Combating Trafficking in Sri Lanka: Multisystemic National Action Plan for Effective Intervention, Protection, Persecution, and Prevention

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Trafficking is a global phenomenon and impacts every country in the world, albeit differently. Social problems, such as human trafficking, run deep into the fabric of a country. Any efforts to combat human trafficking at national levels need to consider the interconnectedness of systems, thus, the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and the interactions between these levels need to be considered.

The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act of 2000 ranks countries on three tiers when it comes to their efforts to prevent human trafficking. Sri Lanka is currently on trafficking Tier 2 watch list country. This paper provides a detailed context and analysis of the context of trafficking in Sri Lanka and identifies gaps in the existing services and a context for a theory of change based on the gaps in services. It also gives a comprehensive action plan for a national-level social change utilizing a multi-systemic and multi-stakeholder approach. Recommendations for human service workers hoping to work in developing countries are provided.

Keywords: *trafficking, Sri Lanka, organized crime, multi-stakeholder approach*

This paper provides a detailed and comprehensive national strategy to combat trafficking in a country. Trafficking in persons is considered as one of the most atrocious crimes in the modern day (Department of State, United States, 2019). Given the aberrant human rights violations involved in human trafficking, it is

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often referred to as the “modern day slavery” (Piotrowicz, Rijkn, & Uhl, 2019). It is very lucrative for the perpetrators involved, with gains over billion dollars annually (Gillispie, Russo, & Shah Arora, 2019). The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) (2000), used “trafficking in persons” as an umbrella term that covers a wide variety of offenses, such as maintaining someone in forced labor or recruiting someone for compelled commercial sexual exploitation. Trafficking under this protocol is defined as ((UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000):

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, 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, for the purpose of exploitation.

This definition provided a much-needed foundation on which governments could build policies that criminalize human trafficking and stop traffickers, protect victims and prevent victimization, and promote cooperation among countries (Department of State, United States, 2019).

While the nature and type of human trafficking may vary, all nations are impacted by the exploitation of human beings through enslavement, abduction, coercion, and fraud for financial and other gains by the perpetrators. Consequently, human trafficking unfortunately is a crime that cuts across nations, and every country, in some way or the other, is impacted by the issue of human trafficking (UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2009; 2018).

The South Asian Island of Sri Lanka is no exception. Sri Lanka experiences several forms of trafficking vulnerabilities. For migration trafficking, Sri Lanka is primarily a source country, and to a lesser extent destination country. Primary destination countries for trafficking include Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius, and North Korea (Amirthalingam, Jayatilaka, Lakshman, & Liyanage, n.d.; Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2020). These workers migrate primarily for domestic work, construction work, garment factory work, and sex work, but some of them end up being trafficked in labor or sexual exploitation conditions (Amirthalingam et al., n.d.; Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2020; Squire & Wijeratne, 2008). More recently, for example, former male child soldiers or former male insurgents, are seeking smuggling routes to escape the country seeking to migrate to other countries, increasing their vulnerabilities to victimization of trafficking. No research is available beyond what is available from the Navy

(Howie, 2013; Personnel communication with Navy officials by the researchers; Sayakkarage, 2016).

Many migrant workers get trapped because they are required to pay high recruitment fees, which are required to be paid back with interest by unscrupulous Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies. These agencies often use sub-agents, who often fall outside the legal system. This traps the migrants in debt bondage. Terms and conditions of jobs are also sometimes falsified or changed when arriving abroad. Some are forced into prostitution upon arrival. To a lesser extent, Sri Lanka is also a destination country for women from Central and East Asia, South Asia, Europe, and Egypt for forced sex work. Child trafficking is also a source of major concern. More recently, refugees from Myanmar, and illegal migrants from South Asia, are coming to Sri Lanka through illegal routes. However, no follow-up has been done to identify their vulnerabilities for trafficking (Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2020; Sayakkarage, 2016).

Children's vulnerability to trafficking arises from several venues: forced sex work in brothels for girls and forced sex child tourism in coastal areas in the case of boys (Miller, 2011). In addition, socioeconomically vulnerable children are forced into begging in the capital and the central sector of the country. Bonded labor conditions are also experienced in dry zone areas where farming, plantation, and fishery industries are operating. While child domestic labor is explicitly banned, child domestic exploitative labor conditions, or slavery-like conditions, have been identified, especially with children from tea plantation areas. More recently, there is concern of displaced minority children from Northern and Northeastern areas. However, very little research is available on this aspect (Amirthalingam et al., n.d.; Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2020). More recent reports are available regarding orphanages running child prostitution rings. Adult sex trafficking by and large targets women, and most vulnerable rural women are brought into the sex industry through false promises (Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2020).

This paper, developed initially as a grant proposal, was done following extensive information gathering through available literature as well as personal communication with relevant government officials, nonprofit and grassroots advocates, and impacted survivors, and even communication with some perpetrators of trafficking.

Human service sectors, including the social work field, have an obligation to combat trafficking. Like many other complex social issues with multilayered complexities and vulnerabilities, no one field or no one approach can effectively address trafficking in any country. Instead multi-sector, multipronged approaches are needed. The United States Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons outlines a persecution, protection, and prevention-based approach to combat trafficking worldwide (Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2020). According to the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Person (2014):

The “3P” paradigm—prosecution, protection, and prevention—continues to serve as the fundamental framework used by governments around the world to combat human trafficking... The U.S. Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons employs diplomatic, economic, political, and legal tools to advance the “3P” paradigm worldwide. In addition, a “fourth P”—partnership—serves as a complementary means to achieve progress across the 3Ps and to ensure that all segments of society are enlisted in the fight against modern slavery.

Coming from social work and conflict resolution perspectives, this paper suggests a four-tier recommendation plan for Sri Lanka that goes beyond partnerships as the fourth pillar, to include direct service interventions for survivors. This paper discusses in detail the context of trafficking in Sri Lanka, by discussing the current efforts, and presents a national action plan that was congruent with the former Trafficking National Action Plan. It discusses ways in which the government, the human service sector, survivors, and the larger communities can implement empowerment-based effective strategies. Specifically, it discusses a strategic effort that looks at the following approaches:

1. Identify and map problem areas for arrest and conviction
2. Improve victim assistance, empowerment, and psychosocial services
3. Hold offenders and criminal justice accountable (including worker paid recruiters)
4. Improve victim identification, referral, and prevention of victimization
5. Work with core agencies and partners to improve regulatory reform

In addition, risks inherent in the proposal are also presented. The paper concludes with the relevance of this approach and the impact to social workers and the human service sector in general.

Current Efforts to Address Trafficking in Sri Lanka

At present, trafficking is addressed under Section 360C of the Penal Code (Amendment) Act, No. 16 of 2006. This 2006 amendment to the penal code was based on the Palermo Protocol, adopted by the United Nations. However, the Sri Lankan penal code is narrower; for example, the Sri Lankan penal code does not explicitly state in the case of adult victims of trafficking the relevancy of consent (Penal Code of Sri Lanka, 2006; UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000). As of 2020, Sri Lanka remains in the Tier 2 trafficking watch list (Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2020). Sri Lanka received a waiver from otherwise being downgraded to Tier 3 (the lowest tier) watch list due to measures they have taken toward combatting trafficking. Sri Lanka became a state party to the United Nations Trafficking Protocol of the Palermo Protocols in June 2015. In 2015, Sri

Lanka ratified this UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (Shadow Report, 2016). In 2016, the Government of Sri Lanka initiated a written national Strategic Plan to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking for 2015–2019. This strategic plan commits the country to symmetrically address trafficking based on the protection, persecution, prevention, and partnership model (National Strategic Plan, 2016). However, it was not implemented in many of its areas. Implementation of this strategic plan could have helped to make great strides toward meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. At present, the country does not fully meet the minimum standards for combating trafficking as laid out by the US State Department. However, it continues to persecute traffickers and identify victims, even though these efforts are not enforced fully (Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2020). As of 2020 a new National Action Plan to combat trafficking is needed.

Author Analysis of Gaps in the Current Service Delivery and the National Plan

In 2017, the primary two authors along with a team of contributors conducted an extensive initial analysis of the context of trafficking in the country. This section discusses the gaps identified from this analysis.

Sri Lanka lags behind other Asian countries in the region such as the Philippines in addressing human trafficking. At this time, intervention efforts to combat trafficking can be improved in many areas. Conditions of vulnerability and despair due to poverty, lack of skills, an inability to obtain jobs within the country, and discrimination are being exploited by unscrupulous groups. Social, cultural, and political contexts, as well as gender oppression, facilitate the exploitation of women, girls, and boys. Post-war conflict has caused displacement and scattering of populations, thus increasing the vulnerability to trafficking. Many of these victims need sustainable avenues for income generation.

Vulnerable populations, as well as the general public, need to be sensitized and educated on trafficking. Trafficking remains a taboo topic in the country. The majority of people who fall prey to trafficking were not aware of their legal rights and the laws that can prosecute traffickers. Mental health needs are also not addressed. Many who have experienced trafficking have undergone oppressive and traumatic encounters. Many of these individuals are at high risk for depression and suicide. They also develop symptoms of complex trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder. Their trauma is often neglected. Extensive training is needed to address victims of such trauma, especially within crisis contexts such as suicide counseling. Long-term counseling addressing deep-seated trauma, and case management and advocacy efforts based on trauma informed care (TIC) are not in place. No organized efforts have been undertaken to train direct service workers at the community level on mental health needs and proper engagement, assessment, intervention, and identification.

The government and the major anti-trafficking organizations like the International Organization for Migration (IOM) recognize that coordinated multi-sectorial responses are needed to address the issue of trafficking. In fact, to this end, as mentioned above, they have created the national strategic plan, anti-trafficking taskforce, and multi-sector trainings. However, the authors found that many of the sections of the strategic plan were not implemented. Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act, No. 04, which was implemented in 2015 (Ministry of Justice, 2020), as a result of the strategic plan, has not yet fully benefitted the survivors. In addition, many of these efforts are top down, with no follow-up protocol and without much understanding of the ground-level operations. For example, the task force includes top officials from various relevant sectors; once these officials were transferred, there was no follow-up as to who was appointed as a replacement. The primary authors' communication with one official who replaced a key taskforce position was not aware of the task force itself or if the person was in the task force. This is especially relevant with regard to the government's nonrecognition/nonacceptance of the role of "middlemen" who exploit potential workers. Author findings are similar to what has been reported by the existing literature, that very little follow-up has been done (Shadow Report, 2016). The taskforce by and large appears to be inactive in many key areas.

In addition, in Sri Lanka, while you need the buy-in from the top-ranking officials to implement action, real work happens at the grassroots levels and the first responder levels. While numerous trainings were conducted, majority of the trainings were done with the high-level officials. Many persons in the criminal justice system lack knowledge of the legal definitions and contexts of trafficking. This has resulted in cases getting dropped at the initial complaint phase. Laws and penalties are rarely enforced. It is clear victims are not accessing the services that are available, but reasons for the underutilization of services have not been explored. At present, the focus on building capacity of officials does not adequately meets the needs of the grassroots/first responders. The authors' follow-up with women's desks identified that many are not aware of the penal code definition of trafficking and/or how to properly assess trafficking conditions in spite of the standard operation procedures (SOPs) being issued. Some in the rural sector were not even aware of the current SOPs created. Trainings were also criticized for being too technical and culturally inappropriate. Trafficking shelter services and other social services available are extremely underutilized. No comprehensive assessments have been conducted on this.

There are delays at very critical stages, not only with criminal justice intervention but also with providing safety planning, shelter, social services, health, and economic assistance. Our follow-up identified that men hardly receive any follow-up or social service solutions. No organized efforts have been undertaken to train community leaders; health workers, such as nurses and doctors; teachers; religious leaders; village-level officials (grama sewakas), etc.

Solutions are also at times remedial and not comprehensive. For example, while Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau (SLFBE) provides health insurance

to legal migrants, authors' research showed that many migrants are not aware of the extent of the coverage, or their entitlements therein. Very few appear to have utilized their health insurance or even appear to be compensated even when they had work-related injuries. Very few seem to be aware of insurance available in some foreign countries. Collective knowledge of the project team as well as body of research conducted over the years have identified many men and women who fell prey to trafficking like conditions did not report, or take actions, rather they sought support from families or through informal support structures (Amirthalingam et al., n.d.; Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2020). Official options available appear to be sought by more knowledgeable workers. The most vulnerable appear not to have been aware of the options available. It is mostly in very few high-profile contexts that official channels appear to be used. Many a time, women go back to the international host agency, which forces women to either go back to their employer or go to another employer. In one situation, where one of our teams assisted a worker who was brought from Jordan to the United States for domestic work, she stated under oath that she is aware of extreme abuse by the foreign employment agency, where she herself witnessed some women being physically abused and there was even suspicion that the agency has killed a worker.

At the moment, there is no system to officially hold these international host agencies accountable for their violations. Very little seems to get reported. In addition, Sri Lanka does not have a system where violating employers are automatically tagged wherein future employees will not be sent to these employers. In Sri Lanka, they have to be reported to SLBFE by the employee, embassy, or someone else to get registered. Even then, it is not clear if such employers will be prevented from receiving Sri Lankan workers.

Sri Lanka does not have social work case managers housed in the embassies who can visit workers at their places of employment or in the foreign employment agency to follow-up on workers. Corruption at the government level means that many things can be changed or bought for the right price. For example, our follow-up with licensed agencies revealed that workers who are incapable of passing the required training courses due to literacy gaps tend to buy their required course completion training certifications. Money to do so sometimes comes from intermediaries and, thus, they are bonded to them. Even licensed agencies use or encourage illegal channels.

In addition, to bypass training and other requirements, many agencies charge the women and send them abroad as if they are migrating on their own. This makes the workers vulnerable for exploitation, as there is no paper trail of contracts. In addition, while the law states that all contracts need to be reviewed by SLBFE, and workers have to sign contracts in the district or main SFBE office, it often does not happen in practice. Not all contracts are reviewed by the officials, and in fact, of the contracts reviewed by the team, licensed agency contracts state hours of employment and other such relevant information, whereas employee contracts do not mention hours of employment and other such terms of

employment clearly. In general, unfortunately, our initial assessments have found that what is on paper and what is actually taking place are sometimes not the same. In addition, sometimes workers sign second contracts with employees once they go abroad, making them more vulnerable.

Laws also tend to at times put the burden on women; for example, women with children under the age of 5 cannot leave (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Such laws tend to push women to seek illegal routes to leave. In Sri Lanka, it is not uncommon to obtain false passports or even birth certificates for the right price. Sri Lankan laws, while following the UN protocol on trafficking, do not state that initial consent is irrelevant for trafficking. This also is an issue for trafficking conviction and makes convicting sex traffickers within the country extremely difficult. In a research study done by one of the project members, it was identified that the sex industry is well connected to the underworld (Organized crime) and without the police and political buy in - through bribery, these illegal operations cannot function.

In addition, even when women knew they were entering the sex industry, the terms were not what they agreed to. For example, women were expected to have free sex with managers and other employees, police, people from the underworld, or any powerful officials the agency deemed relevant. Many reported situations of brutal rape and not getting paid. However, convicting them as trafficking survivors is difficult due to several reasons; even when women were brought in from rural areas, they probably stayed in nearby hostels or homes for rent. Fear of threat from managers, the underworld, and even the police, and cultural taboos, prevents these women from leaving the brothels. On the other hand, fewer instances of extreme trafficking where women were kept at the brothel houses without free movement were also found.

In Sri Lanka, if a brothel house is raided, all involved can get arrested; however, in reality, it is mostly women that get arrested, and the past record is used to convict future arrests and convictions. Some women even mentioned getting picked up from the street on their way home. With patriarchal cultural norms putting the burden of blame on women, it is extremely difficult to convict adult sex trafficking rings. It also came to our team's attention that even when anonymous tips come in for child sex trafficking or sexual exploitation, mobilizing necessary teams takes time due to bureaucratic red tape; for example, forensic doctors, police, and child services investigators need government permission before they can start investigations. These delays prevent swift action, which is needed to rescue such people, for the traffickers can move before all teams are mobilized.

Systematic studies mapping barriers for survivors reaching out for help are lacking, such as the initial contact with entities that they reached out for assistance, contact with criminal justice, social services, legal justice workers, and their follow-ups have not been traced to identify where the points of barriers are, and the reasons for low conviction rates and low reaching out for assistance (Office of Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2017, 2019, 2020). Several government and nongovernment organizations have reached out to the team

for practical training; for example, trafficking hotline assessments, how to assist traumatized survivors, training for teachers to identify the vulnerable who are used for begging, etc.

While the author analysis points to some of the gaps, systematic analyses need to be conducted to understand all points of barriers in a systematic, comprehensive, and in-depth manner. Very little effort has been made to mobilize the communities and the impacted people for empowerment. While this article is being written, the IOM has received funding and is launching some grassroots-level activities in a more systematic manner. While most of the community outreach as well as trainings and intervention efforts have been very top down, very little effort has been made to utilize the vulnerable communities, past migrants, or people who were trafficked in advisory capacities or as advocates. Communities and migrant workers themselves need to be mobilized for effective long-lasting changes as well as for human rights and justice based on true empowerment in the long run. Intervention and prevention efforts in the country in general are done haphazardly without much concerted and organized efforts.

Theory of Change

Any attempt to change needs to have a logic or theory of change. As primarily human services workers, these authors argue that the root causes of trafficking vulnerabilities need to be addressed, as there are many repeat victims who are denied the opportunity to develop necessary livelihood skills outside of these abusive systems. The psychosocial well-being of survivors and their families is essential for their well-being. Mobilizing and empowering trafficked victims themselves to be champions against trafficking is a sustainable and effective way to assist victims. Grassroots community watch groups are also powerful methods to identify and assist victims. Mass media can also be a very effective way to get to victim empowerment and referral, reaching a wider audience.

Changes to law enforcement and the courts systems must also be addressed. Solutions need to focus on the long term and sustainability beyond the implementation period. To this end, relevant government bodies and other responsible parties need to be identified so that projects can be handed over to them for sustainability. Prevention efforts need to be more far reaching, and new, more effective methodologies need to be identified. Data monitoring systems need to be coordinated in order to better understand the extent of the problem.

To become sustainable, any recommendations made must be made in conjunction with relevant stakeholders and with their inputs. The Sri Lanka Strategic Plan has laid out the initial steps for the areas for improvement. The most effective way to utilize the existing resources is to build upon the existing infrastructure. For example, legal aid experts can train police on the legal aspects of trafficking. Trainings need to go to where the need is and be delivered, if necessary, one to one, rather than from top down.

Finally, what is needed is to expand what is already done, continue what works, and come up with creative new solutions where it does not work, and new efforts to make officials accountable. These strategies also have to be comprehensive, culturally appropriate, transparent, and multi-sectorial. The strategic planning needs to be well-thought-out following comprehensive assessments. Below, the authors have presented a comprehensive strategic plan for Sri Lanka, which identified the initial assessment. The plan the authors present is two phased, starting with a comprehensive assessment.

Proposal of a Multi-systemic Model to Combat Trafficking in Sri Lanka

Authors recommend beginning with a comprehensive assessment of critical factors regarding Sri Lanka's human trafficking problems. This will help map out problem areas for protection, prevention, conviction, and partnership. These issues include gaps related to victim assistance, perpetrator accountability, societal views, existing resources, law enforcement policies and practice gaps, and the existing additional stakeholder policies and strategies to services. This thorough rapid assessment review will allow the design of phase two activities to be as systematic, effective, and efficient as possible. In addition, it is recommended that this phase conduct a feasibility assessment that includes evaluability of data identified. The knowledge gained in this phase will be a key component toward achieving the desired project capacity-building.

Phase 1

Goal 1: Comprehensive assessment

Objective 1: Identify strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement

Strategies/Activities for objective I.

1. Comprehensive needs assessment that helps to map the path to problem solves issues identified. (Assessment will look at each sector and potential victims, why some reach out and why others do not, and what happens when they reach out, tracing each area where problems may arise, such as the initial contact point to authorities, what actions were taken, what problems were encountered, what the outcome was).
2. Assessment of existing resources to identify their adequacy; for example, health insurance systems; training material; how licensing agencies are licensed; SOPs; type of trainings for the victims, licensed agencies, and officials. This will also help identify areas of strength and why existing resources are underutilized or ineffective. This assessment will also include talking to each involved agency that is responsible for implementing the written action plan to identify where the barriers are.

3. Assessment is recommended to identify collective strategies used by different types of traffickers involved in various types of trafficking. This involves mapping the traffickers' side, to identify each stage of exploitation; for example, patterns of trafficking by the brokers at the grassroots level, to mid-level recruiters, to higher level organized trafficker patterns of victimization. Assessment of training modules and the type of training, duration, and the qualification and experience of the people who train, and relevancy of the trainings).

Objective 2: Creating a strategic plan

Strategies/Activities for objective II.

1. A comprehensive strategic plan with recommendations based on findings from phase I assessment for each goal and objective identified for phase 2.

Phase 2

The delivery phase will address the four objectives listed above through a well-planned program that involves a minimum of the following strategies and activities (Please note that they may change based on findings from phase 1)

Objective 1: Improve victim assistance, empowerment, and psychosocial services

Activities:

1. Make recommendations and create strategic plans with key stakeholders for system improvements (e.g., National Child Protection Authority (NCPA), police, doctors, social workers, counselors, military)
2. Create a trafficked migrant worker rights coalition (with x number of paid members) and cost share with partners non-profits
3. Creation of livelihood programs combat the root cause of poverty (strongly recommend including victims, paying victims for advocacy, and victims participating in paid multimedia efforts)
4. Empower victims by including empowerment-building activities in government vocational training programs
5. Establish train the trainer (TOT) curriculums in order to incorporate the TIC approach into assessment, intervention, and advocacy
6. Use assessment data to make recommendations to government trafficking shelters to improve accessibility
7. Partners provide TIC intensive counseling, hotline, case management, and x number of support groups to reach x number of victims within the program implementation period
8. Trafficking service provider agencies receive TIC training

9. Expand the existing agency capacities such as 24-hour domestic violence hotline to include a trafficking line
10. Hold x number of workshops to train trafficking hotline workers on safety planning, suicide assessment, and trauma informed engagement
11. Provide assistance to partner agencies to develop procedures to set up a trust fund by year 3 and seek ongoing funding sources that go beyond the implementation period
12. Establish small-scale ACT NOW trafficking website as the national resource website for victim resources (transitioning toward government and university maintenance)

Objective 2: Hold offenders and criminal justice accountable (including worker paid recruiters) Activities:

1. Based on the findings, design a “blueprint for safety” for a coordinated policy response for trafficking to improve interagency policies and shift the burden of responsibility from victim to offender
2. Key partners will identify and handle X number of landmark legal cases to file Public Interest Litigation in order to increase litigation and educate the public about them
3. Improve prosecution efficiency by establishing victim and legal advocacy services (such as court accompaniment, assisting in written victim impact statement, etc.) by nonprofit and government agencies
4. Recruit former traffickers and survivors to create a series of educational documentaries for law enforcement about the acts, means, and purposes of trafficking with assistance from the navy
5. Hold workshops with the police on the differentiation between human trafficking and other related crimes, such as smuggling, labor exploitation, sex work, etc.
6. Assist government by designing a national database (based on an existing national action plan model) that will link hotline calls with procedures that maintain victim confidentiality, police complaints, arrests, convictions, and dismissals

Objective 3: Improve victim identification, referral, and prevention of victimization Activities:

1. Partner with legal aid to create a toll-free legal hotline that victims can call for help from within or outside the country
2. Conduct training sessions for airport officials to identify victims and how to direct them for assistance
3. Establish a migrant helpdesk at the airport manned by advocates and legal aid

4. Strengthen the existing 2six4 mobile-based app, to include trafficking information for victims to reach out to relevant authorities
5. Conduct x number of workshops with different government workers, such as public health workers training sessions, about how to identify potential victims and how to engage them
6. Empower grassroots trafficking migrant rights coalitions to identify, assist, and refer victims and traffickers to the police
7. Create and empower grassroots community watch groups to identify and assist victims and report offenders
8. Work with the media sector to create realistic tele-dramas, radio-dramas, and newspaper story series that tell different stories about trafficking methods and available resources (this type of multimedia effort has not been done before in the country)
9. Improve awareness efforts by incorporating recruitment methods learned from former traffickers
10. Hold x number of child workshops to educate children about the legal dynamics of trafficking and create anti-trafficking champion groups to raise awareness (through art competitions)
11. Create web-based legal rights brochures about child and adult trafficking victim rights
12. Conduct community legal clinics for victim empowerment
13. Conduct grassroots level street dramas in all in at risk communities
14. Create a drop-in center for sex workers to identify victims of sex trafficking through outreach

Objective 4: Work with core agencies and partners to improve regulatory reform Activities:

1. Make regulatory reform recommendations based on phase I findings stakeholders identified in the National Action Plan for trafficking in Sri Lanka
2. Create a manual and materials to improve coordinated trainings
3. Hold a multi-stakeholder conferences at the national level that will bring in an estimated x number of participants
4. Work with South Asia Federation Against Trafficking to hold a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) meeting to identify regional barriers and solutions in partnership with key partners
5. Hold monthly meeting with stakeholders to coordinate information
6. Connect anti-trafficking coalition and grassroots watch group partners with core agencies
7. Provide technical support as needed

Progress and Evaluation

Any project that aims to take on an undertaking such as this needs to have a comprehensive evaluation plan. The authors suggest conducting formative and summative evaluations targeting each of the objectives.

Risk Analysis

Collective research and intervention efforts that have been carried out by the project team give them a realistic sense of risk assessment. The team is aware that to a large extent, trafficking in countries such as Sri Lanka and other organized criminal activities exist due to the indirect support from the government officials and the nexus between criminal justice and other relevant officials for such activity. This is primarily because of the bribery mechanisms that exist starting from the police on the streets, going up the ladder to the very top levels. In addition, these criminal enterprises are sometimes directly or indirectly backed by politicians. These criminal rings also have underworld involvement, which is also closely associated often times with the politicians.

In addition, negligence on the part of the government officials also creates risk. Furthermore, going past bureaucratic red tape to conduct any new activities can

Evaluation Considerations

Objective	Outcome	Indicators	Target group for data
Objective 1	Reduce vulnerabilities, increase survivor well-being Increase organization capacity to address trafficking	Well-being scale and structured interviews Self-assessment scale of organization capacity Recommendations and discussions	Victims who were served through the program Staff who underwent training in key partner agencies
Objective 2	Increase the number of cases referred to the investigation unit, for arrest and prosecution	Number of prosecutions a year, type of prosecutions, complaints referred to investigation, and arrests	Case records
Objective 3	Attitudinal and behavior changes related to trafficking knowledge and services seeking	Creating an attitudinal and behavior change scale	Victims of trafficking
Objective 4	Increase coordination and the number of responses	Number of coordinated team responses, number of coordinated team meetings and self-assessments	Members of key partnering entities

Logic Model of the Plan	Activities	Output	Outcome
Grant funding	Activities to identify problems related to conviction and support:	Complete assessment	Identify and map problem areas for conviction, support, and recommendations
Agency partners:	Rapid participatory action research with stakeholders	Identify the necessary adjustments	
Nonprofit partners	Conduct project feasibility analysis		
Additional consultants	Activities to improve victim empowerment and direct services:	Submit recommendations to stakeholders	Reduce vulnerabilities, increase survivor well-being
Government partners and law enforcement and court partners	Recommendations and creation of strategic plans	Members get paid	Increase organization capacity to address trafficking
Community members	Creating a trafficked migrant worker rights coalition		
Project team and committees	Livelihood programs to combat the root cause of poverty	At least X number of victims benefit	
Physical resources, including facilities, technology, and supplies	Empowerment-building activities	X number of youths participate	
In-kind travel provided by the Sri Lankan government	Train the trainer (TOT) efforts	Create curriculum and conduct X number of sessions	
Victims	Recommendations to government trafficking shelters	Submit recommendations to various stakeholders	
Volunteers and staff	Provide enhanced TIC-based direct services	Reach X number of victims	
	Trafficking service provider agencies receive TIC training	Key agencies and receive TIC training	
	Expand the existing nonprofit 24-hour hotline to include a trafficking line	Victims of trafficking receive hotline services	
	Hold workshops to train trafficking hotline workers	Conduct X workshops for at least X number of individuals	
	Recommend to create a trust fund	Submit recommendations	

Activities to improve holding offenders and criminal justice accountable: Create a “blueprint for safety” for a coordinated policy response for trafficking Legal nonprofit partners will identify and handle legal cases to file public interest litigation Support prosecution efficiency through victim services Create educational documentaries Workshops with the police on the differentiation among human trafficking and other related crimes Designing a national database	Complete and submit a “blueprint for safety” manual Handle X number of litigation cases Provide victim advocacy activities to at least X number of victims Create X number of documentaries Hold X number of workshops	Increase coordination and effectiveness of the existing services, leading to an increase in the number of cases referred to the trafficking investigation unit, arrest, investigation, and prosecution
Activities to improve victim identification, referral, and prevention of victimization: Create a toll-free legal hotline Conduct training sessions for airport officials to identify victims Establish a migrant helpdesk at the airport Expand partner agency 2six4 mobile-based app for trafficking victims Conduct NCPA and public health workers training sessions Empower trafficking migrant rights coalition for victim identification and referral Create and empower grassroots community watch groups	Government uses the database Victims seek assistance through the hotline Conduct X number of training sessions Victims use help desk Trafficking victims use the app Conduct X number of training sessions Victims get referred for services Create at least X number of grassroots watch groups	Attitudinal and behavior changes related to trafficking knowledge and seeking of services

(Continued)

(Continued)

Input	Activities	Output	Outcome
	Work with the media sector to create realistic tele-dramas, radio-dramas, and newspaper story series	Broadcast them on media avenues that victims watch, listen, and read	
	Improve awareness efforts by incorporating recruitment methods learned from former traffickers	Identify new trafficking methods to improve trainings and the overall response	
	Hold child workshops to educate children about the legal dynamics of trafficking and create anti-trafficking champion groups to raise awareness (through art competitions)	Hold x number of workshops and create at least x number of champion groups	
	Create web-based legal rights brochures to be distributed among children and adults	Create X number of different types of brochures	
	Conduct community legal clinics for victim empowerment	Conduct X number of community clinics	
	Conduct grassroots-level street dramas in at risk communities	Conduct X number of street dramas in at risk communities	
	Create sex worker drop-in center	Increase the number of sex trafficking victims identified	
	Activities for working with core agencies and partners to improve regulatory reform:	Submit recommendations to the National Trafficking Taskforce	Improve overall coordination efforts from core agencies and partners with the aim of creating regulatory reform and improving trafficking services overall
	Make reform recommendations for coordinated trainings		
	Create a manual and materials on coordinated trainings		
	Hold multi-stakeholder national conferences with participants	Hold X number of national conferences	
	Hold SAARC meetings to identify regional barriers and solutions	Hold X number of SAARC meetings	
	Hold stakeholder meetings	Hold stakeholders meet monthly	
	Connect anti-trafficking coalition and grassroots watch groups	Establish at least one new partnership	
	Provide technical support as needed	Core agencies receive TA support	

be grueling and lengthy, especially if you are not well connected or if you are seen as going against those with vested interests. Projects can be put on hold before they get off the ground. This means that any entity working with the government needs to be very realistic and diplomatic, while finding creative avenues to indirectly or directly hold violators accountable.

On the other hand, the nonprofit sector, especially at the grassroots levels, often times is ready to spring into action, but frequently it lacks the resources and the necessary skills. In addition, mainstream modern feminist women's groups clash with the government and the political sector on their views on key issues. The private sector often is wary of working with funded projects that requires them to change. They are also known to figure out ways to cut red tape by taking easy routes, including by paying bribes to the relevant officials. It is with this knowledge that the team has created this proposal, and it accounts for shortcomings within the varying systems. The initial assessment team collectively has worked for over 30 years successfully with the government including all relevant branches mentioned here as well as with the private and nonprofit sectors.

However, the team has identified the following risk factors and the pertinent solutions. One of the major risk factors is that the government may not allow some of the work to be implemented. This is a reality that any team may face. To overcome this, it is recommended that any team initiating have buy-in from relevant stakeholders, such as showing proposed ideas to all relevant teams and obtaining their direct input. It is important to have team members who have worked with all major party government officials and that they are well respected by all parties.

Delays due to government interruptions, or other unanticipated reasons, or the inability to implement aspects of the proposal is another risk. To overcome this, the recommendation is the proposed start with a comprehensive assessment.

Working with former traffickers, there is a risk involved, as they may get targeted by other traffickers, especially if they participate in any awareness campaigns. To counter this issue, it is recommended to do voice overs, have actors play traffickers in videos created, or have them talk behind a curtain without showing their faces (if such a threat is identified). Additionally, maintaining identity confidential would be important. At the time the assessment was done, no such threat was identified, and there are few former traffickers who were willing to talk openly in training sessions. The same risk is true for victims of trafficking. They may get targeted by traffickers for talking out against trafficking. However, similarly, the team could do a voice over, or behind the curtain discussions, without showing the faces of the survivors. At the time, the team also identified survivors who felt they will not get targeted by traffickers. To not violate survivors, they will be assisted to set up their own rights organization, and these training activities will be through their organization as its paid employees. Such an approach provides the opportunity for survivors to be empowered as well as find a source of employment. However, once again, a more comprehensive assessment in phase I of the project will help teams identify these threats

and help take the necessary action so as to work with former survivors and traffickers without putting them at risk or falling prey to risk. In addition, there may be public outcry over attempting to empower some of the survivors of trafficking such as individuals formerly involved in the sex industry as victims. Once again, to counter this aspect, it is recommended to starting at a low-key grass roots level with a piloting phase and simultaneously engage in awareness and educational campaigns. An additional risk factor is key partners not following through. To counter that, it is advised to hold monthly meetings and require updates. Furthermore, the comprehensive nature of the proposal means that each sector can keep the other accountable.

Cost Analysis

A multinational plan such as this will cost a minimum of about 1.5 million in US dollars, to start a process such as this effectively. However, this does not include the long-term sustainability of efforts started. Relevant government and non-profit sector and other stakeholders involved need to be empowered and must take responsibility, not just to carry out tasks but also to meet the financial commitments in the long run. The private sector can be included in the long run to provide support.

Conclusion

Any approach attempting to target trafficking systematically at a country level needs to consider the interconnectedness of the 3 Ps (prosecution, protection, and prevention) (Steiner, Kynn, Stylianou, & Postmus, 2018). The authors argued for the need to provide direct service intervention for survivors that goes beyond protection. The micro, mezzo, macro interactions between the systems need to be fully understood (Payne, 2016). This paper presented a multisystemic, multi-tier national plan to combat trafficking in Sri Lanka in two phases, with an assessment phase and a service delivery phase that takes into account intervention, protection, persecution, and prevention. This approach is congruent with the cultural context of the country and builds upon the existing structures and partners with the various stakeholders involved. This paper highlights the importance of starting with an assessment phase that takes stock of the existing efforts and systematically analyzes them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, phase 2, while building and strengthening based on phase 1 results, also emphasizes action plans that meet safety, protection, and the service needs of survivors, and while strengthening mechanisms in place to hold the perpetrators accountable. This plan also takes into account the cultural understanding of trafficking within the country and proposes a model that helps to raise awareness. It is also survivor centered and makes attempts to incorporate the empowerment of the past and present survivors in every step. Job creation was also viewed as a

priority, as lack of jobs that pays sufficiently and lack of skilled vocational training is an issue for many, forcing them take risks, and making them more likely to fall victim to predatory mechanisms and people.

In many international efforts, one aspect that is not highlighted is the direct intervention services needed to manage many traumas some survivors undergo. In the process of drafting this proposal, the authors met with many survivors who had gone through numerous traumas, including being burnt, being beaten, surviving an attempt to murder, and even witnessing others being murdered. Yet, none of the survivors these authors spoke to had undergone any counseling or case management to overcome their trauma. Some talked about having continuous health issues, and nightmares. Culturally appropriate talk therapy that has a format of drop-in centers to talk and survivor support group or women's groups can significantly benefit the long-term mental well-being of the survivors.

Covid-19 has further complicated the contexts of survivor safety. The country is doing its best to bring back anyone who wants to return home with safety measures in place. However, survivors in trafficking contexts are even further vulnerable under Covid-19 contexts. Countries such as Sri Lanka do not have sufficient power to coerce more influential and rich countries such as Saudi Arabia. Yet, regional collaborations can enhance pressure, and similar to the Philippines, threats of not sending house maids to countries that violate and refuse to uphold violators may be a viable solution in the long run.

These efforts show the importance of collaborations, partnerships, and the multidisciplinary nature of large-scale macro social work or human service efforts to combat complex social issues. This paper also emphasizes the importance of working with the respective local and state governments. The authors also emphasize that we do not need to reinvent the wheel, rather working with the existing structures is more viable. It is important to identify different entities and help coordinate. Ultimately, the sustainability of these efforts lies in the ability of the relevant bodies continuing their efforts effectively in the long run.

While the model is specific to Sri Lanka, many aspects identified can be transferable easily to other countries. This plan is congruent with the US guidelines, UN guidelines, and the Sri Lanka national plan. It is congruent with the existing government efforts.

It is strongly recommended that international social workers and other human service workers who assist international efforts beyond their own countries work with the countries rather than going against them. Caution is emphasized while simply transferring Western intervention and prevention efforts to Southern nations. Cultural and political contexts and risk analysis need to take place. Often, in the Western world, social workers are trained only with a micro emphasis, but it is important to understand the larger macro contexts, even when micro-level efforts are initiated in countries outside of one's home to understand the issue more holistically.

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