is that health and safety services are only being offered conditionally. While all of our group members surely have personal opinions themselves on sex work, some of which may be quite different from others, we are all united in our belief that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, has the right to health and safety. The act of connecting at-risk individuals to health and safety services is one that falls on every side of sex-politics. We believe that this commonality of being “pro-people” will therefore be the most effective approach to our work in providing unified support to everyone at-risk while also being an approach everyone can get behind. We believe there is a lot of potential in this project.

OUR NEXT STEPS

As we have completed this report we have seen that efforts to combat labor exploitation seem to already be underway both from a grassroots activist to union levels. The general public is becoming much more aware that human trafficking exists within Iceland's blue-collar sector. So in regards to labor trafficking, in 2019 we see our role as a partner in existing efforts. There is lots of campaigning going on currently amiss the labor movement and we see a lot of potential to integrate human trafficking into the dialogue. Also in discussion currently for 2019 is organizing workshops with fellow labor activists explaining labor rights and paychecks to foreign workers.

However there is not nearly as much information available on sex trafficking with very little information available on the sex industry in Iceland at all. We see an urgent need and a disparity in eradication efforts in this form of trafficking that we hope we can begin to take a role in. While an awareness campaign could certainly benefit here, we also see a great need for outreach. We're hoping to acquire the funding we need to develop an mapping project for sex workers that would work both to inform the workers of their rights and bridge them to services, as well as collect data that could overall improve eradication efforts.

As said previously, we will need to source funding to make our work possible. This past year we have put in the hours voluntarily to complete this report in between our schooling and full-time jobs. We're satisfied given our circumstances at how much we have learned and accomplished, but can't help but think how much more we could have delivered given the resources. It has become apparent to us that if we are to move forward, especially with issues that are so sensitive, we need to allocate some operational costs to conduct this project practically and responsibly.

A full-time employee would be wonderful, but we hope to at least allocate the budget to pay one of our team members part-time in 2019. We are especially hoping to at least fund the mapping project, which is not only a significant amount of work, but it also needs thorough oversight. Even if we bring in more volunteers, organizing them and collecting their data is easily a full-time job. In 2019 we hope to apply for further grants and crowdfund.

Finally, we are working with all of our findings listed in this report with our headquarters in the UK to develop informative campaigns and workshops, as well as bystander trainings. To develop these bystander seminars we have been in touch with Alteristic, a U.S. based organization that developed

Green Dot, a bystander intervention program used to address sexual violence. We will also be consulting our findings, recommendations, partners, and headquarters to develop and localize these programs accordingly.

We are very grateful for the relationships developed and opportunities granted over the course of this past year and are very much looking to pushing the work forward in 2019.