

Human Trafficking Tijuana - San Diego Border

Barriers, Solutions, Gaps & Leverages



What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is the movement of people within a country or across international borders for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

The United Nations considers trafficking a human rights violation based on sex, race, and class.

According to the United States State Department, approximately **600,000-800,000 individuals** are trafficked annually, making this industry one of the most popular and fastest in the world.

The Council of Hemispheric Affairs projected that the human trafficking industry **\$32 billion** revenue each year.

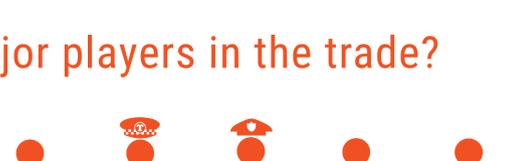
Surpassed the illicit drug trade.

Generates \$32 billion in revenue each year.

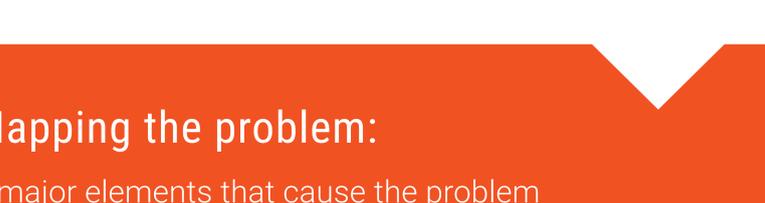
80% of trafficking victims are used for sexual exploitation.

70% of individuals trafficked are **female**.

50% are **younger** than **18** years old.



Who are the major players in the trade?



Mapping the problem:

3 major elements that cause the problem

Intense Border Relationship Between the USA & Mexico

Geographic location makes Tijuana ideal location for labor trafficking.

60 million people cross the San Diego-Tijuana border annually, making it a prime location for fringe services.

High labor mobility

US restrictions against illegal immigrants with anti-immigrant hostility has worked to create an economy that consists of generally undesirable jobs along the border.

40% of people trafficked are coerced through economic needs. Women and children seeking work in the US must rely on labor traffickers to help them cross the border in search of work.

Crime-related Violence

The US effort to end the drug war has forced criminal networks to seek other crime activities to generate income.

Sgt. Casillas of San Diego HTFF says "Trafficking children is a better investment. Once you sell drugs your asset is gone, you can sell minor over and over again. It's a more sustainable revenue source."

Victims from Tijuana, they would come from families with less social connections, from the poorer areas, and without social networks in which the disappearance of someone would call attention. Thus, informants described Tijuana more as a place where victims from somewhere else are exploited in sexual commerce.

The Route: 5 major routes

1. Mexico City ➤ Baja California
2. Central Mexico ➤ Tijuana
3. Deported Out of US ➤ Tijuana
4. Ciudad Juarez ➤ Tijuana
5. Tijuana ➤ Up through California



The Coercion

Economic

Due to language, social, and physical barriers, victims are reluctant to seek help from authorities

Individuals are caught in a cycle of "debt"

Traffickers often steal important government issued documents, like passports or identity cards, from the individual in an attempt to impede his or her escape

Psychological

"Seasoning Process"

Chemical

Violent

Pimps will force victims to be waitresses or lap dancers, easing them into full-fledged sex trafficking. Once they get victims into San Diego, there is a wide range of sexually exploitative industries for pimps to capitalize

Captors work to break victim resistance

Will threaten the safety of the victim and their family if they fail to cooperate

Pimps place heavy debt burden on the victim

arguing that she must work to pay off the cost of transporting her across the border and reimbursement for the living expenses incurred in the new country

Barriers:

Structural Barriers

- US trafficking law places burden of proof on the victim.
- Prostitution is legal in Mexico.
- Legal ambiguity when trafficking cases cross the US-Tijuana border.
- Child protective services do not consider trafficking to receive assistance because the abuser is not related to the victim.
- In Mexico, only 1% of rapes result in criminal charges.
- Some Mexican states require a girl, who brings a rape charge against an adult, to prove her chastity.

Cultural Barriers

- In the US, trafficking is viewed as a problem of illegal immigrants.
- Human trafficking is perceived as a lucrative business.
- Undocumented women avoid seeking social services for fear of being reported to Immigration.
- Tunnel vision regarding the health of those in prostitution.
- Distrust of law enforcement.
- Influence of the Catholic Church.
- Lack of Education.
- History of patriarchal domination.

Solutions to the Problem

Solution Attempted	Acotr(s) Involved	Gaps Identified
Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000	US Government	Not everyone is aware of the new amendments added in 2002.
2008 William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act	US Government	Under the Immigration and Nationality Action (INA) an unaccompanied minor is not recognized as a child.
Changes have been made to the 2nd Article of the Organised Crime Law	Mexico Government	3 or more people involved in child pornography or trafficking of children will be sanctioned under the Organised Criminal Law. These changes still need to be approved by the Lower Chamber.
Mexico has ratified several international agreements to combat the continuance and growth of trafficking. These agreements include: Palermo Convention of 2000.	Mexico Government	Though government has taken steps to signify that Mexico takes trafficking seriously, unfortunately, until few years ago, there was no appropriate legislation to prosecute and punish trafficking.
The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) operates the Polinsky Children's Center (PCC).	US Government + NGO	PCC acts as a temporary shelter for children who must be separated from their families for their own safety. However, there are not many spaces available for victims.
U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking, Mary's Guest House.	US NGO	Lack of space available for victims. Mary's Guest House and Dawn's Place, shelters for women caught up in sex trafficking were completely full at the time of the interview.
California law SB-1193 addressed the required public postings of human trafficking help services in English and Spanish.	US Government + NGO	SDPD and NGOs do not have the enough resources to enforce every business post about human trafficking.

What setps can we take to start bridging these gaps?

Anti-trafficking Campaign

Anti-trafficking campaign on either side of border should focus its attention and resources on a narrowly-defined target population- instead of portraying the entire sex trade as being gripped by organized crime and flooded with trafficking victims.



Education at School

Victims are usually young girls under 16 years old. Pimping about in Middle School and High School. Education about Human Trafficking should be given at school.

New Shelters for Victims

From the NGOs interviewed, one of the major Gaps identified was offering shelter for victims. All the NGOs interviewed were full, and make it easier for pimps to recruit the victims again.



Law Enforcement

Campaigns should aim to increase the resources available to fight against Human Trafficking. A Federal Law is needed in the US. Mexico should start by making prostitution illegal. Police Officers should be trained in how to identify possible victims and gangs.

