



A Human Rights-Life Course Five Point Framework To Address Human Trafficking

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Introduction

A Human Rights-Life Course Approach to addressing human trafficking is based on research undertaken by Dr. Angela Reed RSM (2009, 2014). Her research gives priority to women's narratives, presenting human trafficking as a complex reality with intersecting issues of inequality, educational and economic marginalization, forced migration and gendered violence over the *entire life course*.

In our experience, we know that trafficking for sexual exploitation is fueled by demand and exploits vulnerability. At the same time, Dr. Reed confirms that individual experience, transitions and events over a person's lifetime combined with the socio-economic and political environment, impacts life outcomes, concluding that, cumulative disadvantage over the *life course* renders people vulnerable to trafficking (Reed and Latonio 2015).

This understanding calls for a radical shift in how we frame the problem of trafficking; A shift that moves beyond understanding trafficking as a random act of victimization to an understanding of systemic oppression which causes vulnerability over the life course. This means that there is no quick fix or grand solution for eliminating the exploitation and commodification of people. Instead, long-term interventions are required; that is, prioritizing human rights based, gender, and age sensitive approaches as committed to in the Global Plan of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Five Point Framework

This best practice approach enables women to exercise real power and control over their lives as rights-holders. Specifically, it calls for policy that:

1. privileges the insights gained from narratives shared by those who have been trafficked;
2. recognizes that the interplay between the personal life story and systemic oppression renders one vulnerable to human trafficking;
3. acknowledges cumulative disadvantage and addresses vulnerabilities across the life course;
4. prioritizes and uses qualitative data on actual experiences and circumstances of trafficking for policy formulation;
5. addresses the systemic causes of economic social, gender disparity and discrimination.

This approach calls for radical structural change including: (1) dismantling power based systems that subjugate women and girls; (2) ensuring that all boys and girls receive quality primary and secondary education; (3) addressing inequitable monetary, trade, investment and financial policies; and (4) the implementation of a decent living wage and the realising of a universal social protection floor.

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