



# Human, Not Capital: Preventing sex trafficking

## THE FOCUS

Sex trafficking, when people are tricked or forced into sex work for another person's financial gain, is underreported and misunderstood in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Individuals and organizations in government, non-profit, and corporate sectors are working to stop it. **How might we reinforce these efforts and build new partnerships to improve awareness and prevent sex trafficking in the GTHA?**

### WHAT WE KNOW

Sources: Statistics Canada; Region of Peel; Forbes; The Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre.

**Due to a lack of research and reporting, the scale of sex trafficking in Canada is not fully known, but it is clear that the GTHA is a hub.**

- Between 2009 and 2016, 29% of Canada's police-reported human trafficking violations occurred in the Toronto and Hamilton Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs).
- The number of police-reported human trafficking incidents has steadily increased since 2009. In 2009, there were 41 reported incidents and that increased to 340 in 2016.

**It's a difficult-to-detect crime that is very lucrative for traffickers.**

- Human trafficking is believed to be the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world and the second-largest overall.
- Canadian traffickers, the majority of whom are male citizens between the ages of 19 and 32 years of age, can make \$500-\$1,000 a day off of an exploited person. That's \$182,500 - \$365,000 per year.

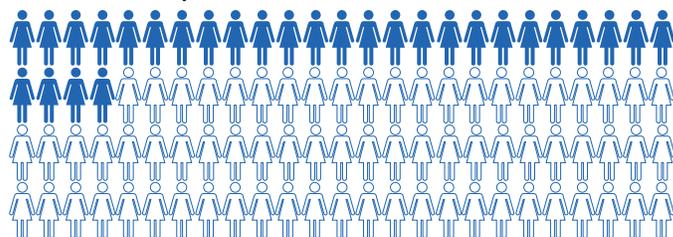
### WHY IT MATTERS

Sources: Canadian Women's Foundation; Covenant House.

**The mental and physical trauma of sex trafficking has long-term impact on survivors.**

- A recent study found that over a third of victims were recruited by men they considered to be their boyfriends. Another 25% were lured through friends, most of whom were victims themselves.
- Traffickers often give victims drugs to create dependency, confiscate identification and money, withhold food or sleep, isolate them from friends and family, and move them between unfamiliar locations. Traffickers will also blackmail or threaten victims or their families with violence if they attempt to leave.
- Many survivors experience long-term trauma-related mental health issues, including anxiety, substance abuse, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and mistrust.

**29%** of police-reported human trafficking violations take place in the Toronto & Hamilton CMAs



Source: Statistics Canada 2009-2016



# MYTHS

Sources: Ipsos and Covenant House Toronto; Alliance Against Modern Slavery; Canadian Women's Foundation.

## "Only police are equipped to deal with sex trafficking."

**We all have a role to play. From hotel chains and social media platforms, to parents and educators, to financial institutions and universities, companies and institutions must continue to take action to prevent traffickers from using their services to recruit or abduct people, advertise sexual services, and launder money.**

- Teenage girls who report that their parents are aware of their online social media activity or feel that they can talk to their parents about anything express greater awareness of the risks of certain online behaviours.

## "This doesn't happen in my community."

**New immigrants, LGBTQ+ youth, and most particularly, young Indigenous women, are over-represented among victims. The average age of exploitation in Ontario is 17, but can start as young as 13.**

- According to a survey of Canadian service providers, 51% of trafficked girls were or had been involved with the child welfare system, 50% of trafficked girls and 51% of trafficked women were Indigenous. 17% of girls and 42% of trafficked women were women of colour.

# WHAT IS BEING DONE

## Project PROTECT

Project PROTECT is a unique public-private partnership that targets sex trafficking by focusing on the money laundering aspect of the crime. Banks, credit unions and money services businesses report suspicious transactions to the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, which in turn notifies the police and other law enforcement agencies. By uncovering financial connections, Project PROTECT provides information that may advance investigations and ease the burden of proof on survivors in court.

## Meeting Professionals against Human Trafficking

Toronto-based organization Meeting Professionals against Human Trafficking is a group of conference/event planners, hotel sales professionals, and AV professionals who are raising awareness about human trafficking that happens at meeting venues, conferences, and corporate and sporting events.

## Rogers Home

In 2018, Covenant House, Canada's largest agency serving at-risk, homeless, and trafficked youth, opened the Rogers Home, which provides up to six women at a time with a wrap-around suite of services including counselling, education, working-life supports, and legal help.

## GLOSSARY

### Human Trafficking:

The Department of Justice defines human trafficking as an activity that "involves the recruitment, transportation or harbouring of persons for the purpose of exploitation. It also involves the control of victims, including force and threats of violence, and it may occur across or within borders."

### Sex Trafficking:

Sex trafficking refers to a trafficking situation in which someone is exploited for the purposes of sex or sexual services. Sex trafficking can occur in brothels, massage parlours, phone sex lines, internet chat rooms, escort agencies, erotic dancing, and other settings.

### Victims and survivors:

Terms such as "trafficked person," "trafficked individual," "survivor," and "person(s) with lived experience" are most commonly used to describe individuals who have experienced trafficking. "Victim" is a term mostly used in law enforcement and judicial contexts.

