



THE REHABILITATION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN GROUP RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

A Study Conducted Pursuant to the Trafficking
Victim Protection Reauthorization Act, 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study of residential rehabilitative shelters for victims of trafficking is based on a review of the literature addressing residential shelters, protection, and rehabilitation for victims of human trafficking; a review of U.S. Government funded shelter activities from 2001–2005; and interviews with individuals engaged in anti-trafficking work including government officials, scholars, and representatives of non-governmental and international organizations. It addresses the major types of residential shelters, the constraints that affect shelter operations, and a series of issues and challenges to effective shelter care, and includes examples of good practices and recommendations. The study was carried out in 2006 by USAID's Office of Women in Development in response to the Trafficking Victims Protection Re-authorization Act, 2005.

Trafficking in persons is a process the result of which is control of one human being by another for the purpose of exploitation. Although only a small percentage of trafficking victims go or are taken to group residential rehabilitative facilities, or "shelters," these facilities can play an important part in a comprehensive effort to address human trafficking that includes prevention, protection, and prosecution.

No two shelters are alike: location, size, cost, length of stay, and the population that the shelter serves differ from place to place and from shelter to shelter. The services shelter facilities offer must be flexible enough to address each population's range of needs, including the different situations in which trafficking victims have been held; the type of exploitation they have experienced; and the victims' age, gender, and nationality.

The size of the group residential facility is usually determined by the location, the demand for shelter, security considerations, the type of services offered, and availability of external support. Shelters can be small enough to serve only a dozen individuals or big enough to serve well over 100 or 200 people, with no one optimal size. Successful group residential rehabilitative facilities cannot stand alone but must be linked to a network of anti-trafficking resources, organizations, and services.

The cost of establishing and maintaining group residential rehabilitative facilities varies significantly from shelter to shelter. Funding may come from local or international sources. Finding a viable long-term means of self-support is difficult for most shelters and requires creative approaches. Activities contributing to sustainability may include enterprises that both increase former victims' job skills and generate income to support the shelter.

Factors that influence the type and geographic location of shelters include the needs of the victims, as well as security issues. Shelters located in border areas may be equipped to provide short-term services to recently rescued victims but may not be an appropriate site for mounting a rehabilitative care program. Longer-term shelters are more likely to be located where the trafficked victims can access services while working toward obtaining legal employment. Security is a concern for all shelters and includes protection against outside break-ins and escape from the shelter by victims.

Group Residential Facilities

Emergency Shelters. Emergency shelters are usually the first destination for victims of trafficking, following a rescue, police referral, or escape, and typically provide for stays of a few nights to a month. They emphasize the immediate provision of medical and physical security for the victims.

Transit Centers. Transit centers are similar to emergency centers but are distinguished by their strategic location at significant trafficking and migration border crossings. They provide assistance to victims who are being trafficked or who are coming back into the country after being trafficked. An effective transit center needs strong coordination between service providers and local law enforcement.

Short-Term Shelters. Short-term shelters commonly provide assistance to victims of trafficking from one week to three months, either in their country of origin or destination. Victims trafficked across national borders may be referred to these shelters, sometimes by an emergency shelter in the destination country or by police, or they may seek out shelters themselves.

Long-Term Shelters. Long-term shelters prepare trafficking victims for reintegration into society, whether within their families or in new communities. The length of stay in long-term shelters varies; most provide support and assistance for six months or more. Transition homes and reintegration centers are two common types of long-term shelters. Transition homes offer residents more freedom of movement. Reintegration centers provide safety and long-term support in a structured, formal program.

Rehabilitation, Recovery, and Reintegration

Critical factors in rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration include the victims' age, physical and psychological health, background, family life, culture, duration of exploitation, and perceptions of the damage done to their person and their future as a result of having been trafficked, especially if they have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation. The long-term recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration of trafficking victims can involve educational and economic opportunities, as well as extended psycho-social care.

Education. Many shelters provide a range of educational opportunities, including formal and non-formal education, life skills, and vocational training. Foreign residents may need special attention, such as those who intend to remain in the destination country to testify against traffickers.

Economic Opportunities. To avoid re-trafficking, victims need the skills to earn an adequate income. Skills training programs should be created to match the needs of the local job market. Some shelters have included income earning ventures to provide vocational skills to former victims as well as to supplement shelter resources.

Psycho-Social Support. Victims of trafficking commonly experience severe physical and psychological trauma as a result of the violence, rape, threats, addiction, and other means traffickers use to control their victims. Psycho-social support and counseling can help victims of trafficking free themselves from the anxiety and depression and start rebuilding their self confidence.

Reintegration. The reintegration of trafficking victims often is a difficult, complex, and long-term process. It is different for each victim, and it involves not only the victim but also the environment and culture within which the reintegration is to take place. The organization providing support may need to make a long-term commitment to the victim to help in this process.

Special Concerns

Children are trafficked into sexual exploitation, labor, conflict, and begging. Child victims of trafficking have a reduced capacity to assess risk, articulate their experiences and fears, and look after themselves — both in terms of obtaining their own food and shelter and taking action in self-defense.¹ Returning victims to their families is not always possible or ideal. The reintegration process back into civilian life for former child soldiers can be difficult because, as child soldiers, they not only have suffered horrific abuse, but they also have committed atrocities, sometimes even against their own families.

Women and children trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation who contract HIV/AIDS are particularly vulnerable to social ostracism. Several NGOs have specialized care programs for trafficking victims infected with HIV who choose not to return home. Women and girls who are not infected with HIV, but who have been victims of trafficking, are often assumed to be infected and are consequently stigmatized and ostracized.

Best Practices

The study identifies a set of good practices for the provision of shelter care to victims of trafficking. Given the range of trafficking situations and the varied needs of trafficking victims, these practices are not applicable to all shelters at every stage of the rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration process.

Standard operating procedures. Standard operating procedures outline the criteria for victims entering facilities and the procedures to follow when assessing, caring for, and referring victims to other facilities or integrating them into society.

Linkages. Shelters are one part of a process in the protection and recovery of victims and the prosecution of the traffickers. They need to develop strong linkages with those who can provide medical, psycho-social, legal, and vocational services to shelter residents, as well as with government agencies and NGOs that are involved in anti-trafficking efforts.

Staff training. Shelter staff should receive continuing training in understanding the psychological state of a trafficking victim. Those working with foreign victims need training to understanding different cultures' approaches to counseling and care.

Individualized attention for victims. Shelters should be prepared to respond to the specific needs of trafficking victims based on the victims' age, physical and psychological health, background, duration of exploitation, and perceptions of the damage done to their person and their future.

Economic Opportunity. Vocational training must be based on a realistic analysis of the job market and take into account both the individual and the environment.

FOOTNOTES for page : 3

¹ International Federation Terre des hommes. 2004. *Kids as Commodities? Child Trafficking and What to do about it.* Switzerland and Germany: Terre des hommes, page 19; ECPAT. 2005. *The psycho-social Rehabilitation of Children who have been Commercially Sexually Exploited: A Training Guide.* Thailand: ECPAT International, page 20; see also UNICEF. 2004. *Trafficking in Children in Kosovo: A study on protection and assistance provided to children victims of trafficking,* page 32.

Follow-up. Assistance to former trafficking victims who are reintegrated must include a follow-up component to assess their needs upon their return home where they often face serious problems, such as stigma and extreme poverty.

Conclusion

Group residential rehabilitative facilities, or “shelters,” differ in location, size, services provided, and population served. To be successful, they must link their services to wider networks of care that are better equipped to provide legal help, protection, education, and training to victims while they are residing in a shelter and when following up with a victim during the long and often difficult reintegration process. Shelters are costly to maintain. They entail a large investment in a small population of victims. Follow-up and continuity of care are an integral part of the rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration process.

Recommendations

- Compile a compendium of internationally accepted Codes of Conduct and Shelter Standard Operating Procedures for both adult and child target groups.
- Conduct in-country mapping exercises to identify location, type, and target population of the shelters.
- Encourage donors to assess any shelter that they fund on a regular basis, making note of costs and target audience, and follow up with trafficking victims to ensure that their lives are improved after their stay in a shelter.
- Improve existing shelters to meet standards. This will include making building safety and hygienic improvements, increasing professional staffing appropriate to the target population, and establishing key linkages with victim referral agencies, social and health services, vocational support, and housing providers.

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

Section 102 (b) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act 2005 (TVPRA) calls on the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, not later than 180 days after enactment of the Act, to carry out a study to identify best practices for the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in group residential facilities in foreign countries. The study is to do the following:

- (i) investigate factors relating to the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in group residential facilities, such as the appropriate size of such facilities, services to be provided, length of stay, and cost
- (ii) give consideration to ensure the safety and security of victims of trafficking; provide alternative sources of income for such victims; assess and provide for the educational needs of such victims, including literacy; and assess the psychological needs of such victims and provide professional counseling, as appropriate.

USAID previously has supported several studies, field assessments, and trainings on anti-trafficking, which include information on residential facilities. Among these are a donor report addressing the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) anti-trafficking program for Nigerian women and minors; a final program report detailing IOM's counter-trafficking activities in Serbia; as well as assessments conducted in Jamaica, Cambodia, Albania, Guatemala, Ecuador, Indonesia, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic.

SECTION II. CONTEXT: EACH SHELTER IS UNIQUE

Trafficking in persons is not a single event, but a process, the result of which is control of one human being by another for the purpose of exploitation. Group residential rehabilitative facilities, or “shelters,” for trafficked victims play a necessary part in a comprehensive effort to address human trafficking that includes prevention, protection, and prosecution. The essential services that shelters provide can help trafficking victims recover and move toward reintegration into society. It is important to emphasize that no two shelters are alike: location, size, cost, length of stay, and the population that the shelter serves differ from place to place and from shelter to shelter.

Although estimates place the number of victims trafficked across international borders at approximately 600,000 to 800,000,² only a small percentage of these victims go, or are sent, to shelters. Women, men, and children who have been victims of trafficking can only go to shelters if they escape from their captors, or are intercepted or rescued and identified as trafficking victims by authorities. Some individuals may choose not to identify themselves as victims of trafficking and thus may resist shelter, protection, and support services.

A study of NGO-run rehabilitation centers in Kathmandu, Nepal, found that between 1996 and 2001, only 202 women and girls who had been trafficked into prostitution came through the city’s six shelters.³ An emergency shelter in the Former Serbia and Montenegro assisted 144 trafficked women and children between 2002 and 2004, 111 of which were foreign and the remaining 35 Serbian.⁴ Eleven adult Ethiopian victims of trafficking, 1 male and 10 females, participated in a reintegration program at the Addis Hiwot Center for Trafficked Women in Ethiopia in 2005.⁵ These examples illustrate how small the population of victims served by shelters can be.

Approaches to combating human trafficking are based on the trafficking patterns, type of trafficking, profile of victims, capacity of networks of local non-governmental and civil society organizations to provide services, and country’s own resources and existing legal frameworks. Shelters may be run by governments, NGOs, international organizations, women’s organizations, or faith-based groups. There are emergency, short- and long term shelters, and the populations served vary in age, education, religion, culture, and background. The examples below illustrate the different approaches to shelter and services.

Columbia is one of the Western Hemisphere’s major source countries for women and girls trafficked abroad for sexual exploitation. Instead of emergency centers, police investigators have dedicated interview facilities in Bogota’s international airport to meet with returning victims, debrief them, and inform them of their rights and the procedures for pressing charges. In both domestic and international cases, the Ministry of Interior and Justice provides legal support, lodging, medical and psychological care, and safe passage for victims returning to their home

FOOTNOTES for page: 7

² U.S. Department of State. 2006. *Trafficking in Persons Report. 2006*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of State, Under Secretary for Global Affairs, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

³ Hennink, M., and P. Simkhada. 2004. *Sex Trafficking in Nepal: Context and Process*. Opportunities and Choices Working Paper, No. 11, April, page 22-25.

⁴ Bjerkan, L. 2005. *A Life of One’s Own: Rehabilitation of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation*. FAFO, page. 58-59.

⁵ <http://www.usaidethiopia.org/info.asp?IID=44&CMID=22>

communities. However, this short-term assistance is only the beginning and is not enough to meet the needs of victims beyond the initial phase of the recovery process.⁶

In Romania, a lack of trust in state institutions and procedures has created an uneven system of care, often underutilized by victims. The state operates seven short-term shelters where victims are permitted to stay for 10 days. This time period can be extended up to three months, although victims are not always informed of this option. Medical, legal, and social assistance are offered, but the quality can be inconsistent from facility to facility, and funding problems have caused some of the shelters to close and re-open during the same year.⁷

The Government of the Philippines, from which a significant number of people are trafficked for labor exploitation, has responded by working with embassies and NGOs in destination countries to address labor-related issues and provide shelter, counseling, and legal and medical assistance to victims who are rescued, or who escape, overseas.⁸

Developed countries are typically destination countries for trafficked persons, and may be more likely to have the means to address the legal status of foreign victims once the victims escape or are rescued. A number of European countries, e.g., Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Serbia, are experimenting with different ways to allow victims to remain in country, often employing a 45-day “reflection period” during which victims can consider next steps, including whether to assist in the investigation of their traffickers.⁹ In New Zealand, the government provides short-term sanctuary, witness protection, and safe repatriation to trafficking victims, in addition to basic medical services, food, and shelter.

Populations Served

Shelter populations may include women and children; victims trafficked within their own country; foreign nationals; and victims of other forms of abuse, such as domestic violence. Victims can arrive at shelters in a variety of ways, such as through law enforcement, NGOs, other shelters, or government or NGO referrals, or as a result of rescue. Trafficked victims may be intercepted while traveling, either across borders or within their own countries. Some may have been released from brothels because they have contracted HIV/AIDS or another illness, making them unprofitable to pimps and brothel owners.¹⁰

The services offered by group residential rehabilitative facilities must be flexible enough to address each population’s wide range of needs, including the differing situations in which trafficking victims have been held; the type of exploitation and abuse they have experienced;

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⁶ U.S. Department of State. 2006. *Trafficking in Persons Report. 2006*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of State, Under Secretary for Global Affairs, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, page 94.

⁷ Interview notes C. Johnston and G. Manta, USAID/Romania (2006); U.S. Department of State. 2006. *Trafficking in Persons Report. 2006*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of State, Under Secretary for Global Affairs, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, page 209.

⁸ U.S. Department of State. 2006. *Trafficking in Persons Report. 2006*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of State, Under Secretary for Global Affairs, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, page 204.

⁹ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR). 2004. National Referral Mechanisms. Joining Efforts to Protect the Rights of Trafficked Persons. A Practical Handbook. OSCE/ODIHR, Warsaw, page 65, 67, 81; U.S. Department of State. 2006. *Trafficking in Persons Report. 2006*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of State, Under Secretary for Global Affairs, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, page 71.

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¹⁰ International Labor Organization/International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC) 2001. *Nepal: Trafficking in Girls with a Special Reference to Prostitution: A Rapid Assessment*. Geneva: ILO, page 32.

and the victims' age, gender, and nationality. Victims may have different legal and personal issues based on whether they were trafficked for forced labor or for commercial sexual exploitation, or both. Some victims do not have official documents, either because their papers were forged or were taken from them, or, in some cases, because they do not have citizenship in their home country. Foreign victims or members of a minority group with its own language may not speak the language of the country or the local area within which they are being sheltered. If residential shelters do not have all necessary services on site, they rely on linkages with other groups or individual providers.

Facility Size

The size of the group residential facility is usually determined by the location, the demand for shelter, security considerations, the type of services offered, and availability of external support. Shelters can be small enough to serve only a dozen individuals or big enough to serve well over 100 or 200 people, with no optimal size. There are shelters operating at below capacity because trafficking patterns have changed; the shelter's location, size, and focus are no longer meeting the needs of victims; or the victims do not trust the agency operating the shelter. Other shelters are stretched beyond their capacity when the population of trafficked victims suddenly surges and the victims' needs are great. Victim intake often varies over time. To be effective, shelters must pro-actively consider whether they can meet the changing needs of the population they serve.

Whether large or small, successful group residential rehabilitative facilities cannot be stand-alone anti-trafficking entities but must be linked to a network of resources, organizations, and services, including law enforcement. Some organizations offer a host of services to trafficking victims and at-risk populations, of which shelter is just one part. For example, Acting for Women in Distressing Situations (AFESIP) in Cambodia provides a series of care alternatives for victims of trafficking, with shelters catering to different populations of victims located all over the country: The Tom Dy Center provides long-term rehabilitative care to victims originally identified in the capital, Phnom Penh; the Pre-repatriation Center caters to foreign victims as they prepare to return to their home countries; and the Siem Reap Center provides services to victims located in the northern regions of the country. In addition to these longer term rehabilitative care facilities, AFESIP operates a 14-day care facility for victims in Phnom Penh, as well as a drop-in center, where victims can seek medical consultations and psychological counseling, along with alternative support services based on the individual's particular needs.¹¹

Cost

The cost of establishing and maintaining group residential rehabilitative facilities varies significantly from shelter to shelter. Providing clothing, food, bed, and professional assistance from social workers, health workers, vocational trainers, police, and legal assistance is costly. Funding may come from governments, NGOs, donor governments, international organizations, faith-based organizations, private individuals, and the private sector. Shelters are very rarely self-sustaining.

Location

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¹¹ <http://www.afesip.org/cambodia.php>

Factors that greatly influence the geographic location of shelters include the needs of the victims, as well as security issues. A short-term shelter may be located close to a point of transit, as is the case with transit shelters located at border crossings. Security is a high priority for these shelters because in the early days after rescue or escape it is not unusual for traffickers to attempt to find those that they have trafficked, especially if the traffickers fear they may have to face the testimony of their victims in court. This leaves not only victims but also shelter staff at risk from traffickers. Shelters located in border areas may be equipped to provide short-term services to recently rescued victims but may not be an appropriate site for mounting a rehabilitative care program that is dependent on access to established social care and vocational networks. Longer-term shelters are more likely to be located where the trafficked victims can access services while working toward obtaining legal employment. Some individual victims residing in longer-term shelters may leave the shelter for training or activities during the day.

Security

Security is a concern for all shelters and includes protection against outside break-ins and escape from the shelter by victims. The practice of holding trafficking victims against their will in shelters is an issue in some places. In a country with a number of shelters, victims may be kept against their will by some shelters and not by others. It is particularly difficult when the parents of underage children have been complicit in the trafficking and exploitation of their own children. There are many cases where allowing a shelter resident to come and go from the shelter freely would impact her safety as well as the safety of other shelter residents, or might have an adverse effect on the ability to prosecute a trafficker, but shelters need to strike a delicate balance between these concerns and the human rights of the individual.

In many shelters victims have escaped or tried to escape, with or without external help. A widely publicized security breach took place in December 2004 in Cambodia. Commonly known as “Chai Hour II,” the case involved the abduction of all but one of the 91 women and children under the care of the anti-trafficking NGO AFESIP. One day earlier, Cambodia’s Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department had rescued 84 of these women and children from the Chai Hour II hotel, which is notorious as a brothel for sex trafficking of children. Although eight of the hotel’s operators were arrested after the police raid on the hotel, they were all subsequently released and reportedly participated in the attack on AFESIP. According to a press statement issued by the U.S. Department of State, in the February 2005 disposition of this case, the Cambodian Government failed to take any action to ensure that those responsible for the shelter raid were held accountable and brought to justice.¹²

The variety of shelters and the range of assistance they provide militate against a single approach to the development and implementation of shelter programs on a global scale. This study lays out a series of factors relating to the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in group residential facilities, including size, services provided, length of stay, and cost, providing examples of how different shelters have dealt with these factors. Using the examples provided, the study gives consideration to the challenges to a comprehensive victim-centered approach to residential shelter facilities and identifies a set of good practices that can be adapted to accommodate the differing needs of victims at different stages of the rehabilitation process. The study concludes by providing recommendations that address important strategic gaps in shelter programming.

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¹² Press Statement, U.S. Department of State, December 9, 2004 and February 18, 2005.

SECTION III. GROUP RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

This study identified several types of shelters designed to meet the range of trafficking victim needs and circumstances:

- Emergency shelters
- Transit shelters
- Short-term shelters
- Long-term shelters
- Transition homes
- Reintegration centers

Based on the research and interviews conducted during the course of this study, the longest running and most established shelter programs for trafficking victims appear to be in South Asia, South East Asia, and Eastern Europe, although there is a growing recognition of the need for such services in the Latin America and Caribbean region, Africa, and the Middle East.¹³

Emergency Shelters

Emergency shelters — also known as confidential shelters, crisis centers, rescue homes, and drop-in centers — are usually the first destination for victims of trafficking, following a rescue, police referral, or escape. They often are located in areas considered to have a high density of trafficking victims — borders between countries, urban centers, tourist destinations, etc.— and they may serve female victims of rape and domestic violence, as well as trafficking victims. Although the shelters may have a capacity for 10-30 individuals, only a few women might be residing in them at any one time.

Usually providing for stays of a few nights to a month, emergency shelters are primarily designed to meet the temporary needs of victims of trafficking directly after rescue. The most fundamental purpose of emergency shelters is the immediate provision of medical and physical security for the victims. When these shelters serve both local and foreign victims, legal assistance may be arranged to help foreign individuals return to their country of origin.

In Belgrade, Serbia, a confidential shelter was established as a safe space for women who had been trafficked. The shelter provides health care, social services, counseling in the victims' native language, and opportunities for education and training, with legal assistance and more comprehensive psycho-social counseling being provided on a case-by-case basis. With a capacity for 15 people, citizens from Serbia and Montenegro and citizens of other countries trafficked to Serbia and Montenegro can seek assistance at the emergency shelter.¹⁴

Many emergency shelters have counseling, educational, and vocational programs, although they are by necessity short-term. In Honduras, Casa Alianza's emergency shelter provides child victims of trafficking with a structured and supportive environment. In their emergency care facilities, or "crisis centers," the children are fed, clothed, and given a clean bed, diagnostic and

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¹³ See for example Tzvetkova, M. 2002. "NGO Responses to Trafficking in Women." *Gender and Development*, Vol. 10(1), March.

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¹⁴ Bjerkan, L. 2005. *A Life of One's Own: Rehabilitation of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation*. FAFO, pg. 58-59.

medical treatment, educational and vocational training, and security. The children also participate in non-formal educational activities that prepare them for the public school system.¹⁵ As is the case for the majority of emergency shelters, as soon as the children are stabilized and make a start in the recovery process, they are referred to the Casa Alianza long-term shelter that will best serve their needs. The movement of victims through the stages of recovery exemplified by the Casa Alianza system is important for the long-term goals of rehabilitation programs. Stabilizing victims should be the first step in what may be a long-term process of recovery. Once they are ready, victims need to be placed in systems of care that not only provide shelter but also help move them on to new stages in the process.

Transit Centers

Transit centers are similar to emergency centers but are distinguished by their strategic location at significant trafficking and migration border crossings. They provide assistance to victims, predominantly women and children, who are in the process of being trafficked or who are coming back into the country after being trafficked. Although transit centers most commonly refer trafficking victims to shelters where they can get more comprehensive care, in some countries, Nepal for example, it has been reported that victims stay in the centers for up to one month while the most appropriate care for their circumstances can be identified.¹⁶

The anti-trafficking NGO Maiti Nepal has established transit homes in three districts of the country along the border between Nepal and India. Among the employees at these centers are a few former victims who now work as anti-trafficking guards. They begin work after they have undergone a period of recovery in shelters operated by Maiti Nepal. Using their experience and understanding of trafficking situations, they operate out of transit centers to intercept girls and women in the process of being trafficked. In addition to the economic support that these jobs bring, these former victims are able to use their experiences to help other potential victims and bring them to safety, both through the rescue process and by mounting prevention and surveillance campaigns.¹⁷

Strong coordination between local law enforcement and service providers is important to establishing an effective transit center. Attempts have been made to combine the efforts of local law enforcement and transit shelters along significant border locations. For example, in the Thai/Cambodia border town of Poipet, the Cambodian Children and Handicap Development Organization (CCHDO) operates a transit center where a team of social workers from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSAVY), police, and NGO staff work with Thai police to rescue victims who are in the process of being trafficked. The centers are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and provide emergency medical assistance, referrals to longer term shelters, and assistance in locating the victims' families.¹⁸

¹⁵ http://www.covenanthouse.org/about_loc_honduras.html; <http://www.hiltonfoundation.org/press/16-pdf2.pdf#search=%22honduras%20casa%20alianza%20four%20months%22>

¹⁶ Interview notes M. Singh, USAID/Nepal (2006).

¹⁷ Sahara Group and Beyond Trafficking: Joint Initiative in the Millennium against Trafficking in Girls and Women. 2004. *Best Practices on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Trafficked Women and Girls*. Nepal: Joint Initiative in the Millennium against Trafficking in Girls and Women, page 27.

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¹⁸ The Asia Foundation. September 2005. *Reintegration Assistance for Trafficked Women and Children in Cambodia: A Review*. p. 35

<http://www.no-trafficking.org/content/pdf/reintegration%20assistance%20review%20-%20taf%20-%202005.pdf#search=%22Located%20at%20the%20border%20town%20of%20Poipet%20CCHDO%22%22>

The location of transit shelters on or near the border is helpful for intercepting victims in the process of being trafficked and serving victims who have escaped back over the border but fear returning to their homes. Life and Hope is a transit shelter along the border between Greece and Albania in the town of Gjirokastra, Albania, which provides emergency assistance to Albanian victims of trafficking coming back across the border from Greece after being trafficked. The victims stay in the shelter for no longer than one week, where they receive medical care and psycho-social counseling, before being referred to a longer-term shelter.¹⁹

Short-Term Shelters

Short-term shelters commonly provide assistance to victims of trafficking from one week up to three months, either in their country of origin or destination. Victims trafficked across national borders may be referred to these shelters, sometimes by an emergency shelter in the destination country or by police, or they may seek shelters themselves. The capacity of these shelters varies; some are fairly small, with a capacity of 10 to 20 people, while others are much larger and can serve 100 to 200 people, at times operating at full capacity. Short-term shelter residents may be victims of trafficking or different forms of physical and psychological abuse.

Beyond providing exploited victims with safety and security, many short-term shelters also provide assistance in obtaining the paperwork exploited victims need to return home or take steps toward a new life. Lebanon, increasingly recognized as a destination for women trafficked into domestic servitude, has short-term shelter services. In 2004, the Government of Lebanon signed a memorandum of understanding with the anti-trafficking NGOs International Catholic Migration Commission and Caritas Lebanon, enabling these organizations to provide enhanced shelter facilities or services for women trafficked into the country. Women are now able to receive temporary permits to stay in Lebanon for up to two months while legal action is taken against their former employers.²⁰ Another NGO located in a suburb outside of Beirut, Laksehta, provides short-term assistance to Sri Lankan women trafficked into domestic servitude in Lebanon, helping them obtain the documents necessary for arranging a temporary stay in country, retrieving their passports from their employers, assisting with repatriation, and arranging for medical treatment and shelter.²¹

Voluntary Assisted Return (VAR) programs are another form of short-term assistance for victims of trafficking in countries of destination, prior to their departure home. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) operates a number of VAR programs worldwide. In Serbia, for example, the assistance package includes shelter, medical and psychological care, legal assistance, and recreation activities. Individuals generally spend between four to five weeks in the program prior to repatriation, during which time IOM obtains travel documents and, if possible, arranges for accommodation in a shelter or care through a local NGO in their country of origin.²²

¹⁹ Interview notes A. Giantris USAID/Albania (2006).

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²⁰ Anti-Slavery International. *Trafficking in Women for Forced Labour and Domestic Work in the Context of the Middle East and the Gulf Region*. Germany: The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZA) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), pages 54-55.

²¹ Anti-Slavery International. 2006. *Trafficking in Women: Forced Labor and Domestic Work in the Context of the Middle East and Gulf Region*. Germany: The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZA) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), pages 54-55.

²² <http://www.iom.int/jahia/page747.html>; Bjerkan, L. 2005. *A Life of One's Own: Rehabilitation of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation*. FAFO, page 46.

Long-Term Shelters

The objective of long-term shelters is to assist individuals with the reintegration process. The length of stay in long-term shelters varies; most provide support and assistance for up to six months or more. As with short-term shelters, the capacity of long-term shelters varies; some are fairly small, with a capacity of 10 to 20 people, while others are much larger and can serve 100 to 200 people and at times operate at full capacity. Residents in long-term shelters may be victims of trafficking or other forms of physical and psychological abuse.

One important component of long-term shelter care involves preparing victims for reintegration into society, within their families, or in new communities. In Nigeria, for example, the Women Trafficking and Child Labor Eradication Foundation runs a shelter serving young Nigerian women, boys, and girls who are the victims of trafficking and child labor. Relying on coordinators located throughout Nigeria, the Foundation works to locate families of trafficking victims who have been referred to their shelter. During this process, which can take up to six months, the women and children remain in the shelter, receiving counseling services, educational and vocational training, and medical assistance at a nearby hospital. The children may go to public schools while the older youth and women receive skills training.²³

The Good Samaritan Association in Ethiopia runs the Addis Hiwot Center for Trafficked Women and is another example of a long-term shelter for returning victims of trafficking. The Center, the first of its kind in Ethiopia, opened its doors in June 2004 and has been providing shelter for women and men who have returned to Ethiopia after undergoing psychological, physical, social, and sexual abuse while working outside of the country. The Association provides assistance in the form of shelter, counselling, and skills-training activities in leather work, photography, and driving.

In Bangladesh, the Dhaka Ahsania Mission operates a long-term shelter in Jessore, preparing trafficking victims to return to social and family life. The 30-bed shelter home provides a comprehensive array of support for the rehabilitation of the women and children who are in its care. Services include health and psychological counseling and literacy and vocational programs for shelter residents. These often are provided through linkages with other local organizations that give training in accessing micro-credit for initiating income generation activities. The shelter also arranges for reintegration of those rescued with their family or community, including counseling services for the families of the victims.²⁴

Transition homes and reintegration centers are two common types of long-term shelters. Transition homes — sometimes referred to as drop-in centers or autonomy houses — offer residents more freedom in their movement throughout the shelter and its grounds as a step in the process of reintegration. Transition homes often house a small number of victims and may include victims of trafficking as well as victims of other types of abuse. Victims referred to transition homes may previously have spent considerable time in a short- or long-term shelter.

In Serbia, for example, the IOM maintains a transition house for Serbian trafficked women in a middle class enclave in Belgrade. The transition “house” is a two-bedroom apartment equipped for up to five residents at a time with a workroom, a kitchen, and a bathroom. Two counselors from a local NGO work with the women but do not live on site. The women receive individual

²³ www.wotclef.org; interview notes Oguejiofor (2006).

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²⁴ <http://www.ahsaniamission.org/interventions/cwtp.htm>

and group counseling services, depending on their needs. The women are encouraged to be creative and become involved in other activities and empowerment workshops. In addition, vocational training or education programs provide computer, job search, and resume writing skills. Upon completion of their education or training, the women are assisted in finding employment. Once the women leave the shelter, their progress is closely monitored for three months to determine their success. If necessary, the women can return to the shelter for additional support.²⁵

The NGO Casa Alianza operates a transition center in Honduras, assisting youth who have been transferred to the center from a Casa Alianza Crisis Center. Specially trained staff prepare the children, many of whom will return to live with their families, for an independent and productive life. School-aged shelter residents are enrolled in public schools, while older youth are offered vocational training or jobs. On average, the youth remain in the transition home for four months.²⁶

Reintegration or rehabilitation centers provide safety and long-term, ongoing support for children and adults — sometimes housed together, sometimes separately — in a structured, formal program. Similar to transition homes, these centers often house a small number of victims and may include victims of trafficking as well as victims of other types of abuse. The goal of the reintegration centers is to prepare victims, through psycho-social care, education, vocational training and legal services, for their eventual reintegration into either their home community, if appropriate, or into a new community.

²⁵ Bjerkan, L. 2005. *A Life of One's Own: Rehabilitation of Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation*. Oslo: FAFO, page 63.

²⁶ www.casaalianza.org; <http://www.hiltonfoundation.org/press/16-pdf2.pdf#search=%22honduras%20casa%20alianza%20four%20months%22>

SECTION IV. REHABILITATION, RECOVERY, AND REINTEGRATION

Critical factors in rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration include the individuals' age; physical and psychological health; background; family life; culture; duration of their exploitation; and their perceptions of the damage done to their person and their future as a result of having been trafficked, especially if they have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Vulnerable before they were trafficked, after the abuse and exploitation, victims are often even more vulnerable. Re-trafficking of victims can be a real danger. The long-term recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration of trafficking victims entails meaningful educational and economic opportunities, as well as extended psycho-social care. A concern to all shelters serving all populations of trafficking victims is the need to find ways to achieve long-term sustainability.

Education

When girls lack educational opportunities their future prospects are limited, making them more vulnerable to traffickers. Many shelters provide a range of educational opportunities for girls, including formal and non-formal education, life skills, and vocational training. World Education's educational programs in Nepal and Cambodia²⁷ enable girls to "learn relevant, practical skills, including basic and reproductive health, nutrition, hygiene, and HIV/AIDS prevention, as well as reading, writing, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills."²⁸

The Kredtrakarn Protection and Occupational Development Center in Bangkok is a government run facility providing protection and assistance to women and children who are victims of trafficking. In addition to providing women and girls with shelter, medical care, and legal assistance, the Center provides extensive educational programs. Using elementary and secondary level curricula prescribed by the Ministry of Education, the Center has established a comprehensive non-formal educational program with knowledge and skills placement tests and completion certificates. Training is provided to help women and girls protect themselves from risky behaviors and negotiate everyday problems. Finally, the Center provides vocational training courses based on market demand, including dress-making, beauty treatment, barbering, and cooking. The Center assists with job placement as well as seed money to help women and girls start their own businesses.²⁹

Foreign residents may need special attention. At the Kredtrakarn Center, for example, foreign residents are offered special classes in their native language. In Italy, the NGO On the Road develops "individualized programs of social protection" for each trafficking victim and identifies which foreign-born victims would benefit from Italian language classes.³⁰ For victims who have agreed to testify against their attackers and will remain in Italy through the often lengthy prosecution phase, the ability to communicate can have an important effect on the recovery process.

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²⁷ http://www.worlded.org/weiinternet/features/preventing_trafficking_through_education.cfm

²⁸ http://www.worlded.org/weiinternet/features/Cambodia_ChildTrafficking.cfm

²⁹ Kredtrakarn Protection and Occupational Development Centre Brochure, Bangkok, Thailand.

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³⁰ Association *On the Road*. "Social Protection and assistance interventions addressed to the victims of trafficking- Description of the Italian System."

<http://victimsoftrafficking.esclavagemoderne.org/pdf/SocialProtectionAssistance.pdf#search=%22%20%22by%20Associati on%20On%20the%20Road%22%20emergency%20shelter%22>

Economic Opportunities

Economic opportunity is critical in any successful rehabilitation. Some young victims have had to drop out of school to look for economic opportunities and have been trafficked as a result. Traditional skills-training programs that focus, for example, on hairdressing and weaving do not necessarily guarantee success. One anti-trafficking advisor noted that it may not be appropriate to train a young woman to be a hairdresser if she is then sent back to a village where people can only afford to get their hair cut twice a year — this occupation will not sustain her.³¹ Another anti-trafficking expert from Asia noted that computer training and bookkeeping may not be appropriate if training in these skills is provided in a market where the victims will be competing with more highly educated peers.³²

Established anti-trafficking NGOs in Nepal, including ABC Nepal and Maiti Nepal, have long placed a strong emphasis on ensuring sustainable employment opportunities for victims. Some victims have stayed on to work at the rehabilitation centers, providing support and skills training to recently rescued victims. Others have gone to work with the police or border control teams. These NGOs have provided financial support to victims who have opened up small grocery shops, or to girls and young women who are now working at local area hotels as waitresses. Many of these women have chosen not to or have been unable to return home and, with the help of these NGOs, have established independent and economically viable lives for themselves in new communities.³³

The Asia Foundation has worked with a local anti-trafficking NGO in Vietnam, the Vietnam Women's Union and the Center for Education Promotion and Empowerment for Women (CEPEW), to address economic empowerment and establish programs that provide trafficking survivors (as well as at-risk women) with vocational training, job placement assistance, and micro loans to pursue business opportunities. Since the late 1990s, more than 1,000 women have received micro-loans. Beneficiaries have gained economic opportunities and have participated more confidently in community decisions.³⁴

A few shelters have included income earning ventures to supplement external support. Hagar in Cambodia maintains Hagar Facilities Management, a food catering operation with clients that include international hotel chains and the new American Embassy in Phnom Penh. Hagar also produces high quality women's accessories and home décor items through Hagar Design Limited, and Hagar Soya Limited is Cambodia's only large-scale soy milk producer. All of these enterprises employ highly disadvantaged Cambodian women, many of whom are former trafficking victims, while providing much needed financial support to Hagar's prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration projects.³⁵

Psycho-Social Support

³¹ Interview notes C. Serey, USAID/Cambodia(2006).

³² Interview notes M. Friedman, USAID/RDM Asia (2006).

³³ Sahara Group and Beyond Trafficking: Joint Initiative in the Millennium against Trafficking in Girls and Women. 2004. *Best Practices on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Trafficked Women and Girls*. Nepal: Joint Initiative in the Millennium against Trafficking in Girls and Women, pages 42-43.

³⁴

http://www.asiafoundation.org/pdf/VN_trafficking.pdf#search=%22the%20asia%20foundation%20Vietnam%20stigma%20human%20trafficking%22

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³⁵ Hagar. 2005. *Annual Report 2005*, pages 20-25.

Victims of trafficking commonly experience severe physical and psychological trauma as a result of violence, rape, threats, addiction, and other means used by traffickers to control their victims. During recovery, victims may fear that outsiders will find out what happened to them, or that returning home will bring shame to their families. They may feel guilt for having made such a grave “mistake,” and anger at themselves for “letting it happen.” They may feel anger at others for not helping, while feeling powerless to help themselves. They may need to re-learn to trust other people, make friends, and have healthy relationships. Overcoming all of these feelings is important to the recovery process.³⁶ Psycho-social support and counseling help victims of trafficking free themselves from the anxiety and depression brought on by their traumatic experience and begin the process of rebuilding their self esteem and self confidence.

The majority of shelters reviewed in this study had some form of counseling services available to victims. However, an assessment of a government-run shelter in Nigeria found that counselors often lack specialized training in trafficking-related trauma. This assessment also noted that the shelter's atmosphere is an important element in the psychological well-being of trafficking victims. Residing in a facility that is similar to one's home, rather than an “institution,” and having access to recreational facilities may help shelter residents achieve emotional release from the trauma they have experienced.³⁷

A study of two international and eight local anti-trafficking NGOs based in Kathmandu, Nepal, noted that it is common for girls who have been trafficked to be extremely depressed and display disruptive or inappropriate behavior. Counseling is essential in these cases, and as noted by the NGOs it needs to be provided on a long-term basis, necessitating more and better trained counselors. Additionally, the NGOs participating in this study noted that during counseling sessions it is important that counselors are not overly forceful in suggesting what is best for the girls, but that they help the girls work through their experiences before making decisions about their future. Finally, the NGOs noted the need for family counseling to discourage families from blaming the girls, encourage them to accept their daughters back, be bold in the face of potential community censure, and discuss why a girl may have run away in the first place.³⁸

In Bulgaria, the anti-trafficking NGO, Animus Association Foundation, provides social support and psychological counseling for survivors of trafficking. Animus aims to provide a safe place for victims of trafficking and assistance in dealing with traumatic experiences; overcoming feelings of shame, guilt, and anger; and planning for their future. In Eastern Europe, anti-trafficking NGOs such as Animus have begun to analyze the experience of trafficking victims in relation to post-traumatic stress disorder and use this model when developing long-term psycho-dynamic programming to help victims regain control over their lives.³⁹

Reintegration

The reintegration of trafficking victims often is a difficult, complex, and long-term process. Its complexity lies in the fact that it is different for each individual victim and that it involves not only the victim but also the environment and culture within which the reintegration is to take place.

³⁶ Stiftelsen Kinnoforum. 2003. *European Good Practice on Recovery, Return, and Integration of Trafficked Persons*. Stockholm: Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, pages 16-17.

³⁷ USAID. 2005. *Nigeria Anti-Trafficking Assessment April 11-27, 2005*. Washington, D.C.: USAID, p. 21-22.

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³⁸ Asia Foundation, Pop Council. 2000. *A Comparative Analysis of Anti-Trafficking Intervention Approaches in Nepal*. P. 27.

³⁹ Stiftelsen Kvinnoforum 2003. p. 33-34.

Reintegration of victims of trafficking entails more than moving a child or woman back home or to another selected place. The process entails putting the pieces of the former victim's life together in a way that she can be re-united with a former life, a family, and a community, or helping the victim create a new life in another place in society.

The reintegration of trafficking victims into their home community presents particular challenges when supporting trafficking victims who do not want to return home or are unable to do so. These victims need assistance to create an independent life, sometimes requiring a long-term commitment by those organizations providing support.⁴⁰

Although some foreign trafficked persons want to return home as soon as possible, others want to stay in the destination country for fear of stigma attached to being presumed a prostitute, rejection from one's family and community, or reprisals, or because of the perceived possibility of a better life than their home community could offer.⁴¹ The desire not to return home may stem from a desire not to return to the root causes of trafficking — poverty, lack of sustainable economic opportunities, and domestic abuse. As the program manager of a women's safe house in Montenegro has noted, follow-up with trafficking victims upon their return home has documented that most of them do face serious problems, such as neglect, extreme poverty, and a lack of job opportunities and psycho-social support.⁴²

Some individuals are reluctant to identify themselves as victims, particularly in communities where trafficking is equated with prostitution and HIV infection is commonly assumed.⁴³ As The Asia Foundation has found in Vietnam, the stigma that many victims feel upon being identified as a victim of trafficking may stop them from accessing resources and services, particularly after return to their own countries.⁴⁴

Case studies collected by ABC Nepal of 12 trafficked girls demonstrate the problems arising from the assumption that a victim must return to her family or community. For women and girls from difficult or dysfunctional family environments, returning home may have an adverse effect on their recovery. For example in Nepal, it was clear that given the stigma associated with prostitution and the possibility of a former trafficking victim being HIV positive, communities may refuse to accept a woman or girl back when her history is publicly known. Families may fear social censure or ostracism from the wider community if they accept their daughters back, and girls themselves may be worried about the extra burden placed on their parents, especially if they are HIV positive or unlikely to achieve life milestones, such as marriage, as a result of their experience.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Hennink, M., and P. Simkhada. 2004. *Sex Trafficking in Nepal: Context and Process*. Opportunities and Choices Working Paper, No. 11, April, page 33. The Asia Foundation. 2001. *Prevention of Trafficking and the Care and Support of Trafficked Persons: In the context of an Emerging HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Nepal*. Nepal: The Asia Foundation and India: The Population Council, page 44.

⁴¹ Interview notes M. Raicevic.

⁴² Interview notes M. Raicevic, Women's Safe House Montenegro (2006).

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⁴³ Interview notes T. Cataldo, country Representative: IOM Nigeria (2006); Save the Children. 2003. *Exploring the Status of Reintegrated Girls: A Participatory Study*. Save the Children, Nepal, page 10.

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http://www.asiafoundation.org/pdf/VN_trafficking.pdf#search=%22the%20asia%20foundation%20Vietnam%20stigma%20human%20trafficking%22

⁴⁵ Evans, Catrin, and Pankaja Bhattarai. 2000. *Trafficking in Nepal: Intervention Models, A Comparative Analysis of Anti-Trafficking Intervention Approaches in Nepal*. Katmandu, Nepal and New Delhi, India: the Asia Foundation and The Population Council, pages 26-29.

In Uganda, where the use of trafficked children in armed conflicts is widespread, successful reintegration is a great concern. To facilitate this process for children who have been forced into sexual exploitation and labor in the service of the ongoing conflict, World Vision has established the Gulu Center for Children of War, providing medical care, counseling, vocational training, and reintegration assistance for children being reunited with their families. The Center provides formerly abducted children with temporary shelter, HIV/AIDS education, food, medical treatment, psycho-social counseling, and vocational training, and facilitates a smooth reunion of the children with their families. Since its establishment in 1995, more than 14,000 children and adults have passed through the center. World Vision also works within affected communities to help families and community members understand what has happened to these children and encourage them to forgive and accept the children.

Special Concerns

Although all victims of trafficking require special care, the literature reviewed for this study identified several populations that may need increased attention. These include child victims, child soldiers, and victims suffering from HIV/AIDS.

Child Victims

The specific concerns regarding child victims of trafficking include their reduced capacity to assess risk, articulate their experiences and fears, and look after themselves —both in terms of obtaining their own food and shelter and taking action in self-defense.⁴⁶ In order to provide greater guidance to shelters in Southeast Asia, the End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT) network of organizations has developed a training guide, which identifies specific issues that may arise when caring for a child who has been prostituted. In addition to addressing the child's family history, which may include abuse, instability, and poverty, shelters need to address the extent to which the child's ability to live an independent life has been compromised by the lack of education, as well as the difficulties she may have reaching certain life goals, such as marriage.⁴⁷

Returning victims to their families is not always possible or ideal. It has been documented in Eastern Europe and South Asia that children may have lost ties with their families, and families may not be prepared to face community stigma once their child returns.⁴⁸ Some NGOs have developed alternatives to natal family reintegration. For example, the Hagar shelter in Cambodia maintains a foster program for child victims of trafficking. While living with their foster families, the children continue to receive counseling and education, and to be involved in social programs that facilitate their reintegration into community life.⁴⁹

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⁴⁶ International Federation Terre des hommes. 2004. *Kids as Commodities? Child Trafficking and What to do about it*. Switzerland and Germany: Terre des hommes, page 19; ECPAT. 2005. *The psycho-social Rehabilitation of Children who have been Commercially Sexually Exploited: A Training Guide*. Thailand: ECPAT International, page 20; see also UNICEF. 2004. *Trafficking in Children in Kosovo: A study on protection and assistance provided to children victims of trafficking*, page 32.

⁴⁷ ECPAT. 2005. *The psycho-social Rehabilitation of Children who have been Commercially Sexually Exploited: A Training Guide*. Thailand: ECPAT International, page 28.

⁴⁸ UNICEF. 2004. *Trafficking in Children in Kosovo: A study on protection and assistance provided to children victims of trafficking*, page 50; ILO/IPEC/TICSA 2006. *Compassionate Care: Proceedings of Workshops*. Kathmandu: ILO, pages 69-70.

⁴⁹ Hagar. 2005. *Annual Report 2005*, pages 14-15.

The cultural perception of the definition of a child is an additional issue.⁵⁰ Many countries do not share the same age of majority, and social and cultural expectations that put pressure on children to take on adult responsibilities, including marriage and employment, result in situations where some children or youths are not seen as victims. In Kosovo, for example, there is a tendency to view teenage girls as young women. In these cases, the needs of these young girls may not be fully addressed.⁵¹

“Street children” — children who work and/or live on the streets, sometimes under the control of an adult — are another vulnerable group that may become shelter beneficiaries. The presence of street children often reflects socioeconomic crisis; poor, dysfunctional families; or a combination of both. In addition to threats to their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being, street children often experience alienation. Life on the street means disconnection from traditional caregivers and the formal education system, which leaves them even more vulnerable to physical, sexual, and verbal use; HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases; and drugs.⁵²

Child Soldiers

Violence and armed conflict increase the vulnerability of children to trafficking. Boys and girls may enlist voluntarily for survival; be sold, abducted, or kidnapped; or have been lured by fraud and coercion, coupled with force. They serve as combatants, informants, spies, collaborators, messengers, couriers, decoys, guards, scouts, porters, mine layers and sweepers, domestic workers, sexual slaves, prostitutes, and marriage partners. They may be subjected to murder, torture, imprisonment, or rape, and forced to commit violence against others.⁵³ According to the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, more than 250,000 children under the age of 18 continue to be exploited as child soldiers in 33 areas of the world.⁵⁴ The problem of child soldiers is most critical in Africa, where during 2004 an estimated 100,000 children were involved in armed conflict.⁵⁵

Formal disarmament and demobilization programs are often the only way children can disassociate from armed groups. However, the registration process for such programs can present problems for child soldiers, both boys and girls, who may or may not have access to or control over weapons or ammunition, which are necessary to claim status as ex-combatants. These child soldiers are dependent on their “commander” to give them the weapons or ammunition required so that they can register for benefits. Additional challenges to providing care within reception centers include whether to provide separate facilities for children, who when mixed with their commanders may be manipulated back into the armed group,⁵⁶ as well

⁵⁰ Subparagraph (d) of Article 3, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children*, defines states “Child shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.”

⁵¹ UNICEF. 2004. *Trafficking in Children in Kosovo: A Study on Protection and Assistance Provided to Children Victims of Trafficking*. Kosovo: UNICEF, page 33.

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⁵² United States Agency for International Development (USAID). 2006. *Displaced Children and Orphans Fund. Portfolio Synopsis 2005-2006*. Washington, D.C.: USAID.

⁵³ Human Rights Watch: Child Soldiers: Facts About Child Soldiers www.hrw.org

⁵⁴ Report of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, A/60/335, September 7, 2005, p2

⁵⁵ www.child-soldiers.org/childsoldiers/some-facts 9/12/06

⁵⁶ In Angola, a lack of temporary facilities led to the mixing of children with adult UNITA commanders who then manipulated the children back into the armed group, and recruited new child soldiers. Of 8,613 child soldiers registered in the UNITA quartering areas, only 57 percent could be tracked for demobilization and family reunification. (Verhey, Beth. 2001. *Child Soldiers: Preventing, Demobilizing, and Reintegrating*. World Bank Africa Working Group Paper, Section 2:

as ensuring that children are not excluded from support services during the transition from military to civilian control.⁵⁷

Upon discharge from the reception center, children may be transported to an interim care facility, where they will experience another period of transition assistance that can last from 4 weeks to 9 months or more, depending on the organization running the facility, its mission, and funding. Interim care centers (ICCs) provide physical, emotional, social, psychological, and sometimes spiritual support. The interim care period allows the children to reflect on their lives and provides them with some brief educational experiences, vocational training, and counseling to think about what kind of life they would like in the future. There are separate ICCs for adult men and children; however the challenge of creating separate ICCs for women and girls remains.

After children leave the interim care facility, transit center, or reception center and return to their communities and families, they can take part in the reintegration programs available within their communities. The reintegration process back into civilian life for former child soldiers can be tricky. The children and youth are not necessarily viewed in the same light as trafficking victims in non-conflict countries because as child soldiers they not only have suffered horrific abuse, but they also have committed atrocities, sometimes even against their own families. In the case of long-term and ongoing conflict, such as Uganda and Liberia, there may be no community left to join; instead children must go back to a life as an internally displaced person, and “return” to an IDP camp. Family tracing and reunification, community sensitization, traditional cleansing and healing practices, counseling and ongoing medical care for war-related conditions, education, and vocational training are all elements of effective reintegration programming for ex-combatants, their families, and their communities.

HIV/AIDS

Women and children trafficked in commercial sexual exploitation are at high risk of contracting the HIV virus. Younger trafficking victims are particularly susceptible to contracting the infection due to the immaturity of their genital tract.⁵⁸ Child soldiers are highly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and to HIV.

Women and children trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation who contract HIV/AIDS are particularly vulnerable to social ostracism. In Asia, brothel owners may abandon ill prostitutes and leave them to fend for themselves.⁵⁹ In South Asia, victims of trafficking with HIV/AIDS find it difficult to return home to their families due to the stigma. Moreover, some awareness raising efforts aimed at preventing trafficking had the unintended consequence of contributing to the

Demobilization, page 10; *see also* de Watteville, Nathalie. 2002. *Addressing Gender Issues in Demobilization and Reintegration Programs*, World Bank Africa Working Paper Series, Demobilization, page 6.)

⁵⁷ In Uganda, former child soldiers abducted by the rebel force pass through a military barracks and then a NGO reception center before returning to their families and communities often without having received the proper paperwork attesting to their civilian status. (Verhey, Beth. November 2001. *Child Soldiers: Preventing, Demobilizing, and Reintegrating*. World Bank Africa Working Group Paper, Section 2: Demobilization, page 11.)

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⁵⁸ United Nations Development Program (UNDP). You and AIDS: www.youandaids.org/themes/trafficking.asp

⁵⁹ ILO/IPEC 2001. *Nepal: Trafficking in Girls with a Special Reference to Prostitution, A Rapid Assessment*. Geneva: ILO, page 32.

stigmatization of trafficked women. In Nepal for example, upon their return, even victims who are not infected, or who have not been prostituted, are assumed to have the disease.⁶⁰

Several NGOs have specialized care programs for trafficking victims infected with HIV who choose not to return home. Maiti Nepal has a shelter dedicated solely to HIV-positive victims of trafficking. Residents of the shelter receive long-term care with the knowledge that they may never be well enough to leave the shelter.⁶¹ However, there is controversy over providing separate shelter facilities for HIV-positive victims of trafficking as this could further stigmatize them.⁶²

Casa Alianza operates in several Central American countries serving at-risk youth. At the shelters, HIV/AIDS patients reside with other victims of trafficking as well as victims of other forms of violence. Through the Luna Project, the shelters also offer medical and psycho-social care for both HIV-positive children and children suffering from full-blown AIDS. The Luna Project works with families of HIV/AIDS children, teaching them how to keep their children healthy and facilitating the return home of their children, when possible.

Viability of Shelters — Sustainability and Quality of Services

Finding a viable long-term means of self-support is difficult for most shelters. The shelter, recovery, and integration services provided by NGOs to victims of trafficking largely depend on support from international donors and foundations. Many of those interviewed for this study emphasized that organizations that support shelter services for trafficking victims need to think creatively about the sustainability of shelters.⁶³

Some interventions, such as collective enterprises for economic rehabilitation, are being developed to address the issue of sustainability. One of the Reaching Out shelters in Romania developed an agro-tourism project, which includes a bed and breakfast that generates funds to cover the shelter's expenses. Naturally grown products produced by small farms in the community are sold to the bed and breakfast to be used in the restaurant, and with the money obtained from selling their products, local farmers are encouraged to produce higher quality goods. This project allows trafficking victims to interact in new ways with their community and make a living for themselves while working at the bed and breakfast. Others shelters, such as the Hagar shelter discussed above,⁶⁴ maintain stores to sell the products that victims make in their vocational training classes, marketing the goods nationally and internationally.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ The Asia Foundation and Population Council. 2001. *Prevention of Trafficking and the Care and Support of Trafficked Persons: In the Context of an Emerging HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Nepal*. Nepal: The Asia Foundation and India: The Population Council, pages

⁶¹ www.maitinepal.org

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⁶² The Asia Foundation and Population Council. 2001. *Prevention of Trafficking and the Care and Support of Trafficked Persons: In the Context of an Emerging HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Nepal*. Nepal: The Asia Foundation and India: The Population Council, pages

⁶³ See for example interview notes C. Johnston and G. Manta (2006); interview notes L. Rende-Taylor (2006); interview notes C. Taha (2006); M.L. Eagleton (2006).

⁶⁴ See page 11 above.

⁶⁵ Hagar. 2005. *Annual Report 2005*, page 22; see also interview notes NGO Prajwala; interview notes C. Taha..

SECTION V. BEST PRACTICES

This study has identified a set of good practices for the provision of shelter care to victims of trafficking. Given the range of trafficking situations and the varied needs of trafficking victims, these practices are not applicable to all shelters at every stage of the rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration process. Rather, they should be used selectively and adapted to accommodate the differing needs of victims throughout the process.

Standard operating procedures. Standard operating procedures are necessary to outline the criteria for victims entering facilities and the procedures to follow when assessing, caring for, and referring victims to other facilities or integrating them into society. Exemplary operating standards developed for children in need of special protection in Nepal include provisions for protecting children's rights and ensuring their safety; developing guidelines for case and staff management, psycho-social interventions, and disciplinary procedures; monitoring health, nutrition, and education; and establishing guidelines for physical facilities and the provision of recreational and cultural activities.⁶⁶ The development of a code of conduct for visitors to shelters also has received greater attention in recent years. Outside visitors may be asked to sign a form concerning what they can and cannot do during their visit, and the international NGO Terre des Hommes' code of conduct for their shelter staff and visitors includes a policy requiring that an adult never be alone with a child.⁶⁷

Linkages. Shelters are just one part of a process in the protection and recovery of victims and the prosecution of the traffickers. As such they must have links and good working relations with other actors in this process. Strong coordination and cooperation among civil society and international agencies, as well as government organizations — formal or informal — are integral to effective anti-trafficking prevention, prosecution, and protection efforts. The U.S. Government supports the efforts of the non-governmental Anti-trafficking Coordination Unit of Northern Thailand (TRAFCORD). This coordinating body has become a pioneering force in advocacy and capacity-building for NGOs, government entities, and other concerned agencies in the anti-trafficking movement. TRAFCORD has been instrumental in rescuing victims of human trafficking and prosecuting their exploiters.⁶⁸

Appropriate staff training. Shelters need to employ, or develop relationships with, professionals in the field of medicine, psychiatry, psychology, and social work, as well as individuals who can provide vocational training in a wide range of skills. Some organizations in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia have advocated that shelter staff receive continuing training in understanding the psychological state of a trafficking victim. In Ukraine, for example, it is considered a best practice to help shelter staff understand that many trafficking victims, although grateful for being rescued, also may be fearful of being incarcerated or deported; feel guilty for having been so naïve or for not having earned desperately needed income; or experience a sense of betrayal by their communities, their friends, and their families. An additional concern identified in Eastern and Western Europe and Southeast Asia is the need for shelter staff, particularly those working with foreign victims, to receive help in understanding different cultures' approaches to counseling and care. The Italian NGO On the Road has developed innovative, culturally

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⁶⁶ International Labour Organization/International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor Trafficking in Children in Southeast Asia (ILO/IPEC/TICSA). 2006. *Compassionate Care: Proceedings of Workshops*. Katmandu: ILO Office, pages 48-50.

⁶⁷ International Federation Terre des homes. 2004. *Kids as Commodities? Child Trafficking and What to do about it*. Switzerland and Germany: Terre des hommes foundation, page 80.

⁶⁸ <http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/news/press/2006/nrot012.htm>; <http://www.chiangmai-mail.com/o44/features/shtml>

sensitive programs using intercultural mediators — social workers from the same linguistic and/or cultural background as the victims — to assist victims more effectively.

Individualized attention. Trafficking victims' age, physical and psychological health, background, family life, culture, duration of exploitation, and perceptions of the damage done to their person and their future as a result of having been trafficked must be taken into account as part of the reintegration process. To prevent re-trafficking particular attention must be paid to victims who, for fear of stigma or social ostracism or because they lack access to sustainable income generating opportunities, cannot or do not want to return home.

Economic Opportunity. Vocational training must be based on a realistic analysis of the market and take into account both the individual and the environment. Traditional skill-training programs that focus, for example, on hairdressing and weaving may not be appropriate in many environments. Alternatively, training in such skills as computer programming and bookkeeping may force the former victim to compete for jobs with more highly educated peers.

Follow-up. Assistance to former trafficking victims who are reintegrated must include a follow-up component to assess their needs upon their return home, where they often face serious problems, such as stigma, neglect, extreme poverty, and a lack of job opportunities and psychosocial support.

SECTION VI. CONCLUSION

Group residential rehabilitative facilities, or “shelters,” for trafficked victims provide essential services to help trafficking victims recover from their ordeal and reintegrate into society. Only a small percentage of the estimated 600,000 to 800,000 victims of cross-border trafficking and the additional hundreds of thousands of those trafficked internally each year go to shelters. The victims must escape from their captors or be intercepted or rescued, and they must be willing to identify themselves as victims, for rehabilitation and reintegration processes to succeed.

Shelters differ in location, size, services provided, and population served. To be successful, they must link their services to wider networks of care that are better equipped to provide legal help, protection, education, and training to victims while they are residing in a shelter, and when following up with a victim during the long and often difficult reintegration process. This process is filled with uncertainties that result from exogenous factors, including the religious, ethnic, and cultural background of the victim, and economic and educational opportunities available to the victim before being trafficked and during her rehabilitation and recovery. The particular trafficking experience of each individual victim, including whether her family or friends were complicit, and the abuse the victim suffered, for example if the victim has become infected with HIV, is an extremely important consideration.

There is no a quick fix in addressing the needs of trafficking victims. Shelters are costly to maintain and they entail a huge investment in a small population of victims. The care they provide cannot end once a victim takes the first steps toward an independent life. Follow-up and continuity of care are an integral part of the rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration process.

Shelters are not a replacement for the other actions that make up comprehensive anti-trafficking efforts. Rather the crucial work of shelters must be augmented by comprehensive, forward-looking preventive measures aimed at alleviating the root causes of the problem.

SECTION VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were identified because they represent important strategic gaps the international community can work on together to improve the effectiveness of group residential facilities for victims of trafficking.

- Compile a compendium of internationally accepted codes of conduct and shelter standard operating procedures for both adult and child target groups.
- Conduct in-country mapping exercises to identify location, type, and target population of the shelters.
- Encourage donors to assess any shelter that they fund on a regular basis, noting costs and target audience, and follow up with trafficking victims to ensure that their lives are improved after their stay in a shelter.
- Improve existing shelters to meet standards. This will include making building safety and hygienic improvements, increasing professional staffing appropriate to the target population, and establishing key linkages with people or institutions referring victims to shelters (e.g., police, NGOs, community members) and those providing continuing post-shelter services (e.g., social and health services, vocational support, and housing).

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