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# New Media and Human Trafficking

Is new media helping or hindering the fight against human trafficking?

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## Declaration

**This is an original work. All references and assistance  
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## ABSTRACT

“Human Trafficking and New Media: Is new media helping or hindering the fight against human trafficking?”

This dissertation investigates the question- “Is new media helping or hindering the fight against human trafficking?” It explores the influences that have contributed to an anti-trafficking movement whilst looking at how the proposed democratic function of new media such as the internet is providing a platform upon which organised crime can be facilitated. Trafficking in the human context, whether for sexual exploitation or forced labour affects the whole world. This paper exposes the realities of human trafficking and how new media has both positive and negative features. As new media provides a world-wide platform that exists without restriction, it is currently being used by both the perpetrators of this crime and anti-trafficking activists. The victims of human-trafficking currently have no voice, and the fight against human-trafficking is pushing for them to be heard.

This is the story of a young woman named Carol from Zimbabwe who was trafficked into the sex-trade from Zimbabwe to South Africa, to Mozambique, to Zambia and Tanzania.

Carol was orphaned and staying with her grandparents when this happened. One day on her way to school she was approached by two men who offered her a job. Carol was enticed by the job prospect as this would give her the opportunity to help out her grandparents, support her siblings and other relations. Carol left with the men and they took her to a place where they raped her and then transported her out of Zimbabwe to South Africa. She was drugged and placed in a coffin as she was sent across the Zimbabwean border. When she was in South Africa she was forced into prostitution. She was not allowed to go anywhere and was under surveillance at all times.

She was forced to stay in South Africa for several months before being taken to Mozambique where the abuse continued. Then she was trafficked through Zambia to Tanzania where she managed to escape. At an open market her captor left her for a few minutes to order food. Carol took the opportunity and ran off. She asked help from a woman who then took her to the Zimbabwean Embassy in Tanzania. The Embassy transported her back home and she was handed over to the police under the care of the International Organisation for Migration who offered her care under their victim support program. From medical tests carried out it was discovered that

Carol had contracted HIV. The other difficulty Carol has to face is her family failing to accept her as they believe she will have a bad influence over the other children. Carol is currently staying at a centre and is receiving care.

(Original Source: Oasis Zimbabwe cited in [stopthetraffic.org](http://stopthetraffic.org))

## INTRODUCTION

The movement of people since colonial times has been the precursor for things that have gone wrong. Huge population movements forced to leave war zones create refugee camps wrought with misery, death, poverty, hunger, depression, trauma, and has lead to survival based decisions. Short time survival in such conditions is more important than long term. Sex in exchange for money is often a decision made by a woman to provide for her family and survive, yet in many cases it is not a free choice. A young woman may initially agree to be transported in order to enter the sex trade to earn a living and provide for her family, but later find herself trapped by threats of violence, physical restriction or debt-bondage. Societies characterized by war, famine, population increase and poverty, lack structures where technology can be accessed, and are frequently target areas that become the greatest exporters of people to more developed nations, that frequently are enslaved. According to a broader definition used by Kevin Bales, of 'Anti-Slavery International', there are 27 million people (though some put the number as high as 200 million) in virtual slavery today, spread all over the world (2000). The Working Group Against Human Trafficking (2006), point out that during the 1980's, more women and children were enslaved by trafficking from Asia than all of the people sold into slavery from Africa during the 400 years of the slave trade. Slavery is the control and denial of freedom of human beings for economic and social benefit. Modern "sex slavery" is an unfortunate reality. Almost every city, town, and village in Eastern and Central Europe has seen some of it's young girls and women disappear. This is not due to illness, natural disaster or deciding to leave home, they are taken under false pretences and exploited under what is known as human trafficking.

In an article written by The Guardian UK newspaper (5<sup>th</sup> January 2005), during the aftermath of the Tsunami disaster in South East Asia, much fear was raised that criminals may be trafficking children who were orphaned due to the massive death toll of this natural disaster. A senior official of UNICEF warned of credible reports that criminal gangs in Indonesia were offering orphans for adoption/exploitation. Carol

Bellamy, the executive director of UNICEF said that organised syndicates were exploiting the crisis in the Aceh Province who were using sophisticated technology such as sending SMS messages to people throughout the region offering children for adoption. Her colleague in Kuala Lumpur received a text message that offered to sell children “according to the buyers wishes” (UNICEF spokesman John Budd told this to Reuters).

With the above example in mind, it cannot be denied that the rapid growth of new media technology such as mobile phone technology and the internet, may be contributing to the expansion of the human trafficking industry. The internet is increasing the availability and the rate at which information is sent across vast spaces, at the same time it is also increasing the variety and amount of information that is widely accessible. With the rise of new media technology and the growing numbers of people’s ability to use it, the media are no longer the only distributors of information. We live in a society where young generations have grown with new media and are becoming more and more interactive with it. Non governmental organisations (NGOs) and activists are utilizing the internet to promote their opinions and create awareness of issues of global importance. The number of these groups is growing with the aid of new technology, and interconnectedness is narrowing national boundaries. So the public are capable of democratic change and new media is speeding up the processes of communication which enable this change.

I will be reviewing in later chapters how global activists are utilizing new media to create global awareness of the illegal operation of human trafficking and how they are capable of obtaining governmental support. What I aim to investigate, is whether new media technology is ultimately helping the fight against human trafficking by providing a platform for activists to create a global response and stop the traffic, or is it hindering the fight against this modern day slavery that is human trafficking by creating technology that is universally available and providing for increased interactivity and communications that traffickers will benefit from. I will be focusing my investigation mainly on the internet as a form of new media and the trafficking of women as one of the main areas of human trafficking.

Placing this topic within a theoretical framework proved to be very interesting due to the enormity of the issue and the amount of literature available. In order to comprehensively gain a better understanding of both new media and human trafficking, I carried out a number of different methods of research including reviews of literature and articles as well as qualitative research that involved speaking to individuals that work with victims of trafficking.

As I am focusing my research on new media, some of my research was carried out on the internet. Chapter 4 for example, is a case study of a website called STOP THE TRAFFIK. Much of the research about human trafficking itself was carried out online and mainly gathered from websites that are raising awareness about the issue such as the Ruhama website and the STOP THE TRAFFIK website itself. The majority of my research was gathered from the literature that is cited in Chapter 3, this research proved to be invaluable to my topic. As criminals are utilizing new media technology to run their businesses, there was a possibility that I may have come across evidence of this while researching their use of new media. In order to prevent myself from stumbling upon illegal websites, I decided not to investigate or search for websites that they may be potentially using. In order to further my research and maintain a higher level of objectivity, I spoke to two women who are involved in non governmental organisations in the fight against trafficking and who also work closely with victims. A justification of why this method of research was carried out is that these women are both engrossed in the fight against human trafficking and both use new media within their areas of work. Both women were slightly apprehensive about what I exactly meant by the term “new media”, so before I spoke to each woman, I formulated a set of detailed questions explaining what new media is. I then emailed these documents to both women so that they could reflect on the areas of discussion with ease before our interviews (See Appendix 1&2).

The next chapter gives an contextual insight into exactly what human trafficking is and a reflection of why global action against it is necessary.

## CONTEXTUALISATION

The act of human trafficking involves the recruitment, entrapment, transportation and exploitation of human beings, by means of abduction, fraud, deceitful promises of a better life and the abuse of power to gain control over a person for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes forced labour, servitude, removal of organs in extreme cases and sexual exploitation. Poverty, unemployment and displacement often make people vulnerable and thus more likely to be susceptible to becoming victims of this crime. Trafficking victims are held against their will in what is known as 'bondage' by threats of harm and deportation from the traffickers.

It is a business, and it is growing at rapid rates. The United Nations (UN) estimates that the total market value is at \$32billion per year, and \$10billion of that is generated from the initial stages of the sale of persons to traffickers, the rest is generated from the activities produced by victims of this crime. It is common for women who are trafficked to be forced into sexual exploitation such as prostitution and reports have found that these women can be forced to service up to thirty or more men, within a 24 hour period. On many occasions they are forced to live in dangerous conditions, they are kept in secret, and undergo frequent threats and physical abuse. Their captors consider them to be disposable, they use them until they become weak and undesirable, or have contracted Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). A trafficked female can be sold again to another captor if she is no longer in demand, and she will be replaced often by a younger, fresher face. Sex-trafficking is one of the most profitable forms of crime today, after the illegal sale of arms and illicit drugs. Victims are treated as a commodity, their human rights are violated and their human dignity stolen. Trafficking is the fastest growing means by which people are caught in the trap of slavery. Economic disparity creates a supply of victims seeking to migrate. Demand for sexual and other services provides the economic impetus for trafficking.

The issue of human trafficking is extremely complex and takes many different

forms in many different people. The UN report that 80% of the victims of human trafficking are women and young girls who are forced into prostitution. They report that the remaining 20% is made up of men and young boys who face forced labour. Men and young boys tend to be trafficked into the labour market, mining, quarrying, and generally dangerous working conditions. Without neglecting the universal problem of human trafficking, I will be focusing my investigation on the trafficking of women and the global issue of sex-trafficking.

It is a common practice to persuade a young woman to leave home and to move to a wealthier neighbouring country where she can work in domestic service, child or adult care, or as a waitress in a restaurant or a bar, or perhaps as a dancer. Upon arrival, her passport, visa, and return tickets are taken from her and, effectively, she is imprisoned, either physically or financially or mentally. She is made to work as a domestic slave or as an agricultural or factory worker, under slave-like conditions, or in a brothel. She sees virtually none of the money that she earns, and eventually she will be sold. (US State Department *Trafficking in Persons Report*, June 2003)

Women and children form the majority of trafficked people. For this reason, it could be argued that contemporary slavery that is human trafficking, has become a specifically feminised experience. Poverty stricken women are prey to traffickers. Traffickers will abuse their vulnerability by making false promises to move them to prosperous centres of globalization where money is guaranteed. Survival is one of the main reasons why women are coerced into trafficking. Women who may have been promised an education, domestic and even office work find themselves forced into the sex trade. Trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation is an increasing type of international organised crime. It generates very high profits. Thousands of people are being trafficked from developing Western Europe and brought into conditions where their basic human rights are violated.

Human Trafficking is now the third biggest source of income for organised crime. It is an underground crime with millions of victims and members that are unknown. Kevin Bales of Anti-Slavery International believes that human trafficking is a form of slavery, whereby the controlling of a person by another is acted out to make a profit.

Bales, reports that throughout history, slaves have been expensive costing on average \$80,000 per person. He states that the growing population and immense poverty in much of the world has led to a significant price drop to \$100 per person, and this cheap rate makes them disposable to their controller (2000). The UN Protocol Against Trafficking in Persons 2003 makes human trafficking a crime however, the participating governments who have ratified this protocol still have not yet effectively implemented it. It is quite rare that criminals are convicted or even caught as legislation is not strong enough and quite often it is the victim who ultimately pays the price, many are convicted for illegal immigration and illegal labour such as prostitution.

The history of female slavery has many roots in Africa. Women were bought and sold by Arab traders and were moved to the Middle East to be sold into sexual slavery. Women were sold at a lower price than their male counterparts and as a result; were in much higher demand. The trafficking of human beings has been identified by the UN as a contemporary form of slavery. Trafficking in the human context, whether for sexual exploitation or forced labour affects the whole world. Trafficking has globalised and currently affects nearly every country in the world. The UN estimate that between 700,000 to 4 million people are trafficked every year to generate profits that mirror other forms of organised crime. As it is an underground crime, it is impossible to know accurate numbers of victims.

In order to move to the next stage of my investigation, I looked at literature that relates to my topic and explores deeper into the issue of human trafficking. The next chapter is based upon the writings of many theorists that discuss new media and the oppression of women in a historical context and as a contemporary issue.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review literature that I have gathered to gain a greater understanding of my chosen topic. As sex trafficking is a global phenomenon that crosses geographical boundaries, I focused on theories of globalization and new media and their impact upon society. I looked at how new media such as the internet is providing a platform for democratic debate and global activism for such issues as the fight against human trafficking. As I am focusing my thesis on trafficked women brought into the sex trade, this review also explores feminism and theories of sexual oppression, sexual abuse and slavery and how activists have always used communication tools as a means of democratic change and creating awareness.

Sonia Livingstone, in her discussion about new media, notes that the most important aspect of any new media technology is its impact on society (1999:60 in Flew, 2005:2). Flew notes how Livingstone and Lievrouw together look at new media as a form of social practice that must take into account three important elements; the artifacts or devices that enable and extend our ability to communicate, the common activities and practices we engage in to develop and use these devices, and the social arrangements and organizations that form around these devices and practices (2002:7 in 2005:2). Flew says that new media can be thought of as digital media, encompassing forms of media content that combine and integrate data, text, sound, and images of all kinds and are increasingly distributed through networks such as those based upon digital platforms. New media captures the development of unique forms of digital media and the remaking of traditional media forms to adopt and adapt to new media technologies (2005:4). Flew points out that the internet and other forms of new media have been strongly connected to new forms of political activism since their inception. He notes how global protest movements against such organisations as The World Trade Organization, have made extensive use of the internet and other new media technologies such as mobile phones in organizing opposition and awareness. He believes that street protests are perhaps the most public face of a wider use of the internet as an information exchange and political

organizing in which activists can advise globally on 'sweat shops' in developing countries and government legislation that restricts individual freedoms as well as ongoing campaigns (2005: 182). Curran (2003; 141) notes how public interest groups are operating on a global basis, within a series of interlocking spaces on the internet, giving rise to issues of political and public importance globally. The number of transnational public interest groups is growing due to increased levels of communication. However, new media is enhancing a new global communications order that is unbalanced which is clearly connected to wider inequalities of power where relations of inequality enter into and structure cyberspace. Curran points out that the internet is exposing the way in which external relations of power shape communications rather than the other way around. He then suggests that we should break free from the assumption that the media are a single institution with a common democratic purpose and look at it as having different functions within the democratic system. The role of the media should include helping civil society to exert influence on the governmental system. He proposes a democratic media system where the objective is to maintain an equilibrium between conflict and conciliation, fragmentation and unity. Negopronte (1996:57 cited in Curran 2003:227) says that the internet is sweeping away the monolithic empires of mass media, generating a new culture that is critical, selective and participatory. So new media is providing a platform where everyone who has access can participate, have their voices heard and make a difference.

Flew notes that there are now movements such as the World Social Forum, established in 2001 which describes itself as an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neo-liberalism and are committed to building a society centred on the human person (2005:182-184). This is similar to the writings of Habermas' (1989) theory of a 'Public Sphere', which suggests a neutral space within society in which the media, free of state control, put forward information that serves the interest of the common good, and where public interest groups voice their opinion. Interventions by these groups with the help of the media according to Habermas, can lead to debates that

require action on behalf of the state. Thus, Habermas' theory suggests that the Public Sphere is a space where the public's interests are served and the argument that best serves the common good will win. So is new media creating a public sphere that may contribute to the fight against human trafficking?

Habermas' Public Sphere claims that universal access to media, disregard of rank and rational debate will create an equilibrium where all are equal and public issues will be resolved. New media does not live up to such criteria as universal access is a major issue, and ownership and control of the internet by state governments and media corporations control the information flows. Habermas said that a critical factor that led to democratic revolutions of earlier centuries was the emergence of a public sphere for democratic discourse. However McChesney points out that it is when this public sphere is controlled by state or business elites, democratic capacities are lost (2005:10). For example in China, OpenNet filtration is a mechanism employed by the Chinese government that operates to filter out any information online that is deemed unsuitable such as hotmail.com and bbc.co.uk, thus exerting power and control over this medium that is supposed to be democratic.

There are also major issues of inaccessibility with regards to new media such as the internet and mobile phones. Poverty is the precursor of inaccessibility as well as high rates of illiteracy. It is these poverty stricken geographical regions that are the 'meat-markets' of the traffickers where people are the most vulnerable to becoming victims, promised better lives, education, unaware that they are about to become victims of crime. However, activists in the fight against human trafficking are operating to increase legislation so that the most vulnerable of victims will be protected by law and modern day slavery will come to an end. Laws in place are not strong enough to prevent trafficking and protect victims. Manuel Castells suggests that power rests with those who control the flows of information, and exclusion in certain global networks can lead to inequality (Castells 1996, in Flew 2005). Sassen, similarly recognizes a spatialisation of inequality evident in both the geography of the communications infrastructure and in the emergent geographies in electronic space itself. She suggests that global cities are "hyper

concentrations of infrastructure and attendant resources” (1998:182), while vast areas in less developed regions are poorly served by new media. She believes that the enormous growth in the worldwide trade in communications services has occurred alongside the already existing inequalities where electronic space has emerged as a major new platform for capital accumulation and the operations of global capital (1998:193). Sassen makes reference to “the blacknet” – a democratic space for many opposing views and drives of non-mainstream deviant groups to act out a range of criminal uses and abuses. Sassen suggests that we need to deal with contestation and resistance rather than the romance of interconnectivity. This point relates to how traffickers themselves are benefiting from increased communications and are using it to their advantage making huge profits for the illegal sale and movement of people.

In contrast to this view Curran (2003) describes the development of new media as a “global public sphere” that may be a step toward a new universalist world order, where such organizations as the United Nations will seek global governance, operating on a global scale thus giving rise to political pressures globally. Downey and Fenton (2003) argue that the internet may foster the growth of a transnational movement for example; the environmental movement of human rights organizations. They note that Habermas recognizes not only the existence of alternative public spheres but of their capacity for challenging domination. They ask if these groups in society will become capable of intervention and will they ultimately be able to change the agenda. It cannot be denied that it takes major media attention for any issue to gain a place on the agenda. In their article they refer to Naomi Klein (2000) who argues that the internet facilitates international communication between non governmental organisations thus allowing protestors to respond on an international level to local and global events (Klein, 2000:196, in Downey and Fenton 2003). It could be argued that the Public Sphere has expanded beyond the reach of democracy with the rise of new media, however, global activists are using new technology to demonstrate their opposing views and to create awareness of global issues, fighting back and making a difference. In later chapters I will be focusing on particular websites that are demonstrating this.

Terry Flew is mainly concerned with new media forms that are associated with digitization and convergence. Convergence and digitization are strongly linked to interactivity. Interactive media forms are those that give users a degree of choice in the information system, both in terms of choice of access to information sources and control over the outcomes of using that system and making those choices. Interactivity can create the possibility for feedback loops and return paths between producers and users and forms of many to many communications (2005:13). The other major development Flew points out is 'networking', which is associated with carrying large amounts of information to a series of interconnected points. He describes this as a "matrix structure where all senders are interconnected" (2005:15). This concept of networking based upon the internet has been at the centre of claims that the current phase marks the emergence of a new economy or what Manuel Castells calls "a network society" (1996: 200b in Flew, 2005:13). This concept is benefiting both sides of the argument where traffickers are interconnected through new media and can operate at much faster rates, yet it also benefiting those involved in the fight against human trafficking and victims themselves as the network society is creating global awareness of this form of illegal organized crime. For Castells, the development of a global communications network with the internet, combined with the growing importance of knowledge and information as the means that the network society will increasingly shape social interaction across diverse spheres. Poster suggests that the relationship between technology and human beings is external because people are understood to manipulate materials for ends that they impose upon technology from a "preconstituted position of subjectivity" (2000:403). Organised crime can be dependent upon both a network of criminals and the utilization of communication technologies. Castells sees new ICT's as having pervasive effects through all realms of human social activity. He states that:

The logic of networking applies to all social processes and organizational forms, since uncertainty is inevitable and knowledge resides in multiple sources, and therefore needs to be collectively pooled in order to be effectively applied (1996 in Flew 2005: 54).

For Castells, the new economy based on ICT's has three fundamental characteristics, it is informational, it is global and it is networked. He sees the network society as a capitalist society embracing the global market economy.

While inequalities and exploitation do not disappear in the network society, in many respects they are intensified. Inequalities are also increasingly based around the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in relation to global networks (1996 in Flew 2005:57)

The global market economy does not openly include the underground process of human trafficking yet it is playing a major part thus making human trafficking a form of capitalism. The capitalization of human beings perhaps.

Curran and Couldry (2003), see the internet as empowering humankind, making accessible the worlds knowledge by building emancipated subjects and promoting new progressive global politics and laying the foundations of the 'new economy'. However they see the internet as having great potential to be undermined by 'digital capitalism' and social inequality. Distribution is distorted by global relations between rich and poor. Mark Poster says that the database on the internet may be more easily accessed than its alternatives and it initiates new forms of interaction, posing the question of new kinds of relations of power between its users. The new forms of relations occurring within it suggest new forms of power configurations between communicating individuals. The impacts of digitization are both pervasive and cumulative and are at the core of the growing informatisation of society. The informatisation of society is marked by both the comparatively faster growth of those sectors associated with the production and distribution of information and communication (2000). Bennett on the other hand, claims that there has been a considerable lack in establishing whether new media has limited the capacities of groups contesting established power arrangements to communicate both among themselves and to larger publics. He notes that commercialism has taken over content space leaving little room for political views and suggests that political activists and minorities are even farther removed from the mass media picture (2003:18). However, he recognizes how the interactive aspect of new media will allow for easier and faster information flow across national boundaries and that this has been a major factor in

the rise of global protest networks, coordinating activities, planning protests and publicizing often information about their causes.

Considerable evidence suggests that global activists have figured out not only how to communicate with each other under the mass media radar but also how to get their messages into mass media channels. Impressive numbers of activists have followed the trail of world power into relatively uncharted international arenas and have found creative ways to communicate their concerns and to contest the power of corporations and transnational economic arrangements. In the process, many specific messages about corporate abuses, sweat shop labour, genetically modified organisms, rainforest destruction and the rise of small resistant movements have made it into the mass media on their own terms (2003:19).

Bennett also notes that what is missing from the hype about these new technologies is the understanding of the social, psychological, political, and media contexts that make new media partly conducive to enhancing the power of this global activist movement (2003:22). The internet is empowering humankind as Curran and Couldry once stated (2003), and it could be argued that the power of this interactive medium will cultivate a strong opposing stand point in creating awareness and change for the global activist movements which in turn could ultimately bring about the demise of global problems such as human trafficking.

Women's liberation movements have consistently engaged in communicative structures in order to attain global attention. With examples listed above, it is easy to see how they are benefiting from new media. I would now like to turn my attention to Feminist Theory in terms of the history of women's oppression and how the trafficking of women is incorporated into the oppression of women, described as a form of 'modern day slavery'.

Jackie Stacey states that Feminist theory is based upon how existing theories of women's oppression might be extended and reworked to provide answers to questions about how to change inequality and to discover how and why women have been systematically excluded from power and from public life by their restrictions to more

private spheres of domesticity, and informal labour. Stacey draws upon three models of feminism that she describes as the 'Big Three'. Firstly she mentions 'Radical feminism', which is based upon male violence and power over women, seeing men as a single group responsible for women's oppression. Secondly she discusses 'Marxist feminism', which is based upon the view that women's oppression is linked to forms of capitalist exploitation of labour. Finally she looks at 'Liberal feminism' which is concerned with a focus on individual rights and choices which are denied to women, and how an education and legislation could change this (1997: 57). All of the models mentioned by Stacey relate to the feminine experience of human trafficking.

Barrett says that what is co-existing with a persuasive ideology of romantic love are the brutal facts of rape, domestic violence, pornography, prostitution, and a denial of female sexual autonomy. She recognizes how it is not surprising that feminism has given a central place to the sexual abuse of women. It has insisted on the political character of sexuality, on the unequal power of those involved in sexual relationships. Sex trafficking is a form of mental and physical abuse. Barrett noted that 'Sexual Politics' has become a significant area of struggle as a result of the contribution of early radical feminism, where physical sexuality is central to the oppression of women (1980:42). Barrett claims that the radical feminist analysis of sexual politics in such writings as Kate Millet's (a radical feminist writer) *Sexual Politics* (1972), has continually stressed that the sexual abuse of women is symptomatic of a wider oppression and control of women by men (1980:44). Sexual abuse is pointed out here, as being the consequence of men's inability to control their sexual drive. This view is similar to that of Marilyn French, who views women as another species from men, 'mutilated' men as Aristotle named them, bound to the necessary, men's servants, incarnating responsibility for not only domestic life but for sexual behaviour. She states how 'she', not man, is held responsible for prostitution, a criminal activity, and responsible for rape, drawing attention to her body (1994 in Radtke and Stam 1994:30). Barrett states that if sexual practice is the area in which systematic inequalities of power between men and women are played out, then all men are in a position to exercise this power. Barrett claims that women are inevitably the passive victims of male power and the capitalist mode of production, referring to Engels' *The*

*Origin of The Family, Private Property and the State* as influential in Marxist thinking.

She also refers to marriage as prostitution, where the housewife as a waged worker eventually sells into slavery (Engels, 1972:79, in Barrett, 1988:48).

The inexcusable incapability of a man's ability to control his sex drive is one of the main reasons why the sex industry is so huge and women are being trafficked into it against their own will. There is no excuse for any rational human being to not be able to control their sex-drive, however women have consistently been abused, taken advantage of and as a result lost control of the rights to their own bodies as a result. Juliet Mitchell notes that Wilhelm Reich, a sexologist of the early 1920's, was a pioneer of 'sexual politics'. His thinking in this area is crucial to women's liberation and recognized the importance of the control of one's own body as a primary right of a woman (1974:199). Sex trafficking is a prime example of how this right is lost.

Stone looks deeper into the oppression of women and tends to understand sexual practice in terms of shifts in the ideological atmosphere rather than in terms of economic determinations. Barrett notes how his emphasis is similar to that of Marxist feminist thought and looks at Simone De Beauvoir who sees woman as the product of interaction which systematically constructs her as 'other' in relation to the subject which is man (1949:483, in Barrett, 1980:51), pointing out that a major problem in the development of Marxist feminist work has been a tendency to try to resolve questions such as independence or otherwise women's oppression from the capitalist mode of production. Barrett believes that capitalism brought about a greater dependence of women on men. She believes that the political and ideological processes that contribute so massively to women's oppression must be fought by those affected by them and that it is inadequate to understand the character of women's oppression in terms of capitalism, and through the recognition of the importance of ideology in the analysis of women's oppression, it could be argued that oppression operates at an ideological level (1980: 251). Barrett concludes by stating that feminism seeks not only to change men or women, but the relations between them, and the basis for this will be provided by an autonomous Women's Liberation movement, for if women's oppression is entrenched in the structure of

capitalism then the struggle for women's liberation will not come about until principles of equality, freedom and dignity are acknowledged outside of the boundaries of capitalism. The internet is a platform upon which this movement can achieve global awareness and political change. Grant notes how Mehrof and Kearon (1979) state that there is no group other than slaves that has been singled out for such systematic and total exploitation and suppression, as the class of women (1993:23).

It is a reality that modern day slavery is a female orientated global issue that is growing in epidemic proportions. After reviewing the above literature, the next two chapters focus on the next step of my investigation- primary research of organisations and people involved in the fight against human trafficking.

## STOP THE TRAFFIK

This chapter looks in detail at an online organisation that is making a difference in the global fight against human trafficking through creative mechanisms of raising awareness online and fundraising online. This website represents how new media can help in the fight against human trafficking.

Stop The Traffik (STT) is an organisation which aims to expose human trafficking, lead governments to action against human trafficking and unlock freedom. It is a global coalition made up of over 300 organisations that operate online, raising awareness and promoting the fight against human trafficking. It calls for change and freedom outlining three key areas that this coalition is focused on, they are; advocacy, fundraising, and education. It states that through advocacy and education, they can demonstrate online to the public, the ways in which they can get involved and help to change the future. STT is aimed at schools, youth groups, universities, businesses, community groups, charities and churches to raise awareness and fundraise to fund some of their projects. It is an extremely user friendly website that appears to be marketed toward everyone. It also has a language feature that gives users an option to change the language of the site to their own making it world friendly. Its homepage offers a definition of what trafficking is:

Trafficking in human beings shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

(Article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (Palermo Protocol) cited on the STT homepage).

The homepage also offers a list of statistics of the amount of people being trafficked per year reported by various groups such as the United Nations, Anti-Slavery International, The International Labour Organisation and UNICEF. These statistics range from 800,000 to 12.3 million people trafficked per year. This method of showing statistics is quite effective as it offers the user an immediate idea of the enormity of this problem.

The website offers a background of its goals and initiatives and refers to 'Freedom Day', which was on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2007. This day symbolised the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. STOP THE TRAFFIK claims the conviction of freedom as a human right that drove abolitionists of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, is the same conviction that drives their online campaign in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They state how it was a mass movement of anti-slavery campaigners and members of the public that lead abolitionism 200 years ago, and that it aims to create the same impact upon modern day slavery. They state that their mission is to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

Its status as an on-line organisation has raised awareness of its initiatives and has gained a lot of support from huge corporate businesses such as Monsoon who state on the website "It defies belief that in 2007, slavery still exists. Monsoon completely supports the STOP THE TRAFFIK campaign" (Peter Simon, Chairman of Monsoon) Virgin Unite say: "Virgin Unite is fully behind STOP THE TRAFFIK to end slavery once and for all". H&M clothing store says: "Human trafficking is certainly a despicable kind of exploitation and the fight against it is therefore very important. H&M fully supports the good cause of the STOP THE TRAFFIK campaign". MTV, Mark& Spencer, ITV are also some of the members of this campaign.

STT website provides 3 ways in which the public, online, can make a difference. Firstly there is an online Global Declaration Form that will add your voice to the global petition against human trafficking. This petition has been signed online by over 200 members of the European Parliament, not to mention thousands of citizens and celebrity endorsements. STT's promo for this declaration form is called "Unlock The Freedom".

STT are dedicated to raising awareness. ‘The Freedom Key Initiative’ is a way in which they fundraise, as well as the STOP THE TRAFFIK T-shirt. The freedom key is a small key that is the icon on the website and campaign. The T-Shirt is black with a white hand print that has a key drawn on it. This image is also an icon for the campaign. It is hoped that the public display of these items will generate interest and spread the message too. The STT Freeset bags are one of their newest features. Each bag tells a story of a woman’s journey from victim to freedom. STT say that by purchasing a Freeset bag, you become part of the story of freedom. All items can be bought online and all proceeds go toward STOP THE TRAFFIK projects (See Appendix 3). Funds are vital to STT projects and the website also provides a link where donations can be made. Projects include The China Project, Nigeria, India, Cambodia, Uganda, Philippines, Haiti, Estonia, Nepal, and Dalit projects. I chose to focus on the Cambodia project. This project is introduced with a trafficking case study of that took place in Cambodia. This story demonstrates the brutal reality sex-trafficking.

After her mother’s death Serey’s brother and sister left home to find work, leaving Serey in the care of her father. Yet it was not care that she received, by age 13 she had been raped, first by her cousin and then her father. She shortly moved in with her Aunt, yet upon learning of her niece’s trauma, she turned her out of doors believing she was tainted.

The young girl boarded a bus and asked the driver to take her to a province in South Cambodia where her sister and brother were working. Instead, he took her to a brothel where he sold her – Serey was then only 14 years old.

The brothel owners treated her appallingly; she was frequently beaten and given electric shocks. When Serey refused sex with a man they would inject her with drugs, making her incoherent and compliant, she would often bleed as a result of seeing up to 10 men a day and fall unconscious because of the drugs.

A man visiting the brothel appeared to offer the abused child a way out, he told her he wished to marry her, and helped her to leave the brothel in Cambodia. Instead of marrying her as promised, he sold her to a businessman in Thailand, where she was kept alone in a house and used for sex.

One day she asked to go to the market, not allowed to go alone she was chaperoned by a boy. During the course of the day, she told the boy she felt unwell and went to the toilets, she ran away. This was how Serey finally escaped from the slavery.  
(Story cited on the website, see Appendix 5 for more cases)

The above story demonstrates the sheer necessity of these projects in preventing this brutal crime. The website discusses its support of the Chab Dai in Cambodia. The Chab Dai is a Christian organisation that operates to raise awareness in small rural towns and villages. STT is dedicated to supporting this project.

Cambodia is a country that is extremely poverty stricken since the civil war broke out and the Khmer Rouge regime began in the late 1970's. During this time, millions of people were brutally murdered and this country became victim to a massive genocide. Some estimate that the death toll was up to 3 million throughout the 13 years of violent occupation. As a result, many children were orphaned and Cambodia is now wrought with poverty and inundated with sexual abuse and exploitation. STT note that such conditions as high unemployment, and widespread poverty make the sale of women and children a survival based choice often made by families. Human trafficking in Cambodia is increasing at rapid rates and rural villages are the biggest targets. Some villages are situated close to the borders of Thailand and Vietnam and have poor access in and out with no nearby towns and poor roads which isolate them. Traffickers prey on these villages and vulnerable families, luring them to sell their daughters under false pretences. STT stress how these villages are in need of immediate help to protect these people from this crime.

Chab Dai is a coalition of Christian Organisations Committed to Ending Sexual Abuse and Trafficking that STT coalition support through the Cambodia Project. It operates by assisting families and victims of sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking. Chab Dai is run by the church and community leaders and is co-funded by STT. The scheme addresses issues relating to sexual abuse, trafficking and child protection. Chab Dai has developed an innovative project in rural areas of Cambodia to increase awareness and education of sexual abuse and trafficking. Pastors can now educate people on the characteristics and strategies of a trafficker and safe migration practices. The STT coalition point out that before this scheme, many of the pastors were unaware of this

crime, and had in some cases facilitated trafficking without realising what was going to really happen to these people after they were taken. This innovative training scheme has provided facilities where pastors and volunteers will be educated about human trafficking and will assist in the prevention of this crime. The goals of Chab Dai include; intervention, rehabilitation, and reintegration for people who have been outcasted as a result of their abuse.

With the financial aid that is raised by STOP THE TRAFFIK through such schemes as the Freedom Key, the t-shirt campaign, the Freeset bag and online donations, it is hoped that projects such as the Cambodia Project will grow and people will no longer be victimized by this trafficking. The coalition of STT has a commitment to assisting other organizations in improving their technical skills, providing programme support, organisational development, networking and staff support.

It is clear that the STT coalition is demonstrating its ability as an online organisation to raise awareness, encourage public support, and most importantly make a difference. This case study has helped my investigation of my proposed question, but in order maintain a higher level of objectivity, the next chapter is made up of two case studies of women who are anti-traffic activists who work with victims of trafficking. I spoke to them both about the work that they do and how new media has impacted both their individual areas of work and the global fight against human trafficking.

## PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

After taking a close look at an online anti-trafficking organisation such as STOP THE TRAFFIK, I spoke to two women who work with victims of trafficking to find out how they think new media affects their line of work and if they believe that new media is helping or hindering the fight against human trafficking.

Firstly I spoke to Gerardine Rowley who works for Ruhama. Ruhama is a voluntary organisation in Dublin that works with victims of trafficking and women involved in prostitution. It mainly focuses on the Irish context of prostitution. It also operates online to demonstrate its goals and raise awareness. Ruhama was set up in 1989, around the time that new media technologies were entering into the public domain. Gerardine firmly believes that Ruhama has benefited greatly from new media technology as it has made communications easier and given her quick access to international networks. She said that it also improves the safety of their workers when carrying out 'out-reach' work, as they can now carry mobile phones that they can use in the event of an emergency. She stressed that Ruhama measure their success in terms of helping women to improve their lives and that their biggest strength of all is interpersonal communication. Gerardine then stated that although Ruhama recognises the advantages that new media brings to their organisation, they strongly prefer traditional media such as newspapers and radio as a means of raising awareness.

I asked Gerardine about *The Next Step Initiative Project* which was launched by Ruhama in 2006, aimed at the development of a model that would support women involved in prostitution to access community education and employment. I asked her did she find new media useful for gathering her research. She replied saying that "it was useful in some aspects but the majority of the work was carried out in direct contact with the women".

Ruhama also works to influence policy development in the area, networking with relevant government departments and agencies, lobbying for better services and seeking to influence the enactment of appropriate legislation, protocols and directives.

Ruhama states that it works to change public attitudes, practices and policies which allow the exploitation of women through trafficking and prostitution. With this in mind, I asked Gerardine if she believes that the internet provides a beneficial platform within her line of work, on which networking is made easier. She said yes, and noted that it is particularly good for international networking. Ruhama is a member of the STOP THE TRAFFIK campaign. Gerardine said that this initiative is innovative and demonstrates the power of the World Wide Web as a tool for making a difference.

As women and children form the majority of trafficked people, I asked Gerardine if she thinks that trafficking has become a particularly female experience. She agreed that the majority of trafficked people seem to be women and young girls, and she believes that this is because they are the most vulnerable in society. Gerardine agrees that NGOs and activists are utilizing the net to promote their opinions and create awareness of issues of global importance. Organisations have made extensive use of the internet and other new media technologies such as mobile phones in organizing opposition and awareness. Gerardine also agrees that the internet may foster the growth of a transnational movement for example- human rights organizations.

While discussing how men, women and children are trafficked within their own countries and across international borders and how trafficking affects every continent and most countries, I asked Gerardine if she thinks that the 'traffickers' themselves are benefiting from new media technology and increased communications. She strongly believes that they are, and that new media means that they can remain anonymous behind modern technology and it is harder for police to catch them.

We discussed how trafficking is a global phenomenon. I asked Gerardine if she believes that new media has played a part in this. She believes that the traffickers and exploiters use the internet to run their businesses and communicate with other trafficking

organisations.

Ruhama released a press statement on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2007, 3 days before the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. It said:

This was such a massive breakthrough so many years ago, however, it is important to now highlight the existence of a contemporary form of slavery in Ireland today – the trafficking of women into the sex industry, by not supporting any aspect of the sex industry, we are reducing demand in the market- a demand which is supplied by modern day slave traders, ‘traffickers’ (Rowley, 2007).

Gerardine said that Ruhama are aware of over 200 women who are trafficked into prostitution in Ireland over the past decade. Ruhama has worked over the past few years to make a political change in Irish legislation by calling on the Irish Government to sign the Council of Europe Convention on Human Trafficking that will “prosecute perpetrators and protect victims of this hideous crime”. This was ratified on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Gerardine spoke of the recent action that has been taken in the fight against trafficking, and she referred me to this article on their website and a letter that can be downloaded and signed that allows everyone to have a voice:

Ruhama has over the years sought the introduction of comprehensive legislation on prostitution and trafficking, we therefore welcome the Governments recently published Criminal Justice (Trafficking and Sexual Offences) Bill, 2006.

We have however a number of concerns with regard to the proposed legislation which we believe, if not addressed, will undermine its effectiveness and indeed may reinforce some of the structural factors that give rise to trafficking.

We have recently made a submission on the proposed legislation to the Minister Michael McDowell outlining our main concerns and recommendations.

We are now asking you on behalf of these voiceless women to ***read and sign the ‘Draft letter to TD’s***, which Ruhama has prepared from its submission. This letter is urging your local TD to lobby the Government to amend this Bill, ensuring that it will provide trafficking victims with protection and assistance, while also successfully prosecuting perpetrators of trafficking and preventing this heinous human rights abuse from happening in the future.

(See a copy of the letter in Appendix 4)

It is clear that Ruhama, are working effectively both online and within their offices in Dublin, raising awareness, making a difference, and assisting victims in the fight against human trafficking.

Secondly, I spoke to Sister Maura O'Donohue who was the former leader of the Catholic Medical Mission Board. Maura's work involves travelling around to various schools, colleges and countries, raising awareness about the issue of trafficking in persons and those who may be at risk. She works with a number of organisations to create channels of communication to raise awareness and prevent women and children from becoming victims of trafficking. She states that the most important step in the prevention of this crime is focusing on the rights of the victim so that they will be protected from prosecution for illegal work or illegal immigration. Maura attends workshops that are organised by The International Organisation for Migrants to keep herself up to date with recent cases and developments. Maura made an interesting point that claimed how Ireland is slightly complacent about the issue of sex-trafficking, yet there are massage parlours, lap dancing clubs, escort agencies and other manifestations of the industry evident in our cities. She also talked of how Ireland is advertised in other countries as a site for sex workers to come and work, and that Dublin, Limerick and Cork are the main target areas. Maura noted how worldwide, this is not a new phenomenon, it appears to have expanded and assumed a global character that attracts international attention and the internet is a space where information, awareness and change can take place. She noted that action is constantly needed and that awareness raising is a major factor.

Maura talked of a meeting she attended at the House of Lords in November 2004 that was held to discuss HIV/AIDS, Substance Abuse and trafficking in persons. She talked about Lord Alton who had just returned from Uganda, Darfur and Rwanda. She said that it was very obvious that he was still trying to cope with the pain that he had experienced, and how he seemed very keen to get actively involved after witnessing the

devastating impacts of sex-trafficking on its victims. She stressed the importance of sharing such facts with as wide of a public as possible, as they, like Lord Alton, may wish to also get actively involved. Maura said that new media technology can facilitate this action.

Maura's work ranges from travelling as a missionary to assist victims of trafficking, to travelling around the world, attending workshops and seminars as well as raising awareness by giving lectures herself and talking on the Rome Vatican Radio on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2005 about the issues of trafficking in persons. She uses the internet to distribute information and articles on trafficking to NGOs such as COATNET and Ruhama. She networks with COATNET, the Catholic Organisation Against Trafficking in Women. COATNET has members from 15 countries and other international Christian networks. She also networks with Anti-Slavery International who also works to increase Anti-Trafficking legislation.

Both Maura and Gerardine believe that new media will ultimately help rather than hinder the fight against human trafficking.

## DISCUSSION

This chapter will focus on the research findings of Chapter 4 & 5 that will be further discussed in conjunction with the literature found in Chapter 3. I will be referring to both of the women I spoke to in Chapter 5, Gerardine Rowley and Maura O'Donohue. I will also refer to the case study in Chapter 4, STOP THE TRAFFIK (STT), an online coalition of anti-trafficking activists.

Curran (2003:141), and Klein (2000:196), both point out that public interest groups are operating on a global basis, on the internet, giving rise to issues of political and public importance globally. STT, which I referred to in chapter 4, is an exemplary example of such a public interest group that is demonstrating this through their online projects and awareness strategies. Curran goes on to mention that new media is enhancing a new global communications order that is unbalanced. He believes that this as a result of the wider inequalities of access. STT projects are combating this issue through their funding structures and education schemes in such projects as The Cambodia project, where they are using their online campaigns to fund prevention projects in poverty stricken areas that do not have high access rates to new media and are consequently unaware of the dangers of such issues as human trafficking.

I noted in Chapter 3 how Negopronte says that the internet is sweeping away the monolithic empires of mass media (1996:57, cited in Curran 2003:227). So new media is providing a platform where everyone who has access can participate, have their voices heard and make a difference. The online Global Declaration Petition against human trafficking on the STT website and the petition letter that is fighting for better legislation on the Ruhama website, demonstrate Negopronte's point that people can have their voices heard and make a difference. This mirrors Habermas' theory of a global public sphere. Habermas said that a critical factor that lead to democratic revolutions of earlier centuries was the emergence of a public sphere for democratic discourse. The online Global Declaration Petition, and the STT coalition's status as an online anti-trafficking

activist group, as well as the work of Ruhama, is bringing to life Habermas' theories. Curran states that the role of the media should include helping civil society to exert influence on the governmental system. The STT website mentions how over 200 members of the European Parliament have signed this petition, recognizing the political importance of the work that STT do, while Gerardine pointed out that the Irish organization Ruhama has worked to make a political change in Irish legislation by calling on the Irish Government to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Human Trafficking, which on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2007 it did. This exemplifies how the goals of anti-trafficking activists can be met and how they are really making a difference, again, bringing to life Habermas' theory.

Sassen makes reference to "the blacknet" as a democratic space for many opposing views and drives of non-mainstream deviant groups to act out a range of criminal uses and abuses. My discussion with Gerardine Rowley in Chapter 4 points out that she strongly believes that traffickers are using the internet ("the blacknet") for their criminal practices as they can remain anonymous behind this form of modern technology making it difficult for them to get caught and easier for them to run their businesses and interact with other trafficking networks. Interactivity and networking were discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Interactivity was described by Flew (2005:13) as a medium that can create feedback loops where people can communicate. Networking was described by Flew as marking the emergence of a new economy, what Manuel Castells calls a "network society" (1996), where people are interconnected and can operate at very fast rates. So if the internet is a site where users can remain anonymous, by choice, and communicate and network in an instant, then traffickers are most definitely utilising this medium to their advantage. For example, Maura O'Donohue talked about how it is so difficult to actually find members of this underground crime as they never leave a trace behind. However, the potential of mobile phone technology to leave traces of evidence is lost due to its disposable characteristics.

The prices of mobile phones today, mirror that of the cost of slaves that Kevin Bales reports to be "so cheap to be disposable" (2000). Mobile phones can be bought

very cheaply and may only be used once to facilitate an operation. Mobile phones today cost as much as a modern day slave, if we take into account the price of a slave according to Bales in Chapter 2. So, new media is hindering the fight against trafficking by benefiting the trafficker with disposable technology. In terms of both mobile phone technology and the internet, organised crime can be dependent upon both a network of criminals and the utilization of communication technologies. Castells sees new communication technologies (ICT's) as having pervasive effects through all realms of human social activity (1996). So how can this be balanced? Sassen suggests that we need to deal with contestation and resistance rather than the romance of interconnectivity. The internet is seen as a free means of communication and is not policed, the romance of interconnectivity refers to the idea that this communication method is and should be completely open for democratic discourse. The word romance suggests a rose tinted perhaps even deluded view of the interconnectivity that the internet brings. Resistance and contestation, then, is in opposition to this romance that Sassen talks of. It means that the misuse of internet by using it as a means to commit crimes needs to be contested and resisted by all. How can this be done while maintaining democratic space that the internet is known for and that Habermas views as a global public sphere? Appoint a body to govern and act as a watchdog similar to the Opennet filtration (see Chapter 3) that China and Myanmar have in place? Castells points out that the logic of networking applies to all organizational forms, where uncertainty is inevitable and knowledge resides in multiple sources. He stresses that it needs to be "collectively pooled in order to be effectively applied" (1996 in Flew 2005: 54). However, the internet is a global space and an international governing system simply would not work. Laws apply only within the states that they govern. There have differing moral and ethical as well as cultural codes within each individual society and as a result, it would be virtually impossible to operate a global watchdog that could adhere to each and every one of these codes. What might be considered culturally acceptable in one country might be considered taboo in another.

There are both positive and negative factors that constitute the internet. One might call it a double edged sword. The duality of the proposed 'democratic' internet, make it a space where both good and evil can thrive. Its democratic global function

means that it simply cannot be policed. So how can internet crime be combated? It is extremely difficult to find an answer. However, what I have found from my case study in Chapter 4, and from my discussions with Maura and Gerardine in Chapter 5, is that the persistent work of NGOs both online and on ground, can tackle such issues by raising awareness and influencing governments to increase legislation on such crime.

In Chapter 3, I mentioned how Curran (2003), Downey and Fenton (2003) are in agreement that new media is creating a global democratic sphere that they believe may be the beginning of a new world order where the United Nations could potentially seek global governance giving rise to political pressures globally, they applaud the work of NGOs. They point out that these organisations are capable of intervention and will ultimately be able to change the agenda. It cannot be denied that new media is facilitating global change and that the public and activists are using this modern technology to create awareness and action. STT exemplify both characteristics of awareness raising and action, and are admired very highly by both Maura and Gerardine for these reasons. New media is challenging domination, as Habermas pointed out in 1989, and perhaps could potentially put an end to modern day slavery as so many of these organisations aim to do.

Moving on from Sassens point about the romance of interconnectivity, another theorist that I mentioned in Chapter 3 has also drawn upon the word 'romance' to point out that what is co-existing with this word, are the brutal facts of rape, domestic abuse, pornography and prostitution. (Barrett 1980:42). Barrett claims that the sexual abuse of women is a consequence of men's inability to control their sexual drive. So is this lack of control the precursor for such a massive sex-trade? Gerardine and Maura both pointed out that human trafficking has become a particularly female experience and STT website confirms this point by stating that 80% of trafficked people are women and children. Gerardine believes that women are more vulnerable in society and as result, more susceptible to becoming victims of this crime. Gerardine and Maura both stressed that legislation must be increased against this crime and have worked hard to change it, so why is legislation so weak to start with? Could it be argued that there are underlying

reasons why this issue is not properly addressed by authorities? Could human trafficking be a crime against women? A persuasive reading of the example below could suggest that there are deeper, more secretive reasons why women constitute the majority of modern day slaves. Modern “radical feminist” (Stacey) theorist Kate Millett, discusses the idea that violence against and sexual abuse of women is a symptom of a deeper oppression of women by men.

### Example

The women of the Alliance of Progressive Labour together with the Coalition Against Trafficking in women gathered at the Sto. Domingo church in Quezon city in Manila to commemorate International Women’s Day on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2007. The women marched peacefully to publicly express their horror at the government’s lack of interest to the plight of the women workers. As they marched through the city they were put to a stop. Police intervened and many of the frontline women were beaten by policemen. (Indymedia: 2007) (See Appendix 6).

A “radical feminist” looking at this example, in consideration of the violence against these women, and with reference to what they were marching for, would argue that these women were oppressed even further when they were trying to fight against their oppression.

Modern-day feminism calls for the equality of women to men, and if an autonomous Women’s Liberation Movement were to be established, the issue of sex-trafficking would need to be at the forefront of the agenda for change. Women, the silent victims of sex-trafficking, driven to this silence by their oppressors and abusers, need a powerful platform to represent their silenced voices. New media is facilitating this need.

## CONCLUSION

The double-edged sword of new media, the platform it provides for criminals as well as the medium for communicating the plight of the victims is a very problematic issue. While on one hand, the progress in technology is accelerating in quite an exciting and vibrant way, the policing of these new mediums is not able to keep up with the changing pace, and as a result, criminals can avail of the world wide platform of the internet to facilitate their activities. Any restrictions which could possibly combat this would, by definition, hinder free speech and remove the very value of the new media, democracy. McChesney points out that when the public sphere is controlled, namely the internet, its democratic capacities are lost (2005:10).

Activists have always benefited from communication infrastructures as their purpose is to have their voices heard. Activists are also using new media to their benefit. They are primarily concerned with raising funds and awareness of trafficking and are using new media to achieve this with great effect. The power of new media is acknowledged and used to combat global issues by these activists, who have been using the internet, through websites such as STOP THE TRAFFIK (STT) and Ruhama to reach out into cyberspace and through its sprawling international nature, get their message out all across the world without restriction. The work that they are doing is really making a difference. Their fundraising is creating material change. Projects such as The Cambodia Project have been possible because of the international fundraising contribution STT did through their website. It becomes possible for charities to form these coalitions via the internet and to achieve visible and tangible results.

At the beginning of my investigation, I asked whether new media was helping or hindering the fight against human trafficking. Throughout my research, I have come to the conclusion that there is a duality to this issue. New media both helps and hinders the fight against human trafficking. As I have discussed, the internet and mobile phone technology facilitates the perpetrators of human trafficking. This is an indubitable fact. Without access to mobile phones and internet, it simply would not be possible for these

people to carry out their activities on an international scale without detection in these modern times. Surveillance and modern methods of policing, as well as the availability of new media to authorities mean that these criminals need to be at the forefront of the technological revolution to stay ahead of the police. I have discussed the impossibility of policing new media with any effect without destroying the lifeline of democracy which runs through it. Activists also need to be, and are, at the forefront of the technological revolution, and it is helping them in their fight against trafficking.

New media is helping both sides of the fight against trafficking, as well as hindering both sides by facilitating both groups. As technology progresses and becomes cheaper and more accessible to all, the platform will inevitably become wider and more voices will be represented, perhaps even the voices of the oppressed victims of trafficking. The projects that STT support could ultimately provide access within areas that are lagging behind. The internet is both educational and informational. Education is one of the main priorities of activists in the fight against human trafficking as education can facilitate most importantly awareness to the dangers of traffickers and can create opportunities for people to make a decent living and not be forced to make survival based decisions.

Trafficking is an ancient problem and has moved and accelerated with the times, adapting to the progressions in technology. However, awareness of it is growing consistently with the developments in technology, through the internet and the advent of instantaneous international communication. Awareness is one of the main contributions that new media can offer to the fight against trafficking, and activists are all too aware of this, and are constantly pushing it forward through their online campaigns. There is much considerable evidence to suggest that new media will help the fight against human trafficking, however as I have discussed in chapter 6, there are also many factors that suggest that new media will hinder this fight for freedom. The internet must be recognized as a space where both good and evil reside for the safety of its users, but more importantly it must be recognized as a powerful medium where the public can have their voices heard. By using it for democratic discourse, and supporting petitions thus giving

rise to issues of global importance, such issues as human trafficking will receive a global response. Through online campaigns, donations and fundraising events, activists are tackling these issues on two levels. Money raised funds projects where education and training are provided in the most vulnerable target areas. Funds also provide structures where victims can seek refuge. The other side of their work focuses on campaigns to attain public and political support that could potentially generate a global liberation movement that could see the end of modern day slavery. Activists are creating public awareness through the structures of new media, it is up to the public to respond. Human trafficking must be put to an end, we as citizens have the power and democratic structures of new media in place that place the world at our finger tips. Every citizen has the right to freedom, it is our world, and every citizen who has access has the power to make a difference in this anti trafficking movement. The internet must be recognized for its ability to do this, for when issues receive global response, they become priorities.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Questions that I asked Maura O'Donohue

#### Human Trafficking and New Media

New media is a combination of new digital forms and adapted traditional media such as the Internet and Mobile phone technology. A new media form exhibits convergence, digital networking, global reach, interactivity and many to many communication. My thesis is researching how new media is helping the fight against Human Trafficking.

- 1) Can you tell me about the work that you do?
  
- 2) How did you get involved?
  
- 3) Since you have been involved have you noticed an increased presence of new media (the internet and mobile phones)?
  
- 4) How do you think new media has impacted the fight against trafficking?
  
- 5) Do you personally find the Internet and having a mobile phone more beneficial within your area of work?
  
- 6) COATNET is a Network of Christian Organizations Against Trafficking in human beings. As a member of Coatnet, do you feel that their organization on a digital platform is contributing to the fight against trafficking?
  
- 7) Do you think that the Internet is making people more aware of trafficking?
  
- 8) Women and children form the majority of trafficked people. Do you think that trafficking has become a specifically feminised experience?

9) Non governmental Organisations and activists are utilizing the Net to promote their opinions and create awareness of issues of global importance. Organisations have made extensive use of the internet and other new media technologies such as mobile phones in organizing opposition and awareness. The internet may foster the growth of a transnational movement for example human rights organizations. Do you think that this would happen without the internet?

10) Men, women and children are trafficked within their own countries and across international borders. Trafficking affects every continent and most countries.

Do you think that the 'traffickers' themselves are benefiting from New Media technology and increased communications?

11) Trafficking has globalised. Do you think that new media has played a part in this?

Do you think that the internet will contribute to the demise of trafficking?

## APPENDIX 2

### Questions I asked Gerardine Rowley

#### Human Trafficking and New Media

New media is a combination of new digital forms and adapted traditional media. A new media form exhibits convergence, digital networking, global reach, interactivity and many to many communication. My thesis is researching how new media is helping the fight against Human Trafficking.

1)

Ruhama was set up in 1989, just before the new media such as the internet and mobile technology came about.

-Do you think Ruhama has benefited from this new technology?

- Do you think Ruhama would be as successful as it is without it?

2)

It says on your website that:

“Increasingly, Ruhama uses the media to highlight concerns about prostitution and the needs of women involved in the sex industry.”

For example, I read an article on the RTE website -“Ruhama reports rise in trafficking of women” Friday, 5 May 2006 20:22.

-Does Ruhama favour digital media over traditional media as a means of raising awareness?

3)

The Next Step Initiative Project-

-Did you find the internet useful for gathering your research?

4)

Ruhama's work involves networking with others on issues related to prostitution and trafficking and in order to improve access to services for women involved in prostitution.

Ruhama also works to influence policy development in the area, networking with relevant Government Departments and agencies, lobbying for better services and seeking to influence the enactment of appropriate legislation, protocols and directives.

Ruhama states that it works to change public attitudes, practices and policies which allow the exploitation of women through trafficking and prostitution.

-Does the internet provide a beneficial platform on which networking is made easier?

5)

You are involved in the "Stop the Traffik" Campaign

-Do you find that the internet is spreading this message faster? -Is this campaign linked to [stopthetraffik.org](http://stopthetraffik.org)?

6)

Women and children form the majority of trafficked people.

-Do you think that trafficking has become a specifically female experience

.

7)

Non governmental Organisations and activists are utilizing the Net to promote their opinions and create awareness of issues of global importance. Organisations have made extensive use of the internet and other new media technologies such as mobile phones in organizing opposition and awareness. The internet may foster the growth of a transnational movement for example human rights organizations.

-Do you agree?

8)

Men, women and children are trafficked within their own countries and across international borders. Trafficking affects every continent and most countries.

Do you think that the 'traffickers' themselves are benefiting from New Media technology

and increased communications?

9)

Trafficking has globalised.

Do you think that new media has played a part in this?

### APPENDIX 3

This is the symbol of the STOP THE TRAFFIK campaign.



The Freedom Key, "Unlock The Freedom"



The Freeset Bag



The Banner



The T-Shirt



FRONT

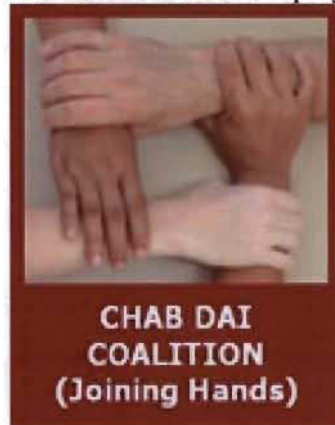


BACK

Animations from the The Good Boy, which tell the stories of the lives of abused children. The stories are awareness raising tools for prevention of abuse.



The Chab Dai are sponsored under the Cambodia project, discussed in Chapter 4.



The STOP THE TRAFFIK campaign also sponsor the following projects.





## APPENDIX 4

Dear [name of TD]

As an informed citizen and a supporter of Ruhama, I am concerned about the proposed Criminal Justice (Trafficking and Sexual Offences) Bill, 2006 and its ability to respond to the needs of the victims of trafficking and also ensuring that the perpetrators of trafficking will be successfully prosecuted.

Following international law it is Ruhama's position that an effective and comprehensive law should be victim-centered and have a structured balance between prosecution, protection and prevention

Therefore I ask you as my party representative to lobby in the Dail to:

- 1 Ratify the UN protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, and sign and ratify the Council of Europe's convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings particularly women and children
- 2 Amend the Bill to provide protection and assistance provisions to victims of trafficking that would aid their physical, psychological and social recovery.
- 3 Extend the Heads of the Bill protecting vulnerable children to cover vulnerable adults. This would include criminalizing the organisation, the sale and/or the sexual grooming of adults for sexual exploitation.
- 4 Criminalise the users of sexually exploited women. We recommend a model of legislation similar to Sweden which prohibits the purchase of sexual services.

Yours Sincerely,

---

[Your Name]

## APPENDIX 5

These stories to follow are the individual accounts of victims of trafficking, taken directly from the STOP THE TRAFFIK website. [www.stophetraffik.org](http://www.stophetraffik.org)

### Sunita's Story:

When Sunita was born, her parents wanted nothing to do with her. They sent her away to her aunt where she was treated as a servant.

Sunita was fit and healthy, intelligent and beautiful. However she suffered rejection at the hands of those closest to her simply because she was born a girl. Like many marginalized women, Sunita is a victim of a culture where the birth of a girl brings shame on a family...

...and where shame is handled with hatred, abuse sets in.

In her early teens, Sunita's aunt sold her into prostitution. As a punishment for trying to run away from the brothel, she was tortured.

Thankfully Sunita was rescued from the brothel and was sent to Aruna. Like so many women who have shared her experience, Sunita was deeply hurt by what she went through and lives with emotional as well as physical scars.

Today, she still has trouble communicating and needs life skills support, but she is on the journey of healing the past hurts in her life.

### Pamela's story:

Pamela, aged 13, was head girl at Noah's Ark shelter and was loved and respected by other night commuters. One night, too sick to make the usual trek from her village into town, Pamela was abducted by the LRA. For a year she was feared dead, then some children brought news as bittersweet as you could get: Pamela was alive but had been 'married' (code for enslaved) to an LRA Commander. Last year Pamela returned to Noah's Ark. No one knows exactly what she has been through. She doesn't like talking about it. Pamela has also suffered rejection from her family because of her abduction – though joining the LRA is hardly something you would do by choice...

Noah's Ark is helping make Pamela's life bearable again through safe shelter, visits to her family and daily counselling. And despite her ordeal, Pamela is finding solace in God. 'She loves praying and this is where she finds her joy,' says Annet Kurui. 'When she sings in praise, you can see her happiness.' Amazingly, Pamela is also able to forgive her captors, saying 'I feel pain because those [LRA]

commanders were abducted and it is from there that they were promoted.' Pamela is now a dormitory captain, caring for younger children at Noah's Ark, and last year helped organise an awareness-raising march that saw 6,000 children march through Gulu. 'None of the children mention what happened to me,' said Pamela. 'I like the centre because I am busy either singing and praying or reading. I don't know how I would cope without it.'

#### David's story:

The reasons for trafficking are always complicated, and in Haiti and the DR they are tied particularly closely to the issues of poverty, politics and ethnicity. Many people who are transported to the DR forge a new life for themselves there and hope to make money, either to return home later or to build a secure and good life in the DR. David La Fortune of La Roye, Las Cahobas is one of these people. He had decided to leave Haiti to improve the quality of life for himself and his family "Life was hard," he said. "There was nothing for me to do. We were living in poverty. I couldn't do anything here so I tried across the border. I took all the kids, I have 8 children, and my wife, and I took all of them and tried to see if we could make it work over there."

David and his family settled in the DR, and lived there for two years. On July 17 2006 David was rounded up on the bateye where he lived and was forcibly returned.

"One day a big truck came into the bateye and they got all of us. We didn't have a chance to get anything. We got some insignificant items but most important things we had to leave behind."

Fortunately for him, he was with his family at the time so they were all repatriated together. Others are not so fortunate. They are rounded up off the street or at work and are not allowed to go back to get their families or even tell them what has happened to them.

David and his family walked over the mountains into Haiti as far as La Roye where the members of the human rights committee are now helping him and his family restart their life from scratch.

"This organisation and the human rights committee helped us," he said. "They got together with a local organisation here and have made different things available to us, for example the kids club where they teach the kids different things like games, singing..."

It was hard in the past losing his livelihood It is even harder coming back with nothing.

### Laxmi's story:

Laxmi was 18 when she was rescued. She had spent eight years in a circus in Southern India. A trafficking agent had tempted her mother with promises of good food, training and a job that would make her 'like a Bollywood heroine'. The family being desperately poor delighted in these good prospects for their daughter. After two days of decent treatment at the circus owner's house, Laxmi was transferred to the reality of circus life. The working routine was gruelling, with three shows per day plus hours of rehearsing, there would be little time left for rest at night. Laxmi regularly performed 'Starkiss', a terrifying act whereby she would be suspended high in the tent by a rope gripped between her teeth to then be rotated like a windmill; serious and fatal accidents were commonplace. Laxmi's food was paltry and worm-ridden, beatings were part of daily life, if anyone tried to run away they would be stripped and beaten in public.

Having not heard from her daughter, Laxmi's mother travelled across India twice to try and see her, only to be denied access; Laxmi only knew this after she was released, by this time her mother had died. Laxmi's father accompanied the rescue party to secure her freedom, at first they did not recognise one another but when they did they were overwhelmed with joy and there were many tears on the two day journey home. We are now supporting Laxmi as she reintegrates into village life.

### A woman's story:

In August 2005 Living for Tomorrow received a call from a friend of a 20-year old girl from Estonia who had been sold to organized group in Bulgaria. The Estonian trafficker had promised her a well-paid job that was supposed to involve taking care of an invalid, but when she reached Bulgaria she was forced into street prostitution. The girl had been threatened and was very scared. After two weeks of abuse she managed to run away from the people who were exploiting her. Living For Tomorrow staff met her at the airport in Tallinn and helped her to find the help she now needed. Due to an emergency reaction to a call from victim and cooperation with Bulgarian NGOs Animus and La Strada-Bulgaria LFT could help woman to return back to home.

### Premila's story:

Premila is a modern slave. It was her eighteenth birthday in her small village in rural Bihar. Her parents, desperate to escape their impoverished plight, signed their daughter over to a nightmare. For the paltry sum of 800 rupees (US \$18), she was sold to a man living in faraway Punjab state. He claimed there were no 'good women' in his village and therefore he was forced to buy a wife. 'Wife' is a term

used loosely. 'Sexual slave' would be more accurate.

For two years Premila was used as a modern-day concubine. There was no marriage ceremony. There was no hope of marital love in her future. Her body was abused at the will of this man, her 'husband', and at the will of any of his male relatives who came to call. It was a living hell. But her days were about to get worse.

Eventually, a new investment opportunity presented itself and Premila was turned out of her new 'family' in Punjab and sold to a well-known prostitution ring in the nation's capital, New Delhi. Premila brought a relatively good price: 5,000 rupees (US \$109). She joined thousands of other women who exist in impoverished, disease-ridden, dangerous conditions. She was forced to sell or give her body under threat of abuse or death.

Premila was a 'good' employee and was soon traded again to the streets of Mumbai for 35,000 rupees (US \$762). It was here in Mumbai that she was finally rescued. Returned to her hometown of Khathiar, Bihar, she was and is a broken woman. She will never re-marry and will forever have to live with what happened to her.

Amoti's story:

Amoti thought it was one of the most significant days of her life. Her little ramshackle stall made of woven matete, was weighed down with plastic bags filled with tap water to sell to the thirsty commuters of Lagos. A flamboyantly dressed Yoruba woman approached her. 'Would you like to come and look after my children rather than sell water on the streets?' she asked her. Within hours her life had been transformed. At Mama Edi's house she looked after two small boisterous children, whilst their mother undertook her import export business. She had her own room! And her clothes provided for her. Not since before her parents had died from HIV Aids had she been so happy. Time passed, the children were ready to go to Secondary school and Amoti's work changed to that of assistant housekeeper in Mama Edi's Lagos compound.

One day after a particularly long and enthusiastic church service, Mama Edi introduced me to a friend of hers who lived in Great Britain! She was so friendly and excited to offer me the post of a nanny to her young son—in a house overlooking the River Thames! In no time I was on a plane to London, with smart warm clothes for the cold British weather. But the plane landed in Dublin, and Mama Edi's friend did not meet me. Another woman who was Ghanaian met me and brought me to the house. There instead of a young boy of three, I was met by a Winston, a young Ibo man and three young women about my age. Winston was very friendly, took me by the hand and showed me to my room. After a cup of tea together and some bread and blue band, he raped me. This was my work from now on. To be ready to receive and entertain the men who Mama Luka arranged to come to the house. Did I understand? Did I know how to use Durex?

I cried, I pleaded no, this is not what I wanted, not what I had come for, where were the children? I wanted to look after Mama Edi's friends son—but Winston did not listen. I was left sobbing on the bed—my new blouse bought only two days ago in the market in Lagos ripped, my thoughts confused, my hopes for a new life shattered.

Amoti's story is the combination of three young Nigerian women's accounts. These and several other young African women have been helped by CHASTE to access safe housing and support whilst their cases are heard by Asylum tribunals. The majority of these young women are currently returned to their source countries under current UK immigration law and lacunae in counter trafficking legislation and protection.

#### Abraham's story:

Abraham Seshi is a fifteen year old boy in the International Needs Ghana School at Kuve in the Volta Region of Ghana. Before enrolling at the school, Abraham was among the thousands of children who have been sent to communities along the Volta Lake where they are exploited for labour purposes in the fishing industry. Abraham was in a fishing community along the Volta Lake called Dambai. At eight years, Abraham was sent by his uncle who is a fisherman to Dambai. The uncle had deceived the family into thinking that Abraham would be put in school and taken good care of. Instead he was immediately made to fish on the Volta Lake. He was fishing with one other boy. They usually left home at four o'clock in the morning and came back home at around four o'clock in the evening every day. For over five years his uncle never paid him for all the fishing he did. According to Abraham his uncle treated him badly; he fed him on "Gari" (cassava-based powder with sugar).

He had no rest at all. They had to row the canoe for long distances and mend the nets. They worked, even in the rains, without any form of protection against the cold and rainstorms. The fishing communities are mosquito-infested exposing them to malaria. According to Abraham his uncle never gave him a mosquito net throughout his stay at Dambai. "I fell ill a number of times but I was never sent to the clinic. Somehow, my father heard of my treatment and came for me back to the village".

The father went and took him back as a result of community sensitization, given by International Needs Ghana, on the hazards of child labour and child trafficking and the benefits of educating children.

Abraham was enrolled at the International Needs Kuve Community School last academic year. At fifteen years he is now in primary three, the normal age for primary three children is eight years. Abraham wants to become a lawyer in future.

**A woman's story:**

**After the featuring of Business Travellers against Human Trafficking on Spanish television, a tour operator contacted the campaign with details of business trips which were regularly arranging visits to under-age trafficked prostitutes. The campaign referred the matter to the police.**

**A man in Indonesia received a text message from a friend saying that she was in debt and her creditors were insisting that she get on a plane and be trafficked to Iraq into forced labour to pay off the debts. The man contacted Business Travellers against Human Trafficking, which made contact with the appropriate authorities in Indonesia. The woman is now safe in Indonesia.**

## APPENDIX 6

This poster featured on the Indymedia website with the article about the women who were beaten up in Manila, this poster demonstrates again how media can give people a voice.

