ISSUE FACT SHEET:
HUMAN TRAFFICKING

DID YOU KNOW?

Worldwide, the majority of human trafficking victims are women and girls - over 70% (UNODC, 2016)

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How do you define slavery? Does human trafficking meet your definition?
2. What responsibility does a government have to enforce its own country's human rights laws? When new laws conflict with generations of tradition, how can a country's government encourage and ensure compliance?
3. How will keeping girls in school help to solve some of the issues related to human trafficking?

DEFINITION

The United Nations defined *human trafficking* in a March 2004 policy paper. Following is the agreed-upon definition:

This internationally agreed definition focuses on exploitation of human beings – be it for sexual exploitation, other forms of forced labor, slavery, servitude, or for the removal of human organs. Trafficking takes place by criminal means through the threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of positions of power or abuse of positions of vulnerability. It relates to all stages of the trafficking process: recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons. Trafficking is not just a transnational crime across international borders – the definition applies to internal domestic trafficking of human beings.

OVERVIEW

Human trafficking is a global crisis, impacting every country in the world. While trafficking affects people of all ages and both genders, over 70 percent of all human trafficking victims are female. Human trafficking takes many forms, all of which lead to individuals losing control of their lives.

RELATED IMPACTS: POVERTY

Individuals most vulnerable to being trafficked live in poverty in poor countries and/or in areas of conflict. Girls growing up in poverty lack the institutional protections that many girls in the developed world have. Something basic such as having a school building nearby can help a girl stay safe and change her future. Because long walks to school leave girls vulnerable, often parents will choose to keep their daughters home. In addition, families living in poverty often do not have the financial resources to protect their children, or to file charges if they are attacked.

In some cases, as with kamlari, it is culturally acceptable for a girl's parents to sell her to a person outside the family. Parents who are extremely poor sometimes see no alternative, simply because they cannot afford to care for their children.

RELATED IMPACTS: EDUCATION

Human trafficking, which contributes to this discrepancy, ends a girl's education – and in most cases, the possibility of a productive, happy future. In order for the statistic to change, girls need to be kept safe, they need schools close to where they live, and adults must begin to understand the benefits that educated girls bring to their communities through better-run businesses and healthier families.

WHAT'S WORKING

So what can be done? How can we keep girls accounted for, safe, and in school?

Here are some initiatives that are working:

- In Nepal, the practice of kamlari has been illegal since 2000. With the work of advocates such as the social worker and the teacher in Suma's story, and girls like Suma herself, the practice of kamlari is finally coming to an end.

- On a global scale, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has been building resources to help with the creation of national anti-trafficking strategies, effective laws, and tools to encourage cross-border cooperation.

- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Room to Read and CARE are providing safe places for girls, helping them to gain an education and create a secure future.

RESOURCES

- CARE at www.care.org
- Room to Read at www.roomtoread.org
- Kamlari Video: http://assets.girlrising.com/kamlari (Note: This video is for mature audiences. Teachers are encouraged to view the video in advance.)
- Apne Aap at http://apneaap.org/about-us/
- See Additional Resources Guide for other resources, including relevant videos (found in the Resources section).