

We also partner with other grassroots organizations and NGOs on a number of anti-trafficking initiatives. We are currently collaborating with the anti-trafficking program "Change" on a European Union-funded STOP II project "Best Practices in Inter-Agency Cooperation." The research was funded by the European Commission STOP II Program (dedicated to preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and all forms of sexual exploitation of children and young people, and to assist the victims of these criminal activities) and the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The aim of the study was to identify the governmental and non-governmental agencies working to combat trafficking in Italy, the UK, Greece, Czech Republic and Romania; to collect and analyze information on their work and the measures undertaken by them; and to collect and analyze information on how the organizations work together to prevent and combat trafficking in women and girls. An important aspect of the study is the establishment of an international network of professionals working on the issue of trafficking.

We are also partners in another project with EU DAPHNE that focuses on preventative measures to fight violence against children, young people, and women.

Conclusion

Trafficking is not a phenomenon that affects just one or a few countries. It affects all countries in the world. It is on this global basis that efforts must be made to address the issue and to implement anti-trafficking initiatives.

There is much that still needs to be done with respect to the protection of trafficked victims and in the fight against trafficking. There is need for more coordination and networking between governments of sending and receiving countries. Law enforcement agencies should be trained and given better resources to assist them in the identification of victims and possible victims of trafficking. Traffickers and pimps should not be protected and can easily be brought to justice if proper action is taken against them. Effective measures should be taken by governments to eliminate those social and cultural factors that encourage the sale and trafficking of women and children into prostitution as well as into other forms of indentured labour. Moreover, we must recognize that the unequal and exploitative global economic structure that has relegated a part of the world into perennial poverty is unacceptable.

In a global socio-cultural environment where media images and social stereotypes promote the exploitation of women in prostitution, where prostitution is accepted as a valid "employment" alternative, and where it is acceptable for the human body to be commodified and commercialized, the fight against trafficking and the exploitation of women, children and men trapped in various forms of modern-day slavery is bound to fail. These factors must be

addressed and eliminated for anti-trafficking initiatives and programs to succeed.

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¹These are oath-taking rituals in which parts of the body of the girls (i.e., pubic hair, nails, menstrual blood, hair and pieces of intimate clothing) are taken and placed before traditional shrines. The girls are made to swear an oath not to disclose the origin of their trip abroad, to pay their "debt" (usually not stated at the moment of stipulating the "blood contract"), and never to report to the police.

²Iroko is the name of a tree which has magical properties and, in part, denotes protection and fighting back.

References

Aghatise, Esohe "Research and Case-study on the International Trafficking of Nigerian Girls for Prostitution in Italy." Unpublished manuscript, 2001.

MARIE JANICK BELLEAU

Hommage à Hale-Bopp

Rendez-vous nocturne
 Lire du Ionesco
 Sur un air de Strauss
 En goûtant ta chevelure
 Dans quelque quatre mille ans.

Marie Janick Belleau's poetry appears earlier in this volume.