

**GOAL 3: To deploy effective public awareness strategies.**

This section describes local, state, national and international human trafficking public awareness strategies. The intent of this goal is to share information about what has characterized effective public awareness campaigns and outreach efforts and where Florida should move in the future to create and sustain effective anti-trafficking awareness messaging.

Increasing public awareness of human trafficking is a core element of any successful anti-trafficking strategy. As one commentator put it:

Combating human trafficking and sexual exploitation requires activist efforts on many fronts, but the key to success is increasing the public’s understanding about the scope of the problem and the harm it inflicts. As history has shown, every great social-justice movement advanced when either significant people or a significant number of people recognized a need for change and acted on it.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, informing the public and motivating people to act remain a great challenge. There is only anecdotal evidence that tells us what works to make members of the public aware of human trafficking so that they change their behavior.

Public awareness campaigns can motivate changes in behavior in a number of ways. After viewing a public service announcement (PSA), people might be motivated to join community anti-trafficking coalitions, post materials in the workplace, donate money to good causes, support a law change to help victims, or call the police if they suspect human trafficking. Or, they may simply be well-informed so that they make wiser consumer choices and buy goods that are “slavery-free.” Alternatively, they may do their jobs better to assist victims of trafficking, as understanding human trafficking can help everyone from the local code inspector

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<sup>1</sup> Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, *National and International Public Awareness Campaigns Against Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation*, Piekarz, A., Cowan, E. and Finkeldey, B. (2010) found at [http://www.caase.org/pdf/resources-research/Awareness-Raising\\_Report.pdf](http://www.caase.org/pdf/resources-research/Awareness-Raising_Report.pdf).

to an emergency room nurse understand a potential trafficking situation and act in safe and effective ways to protect victims and help connect them to services.

### **Key Elements for an Effective Public Awareness Campaign**

Whether an awareness campaign utilizes print, video, or both, there are three main components for an effective campaign:

**1. A Broad Support System** - Establishing a broad support system of individuals and interested groups (scholars, legislators, religious institutions, nonprofit organizations, law enforcement, corporations, media, professionals, students, and the general public) helps garner and mobilize community support for a campaign. The more individuals working on an awareness campaign, the greater the likelihood of the campaign's success.

**2. Diverse Activities** - A campaign's message should be relayed to the public through a variety of means in an effort to reach more people who will connect to the campaign's purpose. Examples include educational events; poster, postcard, and other media campaigns; protests and awareness events; petitions, lobbying, and fundraising; educational speeches; informational flyers; concerts and street dramas; research studies; personal testimonials; and other advocacy efforts.

**3. An Accurate and Concise Message** - The message of a campaign must be short and powerful to mobilize people to action. Testing messages through focus groups and other research tools enables activists to refine a campaign's message and increase its effectiveness.

*From Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, National and International Public Awareness Campaigns Against Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation, Piekarz, A., Cowan, E. and Finkeldey, B. (2010) found at [http://www.caase.org/pdf/resources-research/Awareness-Raising\\_Report.pdf](http://www.caase.org/pdf/resources-research/Awareness-Raising_Report.pdf), p.3.*

## Cultural Relevance and Competency: Tailoring the Message to the Audience

Human trafficking disproportionately affects vulnerable people and their vulnerabilities can make it difficult to reach and inform them about human trafficking. For instance, Haitian guest workers in the U.S. on H2-A visas may not know English, may be desperate for work and probably will not understand U.S. laws and culture. Their employers may keep them very isolated from others. Reaching these workers with public awareness messages in outreach campaigns can be a challenge – unless one knows that many Haitians listen to the radio in the U.S., just as they did in their home country. To cite another example, teens are more used to communicating via text messages, Facebook, and You Tube videos, and so these are effective media to use.

Community groups that work with immigrants generally are trusted by the people they assist, and so information posted in their offices and recreation facilities are likely to reach these underserved minority populations. This is why it is imperative for those engaging in public awareness campaigns to develop partnerships with ethnic and community based organizations. These local groups will help ensure that the messages are crafted in ways to reach the target audiences. For instance, in one community, businesses in a Chinese neighborhood refused to post outreach campaign posters that featured human trafficking awareness information in Chinese. This campaign's strategies quickly changed when their Chinese partners told them that posting "bad news" in a business causes bad luck.

It is also extremely helpful to organize focus groups of the target audience as part of messaging development and implementation. If they are involved, there is a far greater chance that the anti-trafficking discovery and assistance information will reach the intended groups. One of the nation's premier anti-trafficking organizations, the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) works with a trafficking survivor caucus whose input has been invaluable to their work.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Rescue and Restore Regional Program is geared specifically to public awareness and helps communities to spread the word about human trafficking and available help.<sup>2</sup> Communities around the nation that are funded by this program engage in diverse public awareness efforts. One program in Massachusetts writes articles in the local Vietnamese, Thai and Korean newspapers on human trafficking. A project in Kentucky is developing outreach materials for workers who will be attending a large international equestrian event. Teen participants in a domestic minor sex trafficking program developed their own outreach brochure that uses messaging that will reach others in their peer group. In Los Angeles, CAST conducts many community presentations and is strategic about how it promotes them, making them inclusive as well as ensuring that people won't either be stigmatized or hesitant to attend. So, a program entitled "Know Your Rights" will likely draw more participants than one called "Let's Talk About Human Trafficking." These are all good examples of public awareness campaigns and outreach strategies that take into account the cultural contexts and realities of the intended audience.

### National and International Anti-Trafficking Public Awareness Efforts

Informing the public about human trafficking can take place on many levels. President Obama proclaimed January as "National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month" and said:

Fighting modern slavery and human trafficking is a shared responsibility. This month, I urge all Americans to educate themselves about all forms of modern slavery and the signs and consequences of human trafficking. Together, we can and must end this most serious, ongoing criminal civil rights violation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Rescue and Restore Regional Program serves as the focal point for regional public awareness campaign activities and intensification of local outreach to identify victims of human trafficking. Each Rescue and Restore Regional partner oversees and builds the capacity of a local anti-trafficking network, sub-awarding 60 percent of grant funds to grassroots organizations that identify and work with victims. By acting as a focal point for regional anti-trafficking efforts, Rescue and Restore Regional partners encourage a cohesive and collaborative approach in the fight against modern-day slavery. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/about/divisions.htm#5>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/presidential-proclamation-national-slavery-and-human-trafficking-prevention-month>

Others around the country also observed January 11, 2010 as “Human Trafficking Awareness Day.”<sup>4</sup> Around the state and nation, people rally to raise awareness of human trafficking in a variety of other ways. CAST, conducted an intense broad-based public awareness campaign from January – February 2010.<sup>5</sup>

“The public” is often a target for awareness. This means the public-at-large and brings to mind billboards, posters, print advertising, and other kinds of messaging meant for mass audiences. These campaigns are almost always accompanied by interactive websites that offer: information about human trafficking; compelling visual images; resources; direction on how to get involved, learn more and contact organizers; and links to other compatible sites. An example of this kind of campaign is the New York City Mayor Bloomberg’s public awareness campaign: Let’s End Human Trafficking.<sup>6</sup>

Two states, Washington and Texas, have passed laws to promote public awareness of human trafficking. In Washington State, the 2010 Legislature passed a bill to allow the posting of multi-lingual information about human trafficking, including hotline numbers, in highway rest areas, particularly in bathroom stalls.<sup>7</sup> Another law passed that year in Washington directs the Department of Labor and Industries to incorporate information on assisting victims of trafficking “as appropriate” into its posters and brochures.<sup>8</sup> Texas passed a law in 2007 that mandates that any establishment that sells alcohol post signs in English and Spanish that display information about human trafficking including the national human trafficking hotline number.<sup>9</sup> The national hotline staff cites this as one reason why Texas has more calls into the Hotline than any other state.

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<sup>4</sup> See this website for a listing of activities that occurred around the country on January 11, 2010.

[http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/national\\_human\\_trafficking\\_awareness\\_day\\_events\\_near\\_you](http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/national_human_trafficking_awareness_day_events_near_you)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.castla.org/campaign-calendar>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.nyc.gov/html/endht/html/home/home.shtml>

<sup>7</sup> <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Law%202010/6330.SL.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Law%202010/6332-S.SL.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/AL/htm/AL.104.htm#104.07>

An important aspect of some of these public awareness efforts is that they are leveraged with existing work. The Texas campaign builds on the already-existing requirements to post information. There are scores of organizations already doing public outreach campaigns – whether they are for safety like Crime Stoppers or Neighborhood Watch programs or more specialized, community-based outreach conducted to reach day laborers or mini radio “novellas” developed to reach farmworkers from indigenous areas of Mexico done by CAST partners in the Los Angeles area.

The use of on-line and hard copy “tool kits” is also an increasingly popular and useful way to engage the general public and promote awareness. These toolkits have several common features. They are easy to read, access and download, they are free or at low cost, and they contain basic and strategic information that can help the novice as well as someone with an understanding of human trafficking take action in his or her community. Some are geared to certain sectors such as those produced by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes for criminal justice professionals,<sup>10</sup> but most are broad in their appeal like the community Members’ Guide produced by Free the Slaves.<sup>11</sup>

Other campaigns feature similar messaging and also include links to social media sites such as Facebook or Myspace and other forms of electronic media publicity. Some campaigns are primarily web-based and feature short public service announcements that are developed solely for viewing on line. Other forms of electronic media, such as MTV’s *EXIT, End Exploitation and Trafficking* campaign features short PSAs and Hollywood stars such as Lucy Liu and Angelina Jolie narrating short documentary-style videos that tell the trafficking survivors’ stories in ways designed to appeal to today’s youth.<sup>12</sup> This campaign also features videos of Asian survivors’ and traffickers’ voices in their native languages including Burmese, Thai, Tagalog, Mongolian and Korean. This web-based campaign again illustrates the importance of being culturally relevant and appropriate to the target audience. Here, both young people as well as non-

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/publications.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.freetheslaves.net/Document.Doc?id=69>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.mtvexit.org/video.php?lang=1>

English speakers from a variety of Asian cultures are seeing culturally-tailored and language appropriate messages.

There is no question that these broad-based types of public messaging are crucial. Other examples are both the “Blue Heart” campaign of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC)<sup>13</sup> and the “Blue Blindfold” campaigns in both the United Kingdom<sup>14</sup> and Canada.<sup>15</sup> “The Blue Heart represents the sadness of those who are trafficked while reminding us of the cold-heartedness of those who buy and sell fellow human beings. The use of the blue UN colour also demonstrates the commitment of the United Nations to combating this crime against human dignity.” The “Blue Blindfold” campaign is also broad-based:

The Blue Blindfold represents how people are blind to the fact that human trafficking is happening near them. If people see something, we want them to take positive action. To open their eyes. To call Crimestoppers anonymously. Or report it to their local police.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, in the U.S. the most well-known of the public awareness campaigns is the “Look Beneath the Surface” themed “Rescue and Restore” campaign.<sup>17</sup> All of these campaigns take on the task of educating the public-at-large.

### Florida Public Awareness Campaigns

Florida has not adopted a statewide anti-trafficking public awareness campaign of any kind. Some communities and organizations have adopted or used the national Rescue and Restore coalition materials. Many others, including some of the anti-trafficking coalitions allied with the Rescue and Restore campaign, have created and used their own local campaign messages in

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.unodc.org/blueheart/en/about-us.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.blueblindfold.co.uk/index.php>

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[http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/canadas\\_blue\\_blindfold\\_campaign\\_will\\_open\\_eyes\\_to\\_human\\_trafficking](http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/canadas_blue_blindfold_campaign_will_open_eyes_to_human_trafficking)

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.blueblindfold.co.uk/aboutukhtc/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/>

addition to the Rescue and Restore materials. Public awareness efforts have been diverse across the state and few areas have engaged in actual campaigns. Rather their efforts are usually limited to one-time events such as sponsored awareness walks, marches, or conferences where national speakers have come and addressed an aspect of human trafficking. Some local human trafficking task forces, coalitions, anti-trafficking non-governmental organizations,<sup>18</sup> service groups,<sup>19</sup> faith-based organizations and others have also mounted local campaigns to raise awareness of human trafficking in their own areas.<sup>20</sup> For instance, Catholic dioceses statewide are now receiving training on human trafficking so that in January 2011, Catholic churches around the state will be learning about human trafficking, and how to assist trafficking victims, on the same Sunday.

The Clearwater/Tampa Bay Area Task Force on Human Trafficking has a great deal of information on its website including videos and public service announcements.<sup>21</sup> The website lists Task Force activities, as well as upcoming training events so that people in that area can become educated on the topic and engage locally.

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) engages in a wide variety of public awareness campaigns ranging from the recent Florida Modern-Day Slavery Museum which has traveled throughout Florida and other places in the U.S. to the “fair food” and “anti-slavery” campaigns that promote just wages and treatment for farm workers.<sup>22</sup> The key to the CIW’s education, outreach, and public awareness efforts are the many different levels in which they engage. The low-power radio station reaches out specifically to workers, CIW materials are framed in a general labor rights framework which can assist workers and the public to understand that human trafficking is on a continuum of labor abuses as well as to help workers understand their right. CIW’s consumer-based campaign is highlighted by the mobile modern-day slavery

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ciw-online.org/>

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.zonta-tallahassee.org/index.php/human\\_trafficking/](http://www.zonta-tallahassee.org/index.php/human_trafficking/)

<sup>20</sup> See pages 64 through 76 of this *Plan* for a description of local anti-trafficking task forces and coalition public awareness activities in Florida.

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.catfht.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=4&Itemid=12](http://www.catfht.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4&Itemid=12)

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.ciw-online.org/>



museum and marches, and their numerous presentations engage students and communities across Florida. These efforts are focused on involving consumers in corporate accountability campaigns. The CIW website is replete with videos, news and other information and features all of these efforts.

Two NGOs in Florida, the Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking (FCHAT) and the Florida Freedom Partnership (FFP), have sponsored public awareness efforts aimed at disseminating general information to Florida communities about human trafficking. These campaigns used a combination of print advertising, billboards, and a series of public service announcements to warn about the dangers of human trafficking, including child sexual exploitation.

Other kinds of public awareness campaigns or outreach strategies are those that focus on a particular population. For instance in May 2009, the Southeastern Network of Youth and Family Services (SEN) received a grant to support Rescue and Restore Coalition activities in Alabama and at seven sites in Florida.<sup>23</sup> Through training and technical assistance, practice protocols, and real time guidance, this project targets street outreach program staffs and service providers at runaway and homeless youth centers so they can assist domestic and foreign born human trafficking victims. Runaway and homeless youth shelters are important places to target this kind of outreach as many victims of trafficking may either be referred to these facilities or, due to past abuse or other vulnerabilities, may be easy prey for traffickers in the future. Professional groups, such the Florida Medical Association, have also begun to include human trafficking in their mandatory domestic violence training curriculum.<sup>24</sup> The Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence received grant funding and developed materials to help local domestic violence centers understand human trafficking and assist victims including a handbook in English, Spanish and Creole as well as a manual for domestic violence programs.<sup>25</sup> FCAHT has also begun a new initiative in coordination with local school boards designed to

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<sup>23</sup> [http://data.memberclicks.com/site/snyfs/Human\\_Trafficking\\_Compendium\\_2010.pdf](http://data.memberclicks.com/site/snyfs/Human_Trafficking_Compendium_2010.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.fmaonline.org/Layout\\_1Column.aspx?pageid=2722](http://www.fmaonline.org/Layout_1Column.aspx?pageid=2722)

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.fcadv.org/legal>

bring human trafficking trainings into local high school classrooms. This public awareness project focuses on teenage girls who might be at risk of domestic minor sex trafficking.

The 2010 Super Bowl in Miami, Florida provided the venue for one of the country's first concerted public awareness campaigns against domestic minor sex trafficking. A coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including Kristi House, Klaas Kids, and the FCAHT, joined forces with local law enforcement agencies to raise awareness about the commercial sexual exploitation of minors that often surrounds major U.S. sporting events. Aware that Internet sites and community newspapers were marketing the ready availability of "escorts" to sports fans arriving for the weekend, the NGOs were especially concerned about the likely influx of potential traffickers and minor victims into the area. The coalition of volunteers targeted hotels and businesses that might come in contact with minor victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and conducted trafficking awareness efforts prior to Super Bowl weekend. They then sponsored street outreach during the game weekend itself, coordinating with juvenile sweeps and missing child recovery efforts conducted by the Miami-Dade Police Department. A total of 163 volunteers participated in the outreach efforts. A total of 14 leads were generated regarding missing children, and six children were recovered. An anti-trafficking NGO in Kentucky has planned a similar event to generate awareness of human trafficking and help for victims at an upcoming international equestrian event.

### Overcoming Challenges

There are many challenges to successful public awareness campaigns, with one of the foremost being how to measure the campaign's effectiveness. Anecdotal evidence is the most common way to assess success and is a valid measurement. For instance if an intake counselor asks someone seeking services "How did you hear about us?" this information can help that NGO understand its impact and reach. Some organizations can measure the effectiveness by how many calls come to their hotlines, perhaps one of the more quantitative tools. With resources being scarce, it is difficult for groups to justify large evaluation budgets; at the same time, it is important to ensure that money spent on public awareness is not wasted, so making some

effort to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach is important. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement is working with its public awareness and outreach grantees to develop “best practices” in this area – and this information should be valuable for current grantees as well as other groups around the country to be able to develop successful strategies.

Other challenges come when public awareness efforts assume incorrectly that the community they are targeting is homogenous or when the community outreach results in people sympathizing with the traffickers or blaming the victims for the abuse that they suffer. Anyone engaging in public awareness strategies should be prepared to counter these misinterpretations of the anti-trafficking messages. Troubling consequences can follow when, a compelling campaign inspires people to “rescue” or “save” victims on their own. This can instead endanger both the “rescuers” and the victims, as well as run afoul of ongoing law enforcement investigations. Therefore, it is imperative for public awareness efforts to ensure that individuals and NGOs know *not* to try to “save” victims on their own, know where to call if they suspect human trafficking, and know how they can assist victims with food, clothing, employment and other needs under the direction of a qualified anti-trafficking NGO.

Another caveat and challenge to victim safety occurs when NGOs and others allow the media to accompany law enforcement on “raids” or share information concerning victims or potential victims with the media. The 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report is explicit on these points:

NGOs, however, should not play a lead role in a raid or rescue, as they lack authority to perform law enforcement actions and could easily be caught in a cross-fire. NGOs and the media should avoid any practices harmful to the rights of children or others. While it may be attractive as a public relations tool, including broadcast media in counter-trafficking raids is an invasion of victims’ privacy and puts them at risk.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/142750.htm>

Another challenge to public awareness can be the media itself. Very often, reporters are “looking for a victim” to give the issue of human trafficking a “face.” This is extremely dangerous to the victim for not only can the trafficker use that information to find and harm the victim, but media exposure is a serious invasion of victim privacy.

The trafficking survivor’s privacy is paramount. An NGO or anyone working with a human trafficking survivor should never:

- Disclose a victim’s location to the media (in the hope of generating public support and interest)
- Give any identifying information to reporters; or
- Suggest that a human trafficking survivor could help the cause by speaking with the media when he or she is not ready and when it is not safe. That survivor could feel pressure to please those who are helping her.

Disclosure of victim identifying information not only endangers them; it can make it impossible for them to return to their home country. For instance, a news story about a woman who was a victim of sex trafficking in the U.S. that reaches her family in her home country can result in her being shunned by family and her community so she can never return. Trafficking survivors should have contact with the media only when it is safe to do so, when they are physically and emotionally able and when they have an attorney or other advocate to help them negotiate logistics and details of the interview.

There are many different public awareness strategies regarding human trafficking today in Florida, around the nation and across the globe. The overall goal for these strategies is to present information in a way that increases a person’s understanding of human trafficking so that he or she can act in ways that will help victims and hold traffickers accountable. Determining how sharing information can change behavior is a great challenge and it is

important to make sure that the time and other resources that go into public awareness strategies are well-spent and meet their goals.

### **Recommendations**

17. The Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force should request, and the Legislature should provide, funding to support statewide and local human trafficking public awareness campaigns. These campaigns should be tailored to identified needs and include funding to support evaluation for effectiveness. Such campaigns should be both local and statewide in nature.
18. Local human trafficking task forces and coalitions should connect with one another and share information about public awareness campaigns. Where appropriate, they should provide linkages and coordinate public awareness campaigns and messaging.
19. Florida should have a centralized place such as an electronic website where public awareness campaigns and awareness materials are posted and able to be shared. This should include links to outreach efforts such as those being undertaken by the Youth and Family Services Network.
20. The Florida Legislature should adopt laws similar to those in Texas and in Washington State that direct how public information on human trafficking should be posted in establishments that sell alcohol as well as at highway rest areas and other workplaces.
21. NGOs and others who work with victims of trafficking should hold victim privacy paramount and never disclose victim location, identifying information or any other information that infringes on the victim's privacy. Victims should participate in media campaigns or public awareness efforts only when it is safe to do so, when the victim is able and when the victim has the assistance of a trained advocate or attorney.