

A Call for an End to Human Sex Trafficking:

A Proposal for an Anti-Sex Trafficking Awareness Program in the Central Valley School
District, Spokane, Washington

Guided Thesis

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ESSAY 1: CONTEXTUALIZATION

Contextualization is at the heart of rich and healthy relationships that produce deep fulfillment and purpose. Attributes of contextualization are understanding, change, reconciliation, peace, revelation and connection. It can be difficult know what someone needs or why they do what they do without asking questions, observing and spending time in their culture. Community development, outreach and relationships in general require contextualization to be effective. Without exposure to a variety of cultures, beliefs, ideas and systems, we can become small minded and ethnocentric. Seeing oneself requires a growth mindset in which we do not see ourselves fixed or stuck mentally but as able to grow. In his book *Let Your Life Speak*, Parker Palmer states that we must be willing to look within: "...the salvation of this human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart." Culture is deeply embedded in our humanity from our very beginnings making it difficult to recognize its biases. It can inhibit our ability to see context. The most innovative interventions will fail to produce results if situational context has not influenced the solutions.

Sustainable community development demands that contextualization informs the project. A local issue that demands immediate intervention is sex trafficking. It has only been in the last twenty years that sex trafficking has been recognized as a social issue needing to be addressed (National Center). Because of this, sex trafficking has continued to grow to the point of becoming the second largest illegal industry globally (Williams 625). Bringing awareness to the community is vital to ending this horrendous act. When working toward ending sex trafficking, contextualization is especially important. Transformative change requires many costly resources such as time, energy, finances and creativity that will be wasted if the solutions do not meet the need. According to Simon Sinek and his theory of The Golden Circle, people are more motivated

to act and are more satisfied with their work when they know what they are doing is important (2:00). The “why” can only be found within the context of each unique community. What is contextualization? Why is it imperative to community development? These questions will be answered within the context of human sex trafficking.

Contextualization Defined

All cultures are simultaneously beautiful and broken and worthy of our appreciation. There are many dimensions to culture that combine to create unique strengths and challenges. Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions suggests that there are six such dimensions creating that uniqueness: power distance index, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance index, long-term versus short-term orientation and indulgence versus restraint.

Contextualization is taking the time to understand these dimensions and how people and cultures make meaning of the world around them. Without this understanding we cannot know the heart of a people, the driving forces behind their actions nor their area of need.

Contextualization in Community Development

From the time of Christ until the eighteenth century, the human condition did not change much. The wealth of the world, its population and life expectancy of forty years remained unchanged and all people essentially lived in the world with scarcity and insecurity (Myers 23). Although there have always been acts of altruism throughout history, the idea of community development did not begin until about the 1950s. Even the very concept of development has changed since then from one of helping nations escape poverty to one of overall wellbeing and freedom. This concept, largely influenced by Sen (a development economist in the 1990s), states that economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, good health, basic education and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives all promote a person’s freedom to “do valuable

acts or reach valuable states of being” (29). Community development is practiced not only in government organizations but in non-profits, religious organizations and other private groups.

These freedoms for people must also include the opportunity to collaborate with all stakeholders in order to ensure that those benefiting from development also have freedom of voice. Recognizing the concept that all cultures have valuable insights and resources to share creates a connection of copowerment between people and cultures. This allows all stakeholders to experience a level of development and growth. Both those assisting in the development process and those receiving work together and are mutually empowered, hence the term copowerment. Collaboration and copowerment are an innate part of contextualization. Collaboration allows us to come together in unity and pool our resources rather than competing for resources and limiting our effectiveness. It allows us to focus on the needs of communities rather than individual success. Copowerment and collaboration work hand in hand to bring unity, effectiveness and strength.

This model of unity and strength is demonstrated in the biblical story of the Tower of Babel. Although God put an end to their attempt to build the tower, it still exemplifies the power of unity. The Lord says, “If as one people...they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them” (*New International Version*, Gen. 11.6). Those in need must be allowed to be actors in the development process if their capability is to be increased and impediments removed from making choices (Myers 30). In doing so, all stakeholders learn, grow and are empowered and nothing will be impossible just as the scripture states. The opposite would be ethnocentrism and the mindset that those in development are the saviors with all the answers.

Contextualization, copowerment and collaboration are relatively new concepts and are all facets in sustainable development. In the past, those in development, whether they be mission groups or organizations, tended to look at outreach as a method of empowering others. These groups and organizations assumed the systems and programs that worked for one culture would produce the same results in different cultures. Development often lacked the consideration of the sustainability in the systems and programs that were implemented. This approach was very ethnocentric and often caused more harm than good to the very people it was intended to help.

When we evaluate other cultures according to our own standards and customs we work from a position of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism in community development is still happening today and is something development workers need to be aware of. In contrast some organizations, like the New York Juvenile Justice, Opportunity Chicago and Elizabeth River are using the concepts of contextualization and collaboration to come together collectively under a common agenda. Because these organizations worked together in finding solutions to problems in their community, there was a 45% drop in youth incarceration over three years with no decrease in public safety, 6,000 living in public housing were employed during a recession, and 1,000 acres of land was restored with 280 million pounds of pollution reduced from the local environment (Tackling Complex Social Problems). Because the local community was involved in the problem-solving process, the solutions were specific to each community and successful.

The Importance of Context in Innovation

In Charles Vogl's book *The Art of Community*, he ends with a poem by Dorothy Day:

We have all known the long loneliness

And we have learned that the only solution is love

And that love comes with community.

It all happened while we sat there talking,
And it is still going on. (143)

At the heart of community development is love for others. This poem is a beautiful introduction to the importance of finding context when innovating programs, systems and interventions for those we are seeking to love. As we love ourselves, we will naturally seek to understand others for connection and personal growth. Day's poem highlights that this all happens "while we sat there talking, and it is still going on." We must continue to communicate in order to innovate with impact. We cannot find solutions to large problems in communities without listening to what the problems are and why they are there. Otherwise, world-changers may accidentally address the wrong problems or find solutions that do not matter. This is the importance of context in innovation, to love, to connect, to grow and to have sustainable impact.

The Role of Creativity and Innovation in Context

Although other factors are involved, colonialism was a catalyst for the globalism we see today. Industrialism, technology, population growth and capitalism have continued to connect us globally in unprecedented ways (Willis 20). We are no longer the independent communities that made up humanity for so long. This interconnectedness and the size of our population has created complicated systems and harmful impacts that require creativity and innovation in ways never seen before. We must find healthy and sustainable solutions within the context of the world's complex needs. It is imperative to the future of creation that we do so.

Innovation cannot be void of context. At best it is ineffective and at worst harmful to those it was intended to help. William Easterly, a former World Bank senior staffer, shares his experience being part of a significant global force for ending poverty in his book *The White Man's Burden*. He states that those with resources tend to look at development as planners versus

searchers. Instead of searching out viable solutions, they plan what they believe will be successful. If we want to catalyze positive change, we need to be searchers of solutions that are meaningful and impactful rather than planners of our own agendas. The World Bank's billions and other foreign aid programs from organizations such as the United Nations, tend to make little impact because they are primarily designed for the benefit of the donors with their perceptions of what is best for the recipients in mind. Most of these Utopian efforts fail and waste much needed resources that, in proper context, could be impactful (Easterly). These examples of international movements from entities such as the World Bank and the United Nations that fail highlight the need to shift toward creativity and innovation within context.

Contextualization in my Proposal

Background

I first began to understand that human sex trafficking was a serious issue several years ago when acquaintances began an organization designed to work with local victims. As a woman, I have personally experienced a level of sexual abuse that started as a child, as have so many other women I have encountered in my life. Children have a special place in my heart as they do for many. Because of their innocence and vulnerability, we desire to protect them. Sex trafficking is a social issue affecting children with the average age of initial recruitment being 12 to 15 years old (HRC Ministries). Working to end this crime allows me to fulfill the desire to collaboratively offer freedom to others.

In my search to find context I began to research sex trafficking. I saw the same needs repeatedly surface. One of those is the need for awareness. Global and local communities are unaware that sex trafficking is rampant. In Ann Kruger's journal article *Facilitating a School-Based Prevention*, he states that there are "Limitations in knowledge about the characteristics

and prevalence of commercial sexual exploitation of children” (530). Addressing sex trafficking was listed as a top priority by every major entity I researched. The United Nations, FBI and the U.S. Department of Education are among those recognizing the severity and need for attention to this social injustice. The U.S. Department of Education encourages public schools nationally to get involved in the prevention of sex trafficking and help protect our children through awareness programs and even provides a framework for sex trafficking awareness and prevention. An article written by *The U.S. Department of Education* in 2021 states:

Few crimes are more abhorrent than human trafficking, and few crimes are more challenging for communities to recognize and address. For many people, the reality of trafficking in their community is difficult to comprehend, let alone confront. Yet communities, including schools, are beginning to take proactive action against human trafficking. It is fitting that schools take on this challenge; of all social institutions, schools are perhaps the best positioned to identify and report suspected trafficking and connect affected students to critical services. (1)

There are several studies showing the effectiveness of anti-sex trafficking awareness programs in schools. A study was done to evaluate the effectiveness of the *My Life My Choice* sex trafficking prevention program for youth. The curriculum showed that students came forward who were being trafficked, school personnel reported suspected trafficked students, and it had a significant impact in reducing sex trafficking (Rothman). This study shows strong support for an anti-sex trafficking awareness program in all schools.

I continued my search for context by attending a volunteer training at Mirror Ministries. Mirror Ministries is a local organization in the Tri-Cities in Washington State. Their vision, as stated on their website is “to see local victims of sex trafficking become survivors who have

hope, healing and restoration...” They go out on the streets, provide restorative services and awareness programs. This provided a more accurate context of what is happening in reference to sex trafficking in my state and more locally. What is happening in Spokane and Washington State looks different than what is happening in Las Vegas or India, so a different approach is relevant to the local community.

I have a friend in the FBI who specializes in human trafficking. He is involved in every aspect of human trafficking in the areas of surveillance and busts, interviewing victims, connecting victims to resources, creating procedures and systems and bringing community awareness, including schools in particular. We spent a lot of time talking about sex trafficking and his experiences. He is not local to my area, and I found the differences and similarities in what I heard and witnessed intriguing. His input supported my research in that there is a desperate need for awareness programs for youth. He believes children need to have some awareness of sex trafficking and the tactics predators use as soon as they have a cell phone and supports awareness programs beginning in middle school. In his experience, authentic relationships and sensitivity to local communities support the success of awareness programs. Risk factors include disorganized families, social media and age. He found that people tend to take him seriously but struggle to believe it could happen to them or that it is a local problem (Federal Agent). This provided a general context of sex trafficking from a stakeholder with a great deal of expertise.

Fieldwork

I had the privilege of doing my fieldwork with a local organization in Spokane, Washington: The Jonah Project. The love and passion of those working for Jonah is infectious. I spent time shadowing the lead advocate on calls for victims, celebrations of recovery for

survivors of trafficking, youth awareness presentations, local community seminars, meetings with local businesses for fundraising and support and community meetings to brainstorm set goals for change. Members included sex trafficking organizations, FBI agents and others working toward similar goals.

I also spent a lot of time interviewing community members. I interviewed multiple leaders of anti-sex trafficking organizations from HRC Ministries, The Jonah Project and Mirror Ministries. I interviewed local parents, school administrators, teachers, FBI agents specializing in human trafficking, a head of the district health curriculum, Superintendent of the Central Valley School District and a school counselor. I also spent time speaking with current victims of trafficking and those recovered from sex trafficking, and others involved with anti-sex trafficking. Gathering quantitative and qualitative data provided me the contextualization that led me to the need. In order to begin to end the devastation of sex trafficking, school districts must make youth and the community aware. What is it? What tactics do traffickers use? Who are its targets and how can we prevent it from happening? How can an awareness program meet the needs of the Central Valley School District's community?

Macro-cultural Contextualization

There are cultural aspects to be considered when approaching a community with an anti-sex trafficking awareness program. Macro-cultural contextualization can help identify these cultural aspects. Macro-cultures include larger communities such as nations. The United States scores a 91 on Hofstede's cultural dimension of individualism. This score is extremely high and indicates that Americans tend to prefer small, loose knit social frameworks and tend to feel primarily responsible to their immediate families and may not find much satisfaction in service

to others. Because of this indicator, it is essential to gain personal buy-in within the community and an understanding that there is a local need for an awareness program.

This was supported in my personal interviews within the community. Alison Walton, a Central Valley School District middle school administrator, shared that there needs to be a passion about it in the community. If there wasn't, they would need to have more education to get behind an awareness program. A district teacher and parent shared that she would support an awareness program and thought the community would too "if she knew it was urgent or needed" (Siddoway). The understanding that sex trafficking is a local issue needs to be communicated to counselors, teachers, parents and the community as a whole. These interviews provided context that the community needs to build a foundation of understanding in order to support an anti-sex trafficking awareness program which aligns with Hofstede's cultural dimension of individualism.

Localized and Unique Contextualization

The Spokane community is morally conservative, especially in the Spokane Valley where the Central Valley School District resides. I attained localized contextualization by talking with the community. Interviews revealed that the overwhelming consensus was that the community was for an anti-sex trafficking awareness program but concerned about it being "too graphic sexually or that it would emotionally disturb students or scare them" (Smith). They want facts and research-based information that is not sensationalized. Parents want access to curriculum so they can have input with their children (Bartlett). These perspectives inform the need for age-appropriate curriculum.

As a teacher of the Central Valley School District, parent and community member, I have insight into the heart of the community and a unique perspective to develop an anti-sex trafficking awareness program. I have spent a total of 18 years teaching in the district and 20

years in the community. This local and unique context has allowed me a fluency that I would not have known otherwise as well as connections and ideas from an insider position. It allows me to be a reliable source and provides me a level of credibility.

Applying Contextualization in Future Vocational Work

In meeting with the Associate Superintendent of Learning and Teaching of the Central Valley School District, Tim Nootenboom, he was very open to beginning a anti-sex trafficking awareness program. We discussed training the district's counselors (who currently have no training in sex trafficking and awareness) and providing presentations for parents and possibly their children. This work is being influenced by the contextualization qualitative research revealed. A television executive that works for a prominent station airing in four states is working on a meeting to see about running a piece on sex trafficking awareness (Baird). I hope to continue to work toward creating a legislative anti-sex trafficking awareness program in Washington State. In all future work, I will use context to discover needs and solutions. Without understanding context energy is wasted and effectiveness is doubtful.

Conclusion

The heart of effective community development is love. To love well there must be relationship and connection. We all have our own story that is shaped by our experiences such as culture, education, upbringing and religion. It is important to focus on discovering the stories of those we hope to co-labor with so that we can be efficient and effective in our efforts to bring freedom and alleviate suffering (Myers 55). Transformative change requires us to listen. It is my hope to be a blessing and bring light into the world in whatever capacity I am to lead. Understanding the context I am working in will help me to do that.

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ESSAY 2: QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

Introduction

As a child, I found myself thoughtfully observing the people in my life. I was intrigued by the complex interactions I saw between others, themselves and the world around them. I witnessed a lot of conflict and pain in their lives but also appreciated the beauty of traits such as generosity, hard work, talent and compassion that dwelled within each person. I had a deep desire to learn the why behind their beliefs and behaviors. I strived to attain for myself the qualities I saw in others that seemed to bring joy and peace into their lives and the lives of those around them. I longed to be a blessing on this earth and to help others find freedom from suffering.

I grew to understand that I have a love for behavioral science. At the time, I did not realize my actions and motivations resonate with qualitative inquiry. This essay will explain what qualitative inquiry is: its strengths, values and unique attributes. It will show the connection between qualitative inquiry and the International Community Development (ICD) program's value of bringing cultures together through development that better the lives of people. These values will be highlighted in a case study using my project proposal to implement an anti-sex trafficking awareness program in a local school district.

Qualitative Inquiry Defined

Research is an attempt to inquire into or investigate something in a systematic manner to inform our decisions and course of action. The two general categories of research are basic and applied.

Basic research addresses our interest in expanding our knowledge of the world around us.

Applied research is motivated by the desire to improve the way something is done (Merriam and Tisdell 4). There are many forms of applied research, all of which require a qualitative approach to strengthen its conclusions. Quantitative data looks at numbers and tells how much or how

many (5). Qualitative data, on the other hand, focuses on how people interpret their experiences and construct meaning from them (6).

Qualitative research goes beyond simply discovering what an existing issue is in a community to actually implementing an action plan that is put into practice. If no difference is made when that plan is implemented, it failed and needs to be reevaluated (10). This approach is a valuable tool for social development because it allows the context of the question or problem to be revealed. Qualitative inquiry includes observation and interviewing people to find out things we can't observe. The researcher interviews stakeholders, seeking to discover feelings, thoughts and interactions that explain how they organize the world around them and the meanings they attach to their actions. It is about uncovering and understanding another's perspective (108). A successful researcher must have a questioning stance, a high tolerance for ambiguity, careful observation skills, the ability to ask good questions, to think inductively and be comfortable with writing (18). These skills must either be present or learned to be successful at qualitative research. Thinking inductively requires a level of insight into humanity and the ability to form generalizations. The relational aspect of qualitative research is what sets it apart from other forms of research and makes it so useful in community development.

There are several strengths and unique attributes of qualitative research. This form of research is about people. It requires a level of relationship to be done effectively. The ICD program values collaboration, contextualization and copowerment. These values are beautifully embedded in qualitative research. We collaborate with each other by interviewing, observing, participating in daily life, events and activities with the purpose of understanding which is precisely the nature and purpose of qualitative research. These methods uncover the context of the issues we seek to find solutions for. When we search for ways to partner with communities

with the purpose of bettering the lives of all stakeholders, everyone benefits. This is copowerment.

Qualitative research focuses on documenting the process. The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. Qualitative research is inductive and the product is richly descriptive (15). It includes an inquiry process that may look like a researcher developing a systematic plan of gathering data from interviews, observations, documents and more (Stringer 105). The data is collected and recorded with methods such as journals, field notes and voice recordings. The data a researcher collects is detailed and analyzed for patterns. Solutions addressing identified problems or issues can then be suggested that are appropriate, helpful and sustainable.

The ICD Connection

Qualitative research encompasses the values of collaboration, contextualization and copowerment. These are the core values at the heart of the International Community Development program. Both qualitative research and the ICD program believe that all cultures are beautiful and worthy of our appreciation. Every community has a degree of brokenness but also has opportunities and resources to offer others (Inslee). When we collaborate with each other, we are able to pool resources toward a common goal. Collaboration allows for a greater impact in the community instead of a scarcity mentality that competition can create (Inslee). Contextualization allows solutions to be relevant and sustainable. Copowerment believes that we are made stronger together. In contrast, empowerment implies that we are giving power away but copowerment allows all stakeholders to benefit collaboratively (Inslee). We can never know all that we need to know about a culture to bring successful development to a community, but

pairing qualitative research with these three values of the ICD program is a powerful tool for getting there.

When all stakeholders are brought into the process of finding solutions, we create a sense of ownership. When these values are honored, the result is less bias and a stronger set of data. Participants feel safe being more vulnerable when they are respected. When community developers take the time to interview for one's perspective, we demonstrate that cultures are worthy of our respect and appreciation. Qualitative research is ideal in honoring culture and discovering its unique gifts and challenges. These are the strengths and values that make qualitative research and the ICD program unique.

This approach to finding solutions to needs that are long lasting and sustainable is highly collaborative, relevant and logical. The developer has wasted resources and energy if solutions leave the affected community feeling disempowered and do not fulfill their needs. A qualitative approach to fulfilling needs is highly effective in discovering meaning that cannot be measured with numbers. In a *TED Talk* by Brene Brown, she describes herself as a qualitative researcher who is a collector of stories and states that "stories are just data with a soul." Sharing our stories allows us to connect with each other and "connection is why we are here." This connection creates a higher level of empathy, trust and more impactful results. Several different authors such as Mohajan, Brown, and Holmes support the validity of this approach. In a journal article on qualitative research, Mohajan states that "during the last few decades, the use of qualitative research has been increased in many institutions. It can be used to explore several areas of human behavior for the development of organizations." The increase in use shows its effectiveness.

A qualitative approach is about allowing the need to be revealed to the researcher instead of a traditional approach of assuming what the need is in a community and the best solution for that need. Seth Holmes conducted a qualitative study to find the answer to his questions about the cause of suffering and sickness of migrant farmworkers. His study revealed the strength of qualitative inquiry in providing the context that allowed him to discover the need. In Seth Holmes' book, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*, he states, "These pains are examples of the structural violence of social hierarchies becoming embodied in the form of suffering and sickness." He goes on to define suffering as mental, existential and interpersonal anguish. These questions could not have been answered using quantitative research. You cannot truly know interpersonal anguish with a count of numbers. You must hear people's stories and observe their lives. Holmes spent five years completing his ethnographic study. He lived with the migrant field workers in life-endangering conditions. His purpose in doing such an in-depth study was to portray the marginalized as full human beings, raise awareness of the prejudices they face, bring a possible hopeful future for the Triqui migrant field workers and affect policies and laws toward migrant workers, making them more humane and just (28). These all lie at the heart of intercultural community development and result from qualitative research.

Case Example

The use of qualitative methods in my research began from the moment I identified sex trafficking as my topic of study. I spent nearly a year researching journal articles and web sites of anti-sex trafficking organizations and interviewing FBI agents, trauma counselors, and those working within anti-sex trafficking organizations. I did a volunteer training with Mirror Ministries, an anti-sex trafficking organization. I also spent time investigating the efforts, thoughts and research of government organizations working on sex trafficking. I immersed

myself in the topic, looking for areas of need that could be addressed to prevent such a heinous crime.

As I sifted through the data, patterns began to emerge. Human trafficking is currently the second largest illegal money-making industry (Williams 625). Less than 1% of trafficked victims are recovered. The same statistic is true of the apprehension of traffickers. The average age of a victim first recruited into sex trafficking is 12-15 years old (HRC Ministries). My inquiry showed that there is a desperate need to address the issues that are allowing sex trafficking to grow. This crime continues to flourish because of the lack of resistance perpetrators experience. I discovered several areas of need. One of those issues is a lack of awareness in communities, especially amongst those who have high contact with trafficked victims. Rajarama and Tidball did a study of sex trafficked survivors. They support this need for awareness in their report stating that “those who may routinely come into contact with survivors, such as healthcare and social service providers, may lack the awareness or tools to identify and support survivors.” Using a qualitative approach was essential in revealing a glaring need for awareness in the community.

The questions I sought to answer were: is anti-sex trafficking awareness needed in my community and if so, what is the best method? I began my fieldwork with a local organization that works with trafficked victims called The Jonah Project. I was able to shadow the lead advocate on calls and meet with local victims of sex trafficking. I attended anti-trafficking awareness training for youth, helped provide assistance to victims and families of trafficking and attended a celebration of recovery for a victim of sex trafficking now home for three years. I was present at the Renovation Conference where local NGOs got together to discuss several topics including sexuality. I participated in the Spokane CAST (Community Against Sex Trafficking)

gathering of local organizations seeking to collaborate for the purpose of ending sex trafficking. I met with an account executive for KHQ, a television station servicing several states interested in promoting the causes of The Jonah Project. I spent a lot of time interviewing local stakeholders, analyzing data and taking field notes.

I discovered the answers to the questions I sought through local qualitative inquiry. The data showed there is a pressing need for anti-sex trafficking awareness. In an interview with a local FBI agent, I learned that Spokane is ranked the tenth highest city for sex trafficking per capita in the nation (Federal Agent Local). According to the executive director of The Jonah Project, the average age a victim is recruited into sex trafficking in Spokane is about 15 (Tilbury). I interviewed many local stakeholders on their level of sex trafficking awareness and their feeling and thoughts about an anti-sex trafficking awareness program in the Central Valley School District. The sample of those interviewed included teachers, administrators, parents, the district head of the health curriculum, superintendents, counselors and other community members. No one interviewed had significant knowledge of sex trafficking and there were many misconceptions shared. A district counselor shared that there is no training for school counselors on this topic (Cleveland). Comments like the following were prevalent in my interviews. A local parent and teacher shared, "I am pretty ignorant in this area" (Siddoway). These responses showed a strong need for community awareness.

I have the unique context of being a local public-school teacher in the Central Valley School District. I know the community and the inner workings of the local public school system. My network of connections within the district gives me a perspective others may not have. The research led me to my project. I created an anti-sex trafficking awareness proposal for a local Spokane school district, the Central Valley School District. The proposal was created in direct

response to qualitative inquiry. I have presented my proposal to the superintendent and have helped to coordinate an awareness training for all K-12 counselors in the Central Valley School District. The Jonah Project will be leading the training. We have discussed starting evening awareness training sessions for parents, students and other community members and more in-depth training at specific grade levels for counselors. As community support increases, an anti-sex trafficking awareness program will be taught in the middle schools and possibly the high schools. The need for community support of an anti-sex trafficking awareness program in the schools was expressed often in interviews. Interviewees expressed comfort and support for counselor training.

Evaluation is key to successful community development and effective qualitative research. Qualitative methods are also used in the evaluation for the very reasons they were used in the development process. Stakeholder inquiry is necessary for ensuring the quality of programs and their sustainability. The outcome markers that will be used to analyze the impact and sustainability of the anti-sex trafficking awareness program in the local school district include: 1) An increase in the knowledge of school counselors and feedback on what is working and isn't working by using a brief survey, 2) An increase in awareness levels in students through pre- and post-assessments, and 3) An increase in the reporting of sex trafficking and student inquiry about sex trafficking. A district committee will be formed that will be in charge of ensuring the relevance and success of the program. It will review feedback and make any necessary changes. The impact of this awareness program will also be evaluated by stakeholder feedback through online surveys where they can express their experiences with the program. It is important to use qualitative elements in effectiveness evaluations so that stakeholders continue to feel invested and appropriate changes are made.

Conclusion

The strength of qualitative inquiry for making change lies within the values and unique qualities it possesses. When all stakeholders are collaboratively involved in change making, everyone has a voice. Copowerment occurs when we realize that everyone has something to share. Truly impactful change only happens within the context of each unique community. This approach will make me a more impactful agent of social change by allowing me to reach the heart of the community to discover feelings, thoughts and interactions that explain how they organize the world around them and the meanings they attach to them. My research will be contextual making my solutions relevant and sustainable. The collaboration and unity involved in qualitative research brings copowerment that would otherwise be impossible.

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ESSAY 3: ICD VALUES

Introduction

The International Community Development (ICD) program at Northwest University equips its participants to humbly partner globally in community development. I have been on a journey of personal transformation that led me to this program. It is fascinating to look back at your life and observe the path that led you to where you are today. When I look back, I see many twists and turns I never would have perceived coming. The ICD program has had a major impact on my life; it has helped to transform me and my values. Although I have been on a path of growth since birth, there are catalytic moments that have greater impact than others. The ICD program has also influenced how I define and think about social development and justice, and educated me on social and economic structures globally. Major life events have caused me to look closely at my theology. Analyzing my beliefs has made me realize where culture has trumped truth. Over the last several years I have developed a theology that incorporates the growth I have had through personal experience and this program. I will share this process and the wisdom gained from the ICD program in the following pages.

Personal Transformation

When I was a child, I witnessed a lot of suffering in my family from the choices people made. Witnessing the pain and sorrow of my family created a desire in me to be different. I wanted those I loved to live in joy and peace. I wanted that life for myself as well. Creating a happy, loving home became my focus when I had my own family. I believed I was in control of my future. In his book *Let Your Life Speak*, Parker Palmer writes that we no longer believe as a culture that we grow our lives but we believe we make our lives. What he is suggesting by this is that instead of believing that we control our lives, we should have a less arrogant perspective that

we “are dependent on an inexorable cycle of seasons, on a play of powers that we can conspire with but never control, we run headlong into a culture that insists, against all evidence, that we can make whatever kind of life we want, whenever we want it” (97). I started attending church shortly after my daughter was born. I wanted to give her the best life possible and I believed a relationship with God was key. A message of prosperity was preached in church. I was taught that if I had enough faith and did everything right, then my story would have a happy ending. This reinforced the false idea that I was in control.

When my happy ending and the deepest desires of my heart went up in flames, I had to look closely at myself and what I believed. I had to reevaluate my faith. Just as Brenda Salter McNeil describes in her book *Roadmap to Reconciliation*, this was a catalytic event that was confusing and deeply disorienting but produced transformation in me (52). Palmer’s book resonated with what I had been feeling. I knew how to live in the familiarity of my old life. I knew its boundaries. I wanted to be rescued from the challenge before me, but no savior came. Palmer writes “There was no way out of my dilemma except to get into it” (85). The American church tends to teach that if we pray, cling to God and His laws, read scripture, forgive, etc., then our problems will be solved and our grief will end.

The ICD program affirmed so many old and new convictions. A peace came over me as I began to read about lament in *Reconciling all Things* by Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice. They define lament not as despair or whining but as a “prayer of those deeply disturbed by the way things are” (78). As a culture, which includes the church, we desire speed, distance and innocence in our suffering (79). Instead of lamenting with me, the church wanted me to move on. Katongole and Rice state that “to learn to lament is to become people who stay near to the wounds of the world, singing over them and washing them, allowing the unsettling cry of pain to

be heard” (94). Because Americans have less need than most in the world, it causes us to repress death even more than in other cultures. This creates a strong social pressure to be “fine” (Beck 175). I felt a lot of pressure from the church to be fine. I felt guilty when I wasn’t fine. This led to me feeling as though something was wrong and broken in me.

I have been transformed from a person who says, “peace, peace, when there is no peace” to one who knows that deep lament is a sign of great hope (NIV, Jer 6.14). I understand that life is not about control but instead growing through seasons. We must be who we are because that is who we want to be. There is no guarantee that doing everything perfectly will keep you from profound suffering. We are setting ourselves up for bitterness as the brother of the prodigal son did in the Bible. When the brother did everything that was asked of him while the prodigal son lived a wild life, yet still received the love of his father, the brother that did not leave was bitter and angry (Luke 15.11-32). It is difficult to watch the lack of lament and an unbalanced prosperity message taught in the church. It creates a heavy burden to carry.

Social Justice

I never dreamed of how much of an impact the ICD program would have on me personally when I first began. Not only has my definition of social justice taken form over the past two years but so has my focus in community development. Prior to the program, I considered myself a social conscious person who intentionally cared for others but I did not think of it nearly as deeply as I do now. I did not believe there was much more I could do to support social and environmental justice beyond how I interacted with others and the environment. The ICD program has showed me how I can impact social and environmental structures globally in a way that helps promote abundant lives for everyone.

In her book *Everyday Justice*, Julie Clawson expresses the change in thinking I have experienced when she states, “We may not tend to think that the ways we live our everyday lives have much effect on the lives of others, but our circle of influence is actually much larger than we think” (25). She goes on to state that “Living justly means understanding the impact of our decisions. It involves not only an awareness of the needs of others but also choosing to love others in a way that cares for their needs” (26). In 2022 the *Organizational Development Journal* published an in-depth study, “Dissecting Meaning, Scope, and Roles of Social Justice and Social Action.” The following is the definition of social justice that resulted from the 3-year study:

Social justice is allowing full participation in society and the balancing of opportunities, benefits, and burdens, resulting in equitable living and a just ordering of society. The attributes of social justice include, but are not limited in finality to: (1) exhibiting respect and fairness; (2) equity in the access to that which affects the sufficiency of the social determinants of health, resources, and processes; (3) just institutions, systems, structures, policies, and processes; (4) power to overcome exclusion and denial; (5) inclusion in and equitable access to human development, rights, and sustainability; and (6) "sufficiency of well-being". (10)

This begins by not being complicit in injustice.

The ICD program has shown me how global structures are set up either intentionally or unintentionally to harm the poor. David Pellow gives an example of these global structures in his book *Resisting Global Toxics*. He shares that currently industrialized nations produce 90% of global hazardous waste but ship a large portion of it to the global South. There are many reasons for this shift, but the system is ultimately supported by the fiscal need in the South and the willingness of the North to pay the South for taking on its waste (8). Clawson shows how what

we purchase has an enormous social and environmental impact on the world around us when she explains that “it is easy to walk into a store and purchase whatever you think is cute and cheap enough for your budget. However, it is rare for the average shopper to stop and consider the hidden costs of what he is buying and who might be paying those costs” (123). Most of us would not purchase items if we knew the suffering it cost others.

Awareness of these global structures has made an impact on how I live. I am now aware that there are resources available to help me live a life of justice globally. For example, I have started with where I purchase my food. I have begun to purchase as much food locally as possible. In doing this, I can reduce the environmental impact of shipping my food, reduce packaging, support the local economy versus competing with foreign farmers who may be forced out of business and eat fresher, healthier food. This is just one example of many possible ways one can support everyday justice in the world around us. These are just a few examples of the many “interrelated power arrangements, ideologies, values, practices, policies, and ways of perceiving reality that span generations and have unintended snowballing consequences” (Moe-Lobeda 3). I will give myself time and grace to discover where and how I can live out social and environmental justice in my choices.

The ICD program provides the opportunity to focus on a specific social issue. In recent years I have become aware of the severity of sex trafficking. At one time I believed that sex trafficking was not a domestic crisis but was something that was rare that was happening far away from me in strange lands. I began to focus on sex trafficking early in the ICD program. This program has given me the opportunity to impact my community for social justice in an area that is largely misunderstood and unknown. As I began to research sex trafficking

internationally, nationally and locally, I began to realize how little the average person knows about it. Horrible injustices are happening in their own neighborhoods.

In Cynthia Moe-Lobeda's book *Resisting Structural Evil*, she discusses how denial, guilt and grief can keep us in moral oblivion (95). Sex trafficking is a topic that elicits these feelings because seeing it would be too terrible and painful. Addressing the issue can feel overwhelming, so there is a natural tendency to deny that sex trafficking is a serious issue in our communities. My fieldwork and partnering with local anti-sex trafficking organizations confirmed that my community had the same misconceptions and lack of awareness that I had once held. What my journey to educate myself in sex trafficking revealed that was most disturbing and shocking for me was not the details of what happens to trafficked victims, but that there is such a large demand for them. What I found even more distressing and appalling than the demand for trafficked victims was the demand for trafficked children.

The ICD program has allowed me to begin to address some of the root issues that allow sex trafficking to thrive in my community. I wrote an anti-sex trafficking awareness proposal for a local school district that has begun to open doors in educating our community on the social injustice that runs rampant. We have provided a training for all district counselors and will continue to move forward bringing awareness to our local community. There has never been a training like this in this district.

Copowerment

ICD values are centered around copowerment. On a Northwest University webinar, Ngueita, a graduate of the ICD program was asked for the definition of copowerment. His response was that copowerment is a "dynamic of mutual exchange through which both sides of a mutual equation are made stronger and more effective by the other" (6:00). This requires relationship.

Relationships always transform you (Inslee 31:00). In the past, development was approached with the idea of savior and victim. Copowerment is an approach that recognizes we all have something to offer each other. It is a partnership. It is a system in which everyone follows and everyone leads (Palmer 74). It is mutually engaging where one does not dominate the other.

The writing and success of my anti-sex trafficking awareness proposal could not have been possible without the community working together. I asked members of the community what they knew about sex trafficking and what they wanted and expected for our youth. It was the response of the community that defined the proposal. I asked them what they needed and how it could be provided in a way that would make them comfortable and able to accept difficult information, especially for children.

Being a teacher in the district the proposal was written for, a longtime member of the community and having worked with anti-sex trafficking organizations allowed me to speak the language of different organizations and bring them together for the greater good of the community. This collective action approach allows for a greater impact because each organization brings their skills to the table. ICD values were the foundation of my fieldwork and the resulting awareness training in the local district.

Theology and Future Vocation

The shift in my theology about suffering has made me more compassionate. I see where I need to take more ownership in my part of social and environmental justice. I believe in practicing a servant approach to leadership in my future vocation. A good leader develops a competency for wholeness by being deeply aware that all members of an organization have an influence on the direction it goes and they submit to the togetherness of greater work as a group (Kuenkel 112).

They work within contextualization and collaborate with all stakeholders with a focus of copowerment.

According to Hofstede's *Six Dimensions of Culture*, the United States is very individualistic (Hofstede). In this type of culture, the individual cares for themselves. This can make copowerment a more difficult concept to grasp. Individualism often leads to competition, which slows down and even prevents growth and collective action toward a common goal. Instead of all actors giving and receiving, they compete. I observed this in local anti-sex trafficking organizations. Though they shared common goals, they chose not to work together and to compete instead. In my future vocation I hope to model and support the concept of copowerment. ICD concepts are even seen in schools. Research supports these values in community development within schools. There are currently education models that practice ICD values of contextualization, collaboration and copowerment through qualitative research and project design that have had success (Mortari, Luigina, and Marco Ubbiali). The unity it brings allows for greater success in the common goals stakeholders share.

Conclusion

The ICD program has been an invaluable part of my personal transformation. When I first set out to earn a master's degree, I had no idea the impact it would have on me. The concepts and values affirmed my beliefs that had been challenged by others for years. This affirmation has brought me strength, peace and a supportive community. It has also helped shape my theology and take greater ownership in my part of social and environmental justice globally. I have a clearer understanding of how culture shapes beliefs and how important it is to analyze where culture is impacting our theology and belief system. Putting all of the concepts and values of the ICD program into practice through my fieldwork and project revealed my strengths and weakness in

community development. Though I am not as strong in working directly and long term with those who are hurting, I learned that I am strong at bringing resources together, inciting passion in others, networking, problem solving and educating. I will enter my future vocation humbly through contextualization and collaboration with the purpose of copowerment.

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APPENDIX: PROJECT

An Anti-Sex Trafficking Awareness Education Proposal for the Central Valley School District
Spokane, Washington, specifically, Tim Nootenboom, the Associate Superintendent of Learning
and Teaching and the School Board of the Central Valley School District

Anti-Sex Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Program Proposal for the Central Valley School
District

Audra White

December 9, 2021

Introduction

In order to eliminate sex trafficking of youth domestically, a training and prevention program must be implemented in the Central Valley School District (CVSD) in Spokane, Washington. A child sex trafficking curriculum that is age-appropriate is a valuable tool in the hands of students for recognizing and safely reporting exploitative experiences both personally and amongst peers. Parents and guardians should also be included in the education of their children on sex trafficking awareness. School personnel should be trained in the dynamics of child sex trafficking so that they are equipped to identify trafficking exploitation and respond appropriately. This proposal is a call to action in the creation of a training and prevention program in the Central Valley School District that addresses child sex trafficking.

According to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, sex trafficking is defined as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act. Commercial sex acts include any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age. A minor cannot consent to selling themselves under any condition (National Center for Homeless Education). Sex traffickers have many tactics. Some of those seen by local anti-sex trafficking organizations are situations such as, youth required to pay rent to an abusive boyfriend by performing sex acts for him and his friends or threatening the welfare of a victim's family if the victim does not continue performing sex acts (The Jonah Project).

Today there are an estimated 25 million victims trafficked globally (Polaris Project). According to the HRC Website, currently less than 1% of perpetrators are prosecuted and victims recovered. The average age a victim is initially recruited is between 12-15 years old. One

of the primary factors of vulnerability is age. Homeless, runaways and abused youth have higher risks for trafficking although youth from all walks of life can be victims. Once trafficked, the average life span of a victim is seven years after recruitment, even if recovered, because of the harsh treatment physically and psychologically (HRC Ministries). The industry is growing. In 2018 the FBI estimated human trafficking to be the third largest act of criminal activity. It is now second behind the selling of illegal drugs (Williams 625). Beth Williams tells the plight of the victim:

Trafficking persons is an offense against human dignity. Trafficking victims are treated as commodities that can be bought, used, and sold not just once, but over and over.

Trafficking victims are denied their freedom and often are denied even basic human needs. They are forced to live at the mercy of their traffickers and frequently endure horrific psychological and physical abuse. (625)

As of 2019 only 8 states had incorporated any type of awareness curriculum in public education into state policy. These policies for mandated sex trafficking awareness programs in schools were created because of the spike in youth at risk over recent years and the pervasiveness of human trafficking (Lemke 289). Because of their constant contact with kids, educators are frontline responders and thus imperative to ending trafficking.

Implementing a training and prevention program in CVSD will bring the awareness needed to the community. Middle school is the age group where perpetrators begin selecting victims to groom. If children were educated about the tactics traffickers use to lure their victims, they would be able to identify it and protect themselves. A sex trafficking awareness program for school personnel, youth and parents is essential in the fight against this abuse.

Training in sex trafficking would be a logical addition in the Central Valley School District. The literature overwhelmingly shows a need for those in positions of high contact (health care providers, teachers, hotel employees, law enforcement, etc.) to be trained in the signs of trafficking (Nemeth and Rizzo). Stakeholder input from the CVSD community supports a training program. Implementing an anti-sex trafficking awareness and prevention program is a solution to the oppression that causes serious and often long-term physical and psychological trauma to our children. It is time to do more to protect our youth. This proposal outlines the need for the Central Valley School District to organize and implement an anti-sex trafficking awareness and prevention program for youth, school personnel, parents and guardians. It will inform the current state of sex trafficking in Spokane, the support behind a trafficking awareness program in our schools, local stakeholder input (parents, educators, administrators, superintendents, counselors, FBI, etc.), ideas for training and prevention, and supporting resources.

Local Background

Because of Washington State's many ports, location and diverse businesses, it is a hotspot for human trafficking. Washington was the first state to enact trafficking legislation by establishing a Task Force Against the Trafficking of Persons in 2002. Washington continues to be a progressive state focused on policies that address prosecution, prevention and protection (Washington State Department of Commerce 4). Despite the progressive approach of Washington State and the many state and federal organizations that promote sex trafficking awareness programs as a top priority in schools, it is void of any legislation or public policy to support awareness programs for those in high contact professions.

There are several factors in place that would allow this to happen. In December of 2020, Washington State passed senate bill 5395 called the Healthy Youth Act. It mandates a sexual health and wellness curriculum in grades K-12 (Washington State Legislature). The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction suggests four different curriculum options for public schools that will incorporate state requirements (OSPI). The Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force meets monthly to discuss how sex trafficking can best be addressed in our state (Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force). This is a good avenue for the addition of awareness curriculum in the current health curriculum. This would allow nearly every child to be exposed to curriculum that brings awareness. The wording for the inclusion of sex trafficking is already present in broad terms in the both the senate bill and the Washington health standards (OSPI).

According to the executive director of The Jonah Project, a local NGO serving sex trafficked victims in Spokane, 85% of all domestic trafficked victims are U.S. citizens (Tilbury). The pacific northwest holds multiple top-ranking cities for human trafficking (HRC Ministries). Spokane, Washington is ranked 10th per capita for trafficking in the United States (Federal Agent Local). The Jonah Project has served over 450 victims recovered from sex trafficking from 2014 to 2020 from nine years old to seventy-three. Approximately half of those are under 18 years of age. This is only a fraction of local victims during that time period considering that typically less than 1% of victims ever seek help or are recovered (Tilbury). These facts show a need for an anti-sex trafficking awareness and prevention program in Spokane.

Support

The literature is redundant and clear. Human trafficking has grown substantially over the last several decades because perpetrators are rarely caught. They have become emboldened. Putting a stop to human trafficking is one of the Department of Justice's top priorities (Williams 625).

Several states including Virginia, Kentucky, Texas, Ohio and California have all legislatively mandated some form of sex trafficking awareness in their public-school systems. Educating youth on the signs and tactics of abusers will enable them to detect and avoid traffickers.

California is currently the frontrunner for implementing public school training and awareness programs. They have even provided a guide for other states. The federal government, the United Nations and even the U.S. Department of Education have identified sex trafficking as a top priority with the U.S. Department of Education deeming sex trafficking awareness the responsibility of public schools (U.S. Department of Education). Implementing an anti-sex trafficking awareness and prevention program in the Central Valley School District has vast support from all major entities affecting public education.

The Institute of Medicine and National Research Council recognizes the opportunity within U.S. schools to reach youth in the prevention and intervention of trafficking. School-age youth spend around 180 days a year and 6 to 8 hours a day in U.S. schools putting educators and school staff in a key role for recognizing, preventing and intervening in the sex trafficking of minors (297). Schools provide the unique advantage of reaching first responders (teachers, school nurses, staff), students and parents. In doing so, schools can make an enormous impact on ending the physical, mental and emotional trauma suffered by young victims (19). If Central Valley School District included an anti-sex trafficking awareness and prevention program, youth would have the knowledge they need to avoid sex trafficking.

Stakeholder Input

Several months were spent interviewing stakeholders and working with The Jonah Project.

Patterns began to emerge within the qualitative research. With a qualitative research approach, people are interviewed to find out things one cannot observe through quantitative data alone. The

goal is to discover feelings, thoughts and interactions in order to understand others' perspectives to create viable and relevant solutions (Merriam and Tisdell 108). Culture is elusive and hard to capture and requires relational engagement to truly understand it (Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater 311 and 343). This was the goal in interviewing stakeholders.

My research revealed that the average citizen has no real grasp on the actual happenings in the realm of sex trafficking and unanimously supports the education of the community and youth in schools. Even though global organizations such as the United Nations, national organizations such as the FBI and the United States Department of Education, state organizations such as the Washington State Clearinghouse on Human Trafficking-Washington State and local non-profits like The Jonah Project have all declared a focus on anti-human trafficking a top priority, the lack of awareness at the citizen level is glaring. A federal agent assigned to national sex trafficking shared his experience working in the community. He stated that, "Sex trafficking often hides in plain sight because it is misunderstood. People have a hard time psychologically accepting that horrible things like this exist, they then try to deny it. They take you seriously but don't believe it will happen to them or that it is a local problem" (Federal Agent National).

Frontline

Two FBI agents, one assigned locally and one nationally, were interviewed to gather their input on what they are seeing on the frontline in reference to sex trafficking and their experience with sex trafficking awareness programs for youth. There are two Spokane FBI agents assigned to trafficking locally. The workload is more than they can handle and they often refer out to local NGOs. It is a topic that both parents and kids need to be educated on and aware of (Federal Agents). Both local and national FBI agents agree that technology, especially cell phones, is a major source of concern. "There needs to be some awareness (of sex trafficking) as soon as kids

have cell phones” (Federal Agent National). The national FBI agent spends time in every aspect of anti-trafficking efforts including intel and apprehension of perpetrators, recovery and placement of victims and community awareness. He stated the importance of involving all stakeholders in awareness programs, making sure it is a program that teachers and parents are comfortable with.

Parents

Spokane parents, most of whom had or have children attending CVSD, were interviewed to get their input on their current level of awareness of sex trafficking and their thoughts on implementing an anti-sex trafficking awareness and prevention program in the district. No one was opposed to an awareness program and all unanimously agreed it was needed in schools. Whether in research or interviews the consensus was that the material used in an awareness program in schools needs to be factual, data based and age appropriate. There was also agreement when asked what community members thought the awareness curriculum should cover. Comments like the following by a parent were unanimously shared, “The curriculum should inform students of tactics used by perpetrators to groom victims, red flags to look out for and how students should handle situations if they do occur” (Smith). Kim Smith and many other parents shared that they did not want were graphic details shared that could traumatize students, a faith or moral based curriculum. Both Jen Sewell and Smith have multiple children that have gone through or are currently in the local public school system. Smith is a married, a local professional, Christian, conservative woman who is very proactive in raising her children. Smith was the only interviewee that had any basic information about sex trafficking. She is part of a Bible study with a woman who was trafficked at 13 years old. Smith insightfully expressed, “...it is absolutely happening under our noses and we don’t even know it. For years I didn’t even know

what it was.” Sewell stated that she knows sex trafficking is out there but has no idea to what degree. She said that there really isn’t information out there to inform her on the details of sex trafficking. When I began to share recent, local stories of sex trafficking she was quite surprised. Two parents shared personal stories of their child experiencing grooming that the parents recognized and stopped (Siddoway and Sewell). These interviews show a need and a desire to be educated on sex trafficking from conservative community members and parents and continues to inform and support the implementation of such a program in the district.

Teachers

Teachers were asked what they thought it would take for buy-in to an awareness program in the schools. They stated that school staff needs to be educated and made aware of the problem. Ali Bartlett, a mother of three, wife of an administrator, high school and middle school teacher for 15 years, science professional development head and a member of the HIV/AIDS curriculum adoption committee expressed how society doesn’t really talk about sex trafficking. She thought that people don’t understand why someone wouldn’t just say no to trafficking. Another local teacher of 10 years and mother of three stated a similar thought. She shared that teachers must be made aware of the need and must have their hearts engaged (Siddoway).

Both shared that they had little awareness of trafficking. “I am pretty ignorant in this area” (Siddoway). Teachers agreed with parents that the curriculum needs to be age appropriate, scientific and research based (Bartlett). The need for parent and community involvement was expressed to ease weariness of new information taught to their children (Siddoway). Cory Siddoway thought getting counselors on board was a good place to start. Being sensitive to teacher workload and ensuring that anything requested of them was scripted and fact based for

ease and comfort was suggested by one of the district's teachers (Bartlett). From these interviews it appears teachers are not educated in this field and desire to be.

Principals, Counselors, Superintendents

The consensus was similar when speaking with administrators and counselors. All of these interviewees shared the feeling that “the local community believes that sex trafficking is something that would not happen here so why would we even teach about that” (Nootenboom). Alison Walton, an assistant principal and teacher of middle and high school of 25 years, and mother of three shared that “It is hard to move this machine (the school district) forward in any sort of direction especially on an uncomfortable topic because we are a vehicle for moving the community forward.” She also stated that there is a need for community buy-in, curriculum that is age appropriate and veers away from anything that may create fear of adults, sexuality or is counter to personal values.

Currently, there is some training for counselors and administrators on grooming but nothing on sex trafficking according to administrators as well as counselors. Several ideas for implementation were shared. Lisa Cleveland, a school counselor, suggested incorporating sex trafficking awareness for teachers in the annual Safe Schools training. Another was adding an anti-sex trafficking awareness piece to the health curriculum. She shared that the district's health survey for students showed 80% had emotional risk and plans to use that data to meet with students. This could be a possible tool to identify trafficked victims.

The Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching suggested a layered approach to sex trafficking awareness. Providing education for counselors and the community first would create support for a school wide program. He was very open to a training for the district's counselors. He also thought it may fit well in the health curriculum on safety taught by

counselors (Nootenboom). Offering awareness education in the evenings where parents could bring their children so that the community could hear the message with their child and feel secure was also suggested (Nootenboom). Awareness education might also help uncover sex trafficking victims. Such effects have been seen with other awareness trainings. A counselor shared that after she would present a training on awareness for issues such as bullying or suicide, referrals of students being bullied or who may be suicidal increased significantly. “The upswing in referrals that I would get because now the signs were in the forefront, every year, every year at middle school is an amazing testimony but then it would wane. It’s almost like we need a booster” (Cleveland). This input is invaluable in informing an anti-sex trafficking awareness program in the district.

Training and Prevention

Implementation

Because the average age a victim is initially trafficked is 12-15 years old, middle school is the appropriate grade level for implementing an anti-trafficking awareness and prevention program. Several ideas for implementation of a sex trafficking awareness program have been voiced by stakeholders. Community support has been suggested as a key to successful implementation. A grassroots approach to development is highly supported by organizations globally and tend to be more cost effective, efficient, provide more say for the people involved and are better governed (Willis 106). Below is a summary of the ideas for implementing an anti-sex trafficking awareness and prevention program in the Central Valley School District:

- Each school district has a team of counselors that meet to determine the needs of the student body’s mental health. If sex trafficking awareness and prevention education were presented to the team of counselors, it could then be added to their agenda. This approach

has benefits in the sense that it may not require the school board to approve it, nor does it require any changes in current curriculum or legislation (Nootenboom). *A K-12 district training for counselors was held on February 18, 2022. Continued training for counselors is being planned for the fall of 2022.*

- A parent and child awareness education and prevention training night presentation offered to the community. *This is scheduled for May of 2022.*
- Staff awareness education and prevention training through professional development, LID (teacher development) days, annual online trainings like Safe Schools.
- A curriculum added to the current health curriculum under the safety standards.
- A leveled approach beginning with parent and child awareness education and prevention training night presentation and school staff training, and an eventual student curriculum once support is present.

Curriculum

There are many possibilities available for an awareness education and prevention curriculum. They range from a 20-minute video to courses that are several weeks long. The curriculum should meet the needs of the community it serves. A list is provided below of possible curriculum choices and comparison tools. This list is given as to provide possible curriculum for implementing an anti-trafficking awareness and prevention program in the district.

National Educators to Stop Trafficking: Sex trafficking awareness curriculum information and comparison tool.

nsteducators.org/curriculum-and-resources/student-disclosure-protocol/

Project Starfish

Designed for students in grades 7 through 12. There are syllabi for teachers, activities for student groups, training materials for school social workers, school nurses, and school administrators,

examples of school policies and parental consent forms and tools to use for community education.

Projectstarfish.education

Prevention Project Program

Six-lesson academic curriculum administered to late middle and high school students in their classroom, after-school program or youth group, etc.

www.prevention-project.org/home/prevention-project-program/

Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives

Human trafficking prevention education curriculum in schools and communities. Project aims to reduce the vulnerability of children to the crime of sex trafficking, through a combination of classroom curricula, educator training and coordination of community resources.

www.fdfi.org/human-trafficking-education-curriculum.html

SafeSchools:

This course will help you learn to identify and potentially prevent occurrences of human trafficking. Topics covered include sex and labor trafficking basics, identifying victims of trafficking, and what to do when you suspect a student is a victim.

www.safeschools.com/courses/human-trafficking-awareness/

Not a #Number

Relevant to a variety of populations and has been embraced by schools, child welfare and juvenile justice agencies, and other youth serving organizations.

<https://love146.org/notanumber/>

A21

This high school curriculum fully equips teachers to educate students on the reality of human trafficking.

www.a21.org/content/education/grc2u8

Information for Schools

School Trafficking Outreach Program STOP:

STOP is a free human trafficking awareness program of activities, education, and training to area high schools and middle schools.

http://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/hrc/abolition_ohio/stop/index.php

Webinar: What is trafficking and How Can Schools Help?

It is a free webinar to learn about the “4 T’s of Human Trafficking”

<https://iempathize.org/course/webinar-what-is-trafficking-and-how-can-schools-help/>

Stop the Traffik

Resources for schools that include lesson plans and PowerPoints:

www.stopthetraffik.org/awareness-courses/resources-for-schools/

The Jonah Project

A local organization that provides sex trafficking awareness education for youth and the community as well as many other resources.

www.jonahproject.org/

Shared Hope International: Chosen

The anti-trafficking curriculum is comprehensive including a 20-minute video, an educator's guide, leader's guide, discussion guide, preparation ideas for counselors, presentation tips, take action ideas, and trafficking terms. The video uses the true stories of teen girls manipulated and trafficked. It is designed to bring awareness of the warning signs and indicators of traffickers.

www.Sharedhope.org

Prevention

Interviewed victims of sex trafficking report that over 90% of them attended school while being trafficked. Of the survivors interviewed none disclosed what was happening to anyone while being trafficked (Scott). Several studies on the effectiveness of sex trafficking awareness programs in middle schools have been completed. The findings show awareness programs are highly effective. Here is an excerpt from one such study:

Since 2013, Prince William County Public Schools (Virginia) has delivered 90-minute lessons on human trafficking to middle and high school students. Afterward, students are invited to privately identify themselves or friends as possible trafficking victims. The students can then meet privately with a social worker who assesses their needs and helps them get the care they need. Between 2013 and 2020, 939 students came forward, 253 of whom were identified as having been sexually assaulted, groomed, or victims of trafficking. Forty-one of the students who requested meetings simply wanted more

information—an encouraging fact as prevention is one goal of the program (U.S. Department of Education).

Evaluation

Each district is unique and will evaluate programs in a way that makes sense for the method and awareness program that has been implemented and its culture. Possible methods of evaluation are provided. A parent viewing night of chosen curriculum prior to the introduction to students would serve two purposes. It would educate and bring awareness of the methods of traffickers and allow parents input and control over their child's education. Students can be given a brief pre- and post-assessment measuring the level of awareness gained through the chosen curriculum. A brief survey can be given to school counselors and presenters of the curriculum for feedback on what is working or not working using the curriculum. The “searching approach” is a plan that ensures the needs of the people are being met with a fluid plan in place that can continually keep the project accountable (Easterly 6). Evaluation and accountability will lead to a relevant and sustainable program.

Committees can be formed at the district level in charge of ensuring the quality, review of feedback and any changes to the curriculum. Another possible purpose for district committees could be to reach out to other districts with presentations to bring the curriculum to as many as possible. Success could be measured by committees formed, post-assessments and surveys reviewed for effectiveness and changes made when necessary. Committees could also bring this need and curriculum to the state union and legislators in the hope of continuing to spread awareness. Success will be assumed when student pre- and post-tests show increased awareness, counselor/presenter surveys show effectiveness, and the awareness program grows to include new schools and districts each year.

Conclusion

Human trafficking is a complex, profitable crime and broad reaching. With the ability to communicate anonymously through the internet and the complex tactics of traffickers, schools are uniquely positioned to be highly effective in equipping and protecting the physical and emotional wellbeing of youth. The hope of this proposal is that through awareness about human trafficking warning signs and indicators, young people will be empowered and less susceptible. With an empathetic approach to fuel this process, one can be sure that it is not forgotten that the design of this program is for real people (Kelley 21). With a collective impact from educators, parents, anti-trafficking organizations and survivors of this modern-day slavery, schools can play an important role in the nation's response to the crime of the sex trafficking of minors.

Resources

National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) at 1-888-373-7888

“In the absence of an established protocol, educators should contact the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) at 1-888-373-7888 to seek guidance. The NHTRC is a national, toll-free hotline available to respond to requests for assistance from anywhere in the United States 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. The NHTRC is a non-profit, non-governmental organization working exclusively on the issue of human trafficking. The NHTRC is not a government entity, law enforcement agency, or immigration authority” (National Center for Homeless **Education** at SERVE 1).

Human Trafficking in America's Schools (PDF)

What Schools Can Do to Prevent, Respond, and Help Students to Recover from Human Trafficking a guide

www2.ed.gov/documents/human-trafficking/human-trafficking-americas-schools.pdf

General Information

- FindYouthInfo.gov Trafficking of Youth Webpage
<http://findyouthinfo.gov/youthtopics/trafficking-of-youth>

- The A21 Campaign
www.thea21campaign.org/

- The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC)
www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/nationalhuman-trafficking-hotline/the-nhtrc/overview
- The Polaris Project
www.polarisproject.org/
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Anti-Trafficking in Persons (ATIP) Program
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/anti-trafficking

Training and Technical Assistance

- NHTRC's Get Training Webpage
www.traffickingresourcecenter.org/trainingresources/get-training
- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign
www.dhs.gov/end-human-trafficking
- Human Trafficking of Children in the United States: A Fact Sheet for Schools
www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/osh/factsheet.html

Additional Student Materials and Curricula

- The A21 Campaign's Bodies Are Not Commodities High School Curriculum
www.thea21campaign.org/content/bodies-are-not-commodities/gjdpjv
- The Not for Sale Campaign's High School Curriculum
jp.notforsalecampaign.org/resources/
- TeachUNICEF's Child Trafficking Curriculum
teachunicef.org/explore/topic/child-trafficking

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