

SLAVERY NO MORE 2012 GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE
August 10-11 ~ LOS ANGELES, CA

PANEL: Fighting Human Trafficking in Foreign Lands

Peter White: Our next moderator previously served in the Philippines as an Aftercare Fellow with International Justice Mission and was Clinical Director for My Refuge House which is a partner of Slavery No More, and ran an aftercare facility that takes in the most acutely traumatized victims who aren't even capable of being placed into a normal aftercare facility. He's got an incredible body of experience in this area. He is currently with the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare. He has the biggest heart for young people affected by human trafficking and modern day slavery. He's going to moderate our next panel with a very distinguished group of panelists. Please welcome Russ Bermejo.

Russ Bermejo: Good morning. Just a few words. In a generation, in a time, in a place, in a city where celebrate celebrity, where we elevate the relatively insignificant, I think it's refreshing. It's inspiring, but it's also transforming to be in the presence of real life heroes, so I don't get easily star struck. I get struck by visionary leaders. I get struck by courage. I get struck by people that take on the darkest, the most difficult and challenging problems in this world and dedicate their lives and professions to it. That's who we have up here, and for the next several minutes hopefully we will touch on the three P's. The U.S. State Department Trafficking in Person's Report gives us a paradigm on how to think about how we combat human trafficking. We have prosecution, protection, and prevention and then a fourth P that you might hear is partnership.

We're going to have a taste of their work internationally, and I'm going to ask each presenter to give a really brief summary on their current role, their current profession, and also what background experience so just a few senses about that. Then we'll proceed on with introductory questions.

Holly Burkhalter: I'm with International Justice Mission, and as I've mentioned we have 16 overseas offices. About a third of them work on trafficking and slavery, and my job in Washing is to deal with the State Department and the White House and Congress. My team also heads up an effort to organize around the United States citizens just like you and people who care about trafficking to bring them in touch with their elected members and senators. We have some advocacy cards that I'll pass around. It gives you a sense of what we do, and I'd love you all to sign them. They will go to your senators to show them that Californians want them to do more on slavery and trafficking. Thanks.

Sandra Morgan: My name is Sandy Morgan. I'm the Director of the Global Center for Women & Justice at Vanguard University in southern California. Previously I served as the administrator of the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force. Before that I was overseas in Greece and worked for about ten years there on women's issues. That's really where I began working against human trafficking.

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Betsey Meenk: Good morning I'm Betsey Meenk with Zoe, a Greek word that means life, and we care for orphans and rescue children from human trafficking. Our home currently is in Thailand and just in the past couple of years we've started our work here in Los Angeles.

Kevin Potter: Hi my name is Kevin Potter. As you can tell I'm not originally from the United States. I come from the UK. I'm a Welshman. My background is that I lived in India for eight years working with women and children who were HIV positive, women from the red light areas, from the slum communities. That's both in south India and in Mumbai. I went back to the UK and got involved in setting up something called the Mustard Tree Foundation which worked in urban deprived areas. We would be in contact with girls who had been trafficked in from Eastern Europe. I've been involved with the ministry down in Juarez through the violence and the drugs and the trafficking that was going on down there. Currently, I am with Oasis. We're based here. We have 28 centers. We work with 20 communities around the world, in ten countries, working in grassroots urban transformation, impacting trafficking.

Cynthia Brielh: My name is Cynthia Brielh, and I am the Director of Women of Vision which is a program of world vision, so I'm representing *World Vision* here today, the third largest international development organization in the world. I'm going to speak from both sides. My present job is mobilizing women around the United States and now globally as well around issues that they care about and human trafficking is a huge one on women's hearts. As you've been hearing over and over again, it disproportionately affects women and girls. I grew up overseas in Ethiopia. I have a healthcare and business background, and I am really passionate about this topic as well, and I hope to share some things that I care in terms of prevention and partnership as Russ was saying. Thanks.

Mary Heller: Hello. Thank you for allowing me to be here today. I'm very honored. My name is Mary Heller, and I'm current a Chief of Police in the Denver metro area, one of those satellite cities around Denver. I spent about 23 years in law enforcement, but the highlight I think of my career was three years that I spent in Shehnai, India with the International Justice Mission as the *Director* of Investigations there. I worked with a wonderful group of investigators, very committed to rooting out and investigating cases of bonded labor, and that was an amazing experience. I'm glad to be able to share that with you today.

Russ Bermejo: Okay thank you all. First question really wants to address the rule of law or the existence of laws, so the first question actually is for Holly. The countries that International Justice Mission works in, human slavery, sex trafficking are they illegal, and if they are illegal why does it still prevail. If you can talk about those factors and International Justice Missions role in those.

Holly Burkhalter: Sure and I think the other panelists will have good views as well. Slavery is actually legal nowhere on earth, so we start with a tool that our forbearers 200

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years ago and our abolitionists here in the United States did not have when slavery was legal. This is a crime. It's illegal in every country of the world and certainly in the three where we work. Of course the whole issue is not whether there are laws in the books. There are. But whether those laws are being enforced. Mary can speak to what it looks like to actually work with local police and get them to try to actually do their jobs. It's a very intricate combination of helping and pushing and a certain amount of prayer if you work for *International Justice Mission*. What we're trying to do is act as if the law is real, because it should be real.

Russ Bermejo: Mary do you want to add to that? You can talk about your experience in India as the Director of Investigations, but could you tell us about one the rule of law there and also the unique challenges of investigation human trafficking cases which lead to victim rescue?

Mary Heller: I think the thing that takes you back when you go to India, particularly in the area of bonded labor, is that modern slavery in India is very normalized in the culture. It's visible and because it's visible and because it's normalized, there's this appearance that it's right and that it's acceptable. Bonded labor, anytime that you own someone which is how the facility owners view their laborers. Anytime you own someone, anytime that you have control over every aspect of their lives, it opens up incredibly avenues for other areas of abuse, so not only did we have bonded labor, in and of itself which is horrendous, but we had incredible physical abuse, sexual abuse, and we even investigated homicides while we were there.

The interesting thing about when you get something that's normalized in the culture is that the laborers themselves become very conditioned to the circumstances that they live in. A lot of times you have long term bonded labor as well as generational bonded labor. We found three generations in one facility where the grandfather had taken a small loan, and the next three generations were working off that loan. The challenge really is to convince the laborers, we meet with them covertly, that they have a right to be free, that they have a right to be treated with dignity, that they have a right to live free of fear. It's not difficult to find a bonded labor case. What's difficult is to convince the laborers to come out of the conditions that they're living in.

Once you're able to do that, I used to call it critical mass; we would really have to have a certain percentage or group of the laborers to be willing to tell their stories in order to draw the rest of them. We would meet covertly with the laborers and convince them what freedom looked like and that it was better than the circumstances they were in even though it was uncertain. Once you did that then you could move towards rescue. In fact, the timing was really interesting, because once they thought that freedom was possible, they wanted out tomorrow. The Indian government doesn't work that quickly.

The other thing if I can just say very quickly is that I did most of my career in Aurora, Colorado which seems to be in the news lately. I was the Commander of Investigations, and I

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also did a lot of work in vice and narcotics. With my investigators in India also when investigators are working with victims of trauma, they take them on themselves. It impacts them personally. It impacts them professionally, and you have to have a very good, well established staff care program that can address the psychological impact of working with victims of trauma.

Russ Bermejo: This question actually is for Kevin. I met you at a previous conference, and we talk about ending trafficking, investigation one case at a time, one life at a time, but your approach is ending trafficking one community at a time. I know that your work at Oasis talks about traffic free communities. Can you describe the model and why you think it's effective and maybe an example of success.

Kevin Potter: The issue trafficking and fighting trafficking is multidimensional. For it to be multidimensional it is interconnected. Some of the things that these traffic free communities that we were talking about that are actually functioning here in the states come out of that multi sector approach that has happened in India. We work with International Justice Mission and various other folks in south India. It's that interconnectedness which we do on this sort of level but actually we're looking at interconnectedness on a grassroots level. Individuals will come to us, and they'll say, I'm not going to become a lawyer. I'm not going to go to India. What can I do locally? We've got lots of good organizations, but we've heard that the people, the police officers, and various law enforcements agencies get tips from the community. Its individuals within their local community that can effect change within the community.

We've seen it in South Africa. There's something called Change Agents in South Africa. Young people, men, women, couples who are going into their local communities and actually becoming change agents. They're not going in with a set goal. They're going in to impact their local community to raise awareness, to highlight the issues where there's vulnerability, to find out areas where there is vulnerability, people who are being trafficked, or even people who have escaped trafficking and need to be cared for. The community will care for people who have been trafficked.

The traffic free community is this multi sector approach on a grassroots level. For instance, we've got folks in Pomona for a traffic free community who have been involved in working with the police, liking with the police and the local authorities and being able to highlight certain issues within their community. They seek to highlight those areas and become part of the local community. Some of the cases when you become more involved in your local community, you build up relationships. Those relationships get you into certain doors. Getting into those certain doors and building relationships is key.

Folks in Europe were working with the brothel girls being brought up from Thailand. It took them two years, but the people who were working with the brothels were actually with the brother Madame when she overdosed and was in the hospital teaching her French as a foreign language. They were walking with her, and eventually this brothel owner came and

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asked to close down her brothel. The interconnected approach means that actually it's not just closing it down. What happens to those girls afterwards? Therefore, you've got to connect in with business. You've got to connect in with education on a local level.

I'm going briefly over some of the interconnectedness. We are a community of people, and we hear about supply chains, etcetera. We're people who believe in what we do. Outside, getting that mess, and changing minds and hearts into local communities, so they will stop buying things. I have a daughter. How do I raise her as a strong woman or my sons? How do I raise my sons not to be involved in the porn industry, not to be involved in pornography? That's going on there. Local communities, local people, you and I will change that dramatically and then link in the politicians.

Russ Bermejo: Thank you Kevin. You talked about how communities can help change the way that we think about gender and roles. This question is actually for Sandy. I know you focus a lot on push and pull factors in human trafficking in supply and demand. Can you talk about gender as a push factor and why it's important that the global fight in preventing human trafficking needs to consider gender as a push factor.

Sandra Morgan: Thank you. I was in Zambia this summer doing a human trafficking training in the capital. About 60 people from different districts in the country. Law enforcement was there. They always want to know what you're doing. There wasn't a lot of trust between law enforcement and the community, and one of the things I talked about a lot was push and pull. We did an assessment first to find out what the trafficking situation was, and I kept hearing more and more little girls from rural villages were being trafficked to the city and then beyond usually through South Africa and to the rest of the world. They wanted to know what does that really mean, and it was the day I was leaving. Someone came to me at breakfast and said you know we really don't understand push and pull.

It's like okay I go back to my classroom, and we're going to have a role play lesson. I got two of the youngest people there to be brother and sister in a rural village. They were standing way back here. Nice, safe in their homes, and then I started going through the push factors of education. I had one of the older ladies be the mom, and I said to the mom, "*You only have this much money, and you get to send one of your kids to school.*" Lack of education is the push factor. She said, "*Oh my son has to go, because he has to become a good man.*" We had another person who was the push and to push that little girl just a little further away from the safety of her home. Then I asked the mom, "*The flu epidemic hit your village, and you don't have enough medicine. They only had a little bit. They gave each family some. Which one of your kids are going to get it?*" "*My son, because he can't miss school.*" And the push person pushed the little girl further, and we went through that.

I know you guys in this room know those push factors. What about the pull factor? She was just right here on the edge, and here's the cliff. On the other side are the bright lights and the options and the opportunities. There's a woman not even a man. The traditional recruiter in the rural villages tends to be a woman, and she says you know we have a job. There are

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people that want household servants, and you would be able to go to school like your brother. So the pull factor. That little girl takes that step, and she's off. And she's often in a domestic servitude situation but many, many times into commercial sexual exploitation. Everybody in the room was silent. They said we've got it now, and we're going to work very hard at keeping her really safe back here in her home. That's what gender implies with push and pull.

Russ Bermejo: Ending human trafficking podcast. I've been listening to that. It's fabulous. It's on iTunes at the Vanguard website. This question actually is for Cynthia. You're working in many countries around the world, and you're trying to change the global story of women and children. Can you talk about your community work in those countries?

Cynthia Brielh: *World Vision* works in 100 different countries. Some of the most vulnerable places in the world and that is our target audience. As one of our staff in Cambodia said, "*We need to stop human trafficking where it starts,*" and that's at the village level. I think we've all been affirming that. Child protection is a huge piece of everything that we do in *World Vision*. We are trying to focus it on the prevention side. What are the factors that get people into trafficking? The sense of hopelessness. Sandy was saying the lack of education. Just the blatant poverty that creates that sense of hopelessness where somebody would actually sell a child or would themselves go into bonded labor.

I want to just give you a couple of things that we're working on to try and stem this tide. We are very big on child rights education. In communities where we work, we want all of the children we engage with to understand their rights. Sometimes people get into trafficking simply because they don't know that they don't have to. As Holly mentioned, there's laws on the books in every country against slavery and yet we have slaves. People do not realize that they don't need to be enslaved often times.

Starting with letting children know their rights, and I'll just tell you a quick story of a program in India that we had. A little girl named [Saveetha] was sold into bonded labor for a \$50 loan for her sister's dowry. She had to leave schools to go roll BB's which is very common for children in India. She did not realize that this was against the law, but her little friends at school did. They were part of *World Vision's* child rights afterschool program. They were trying to convince her to leave. She wouldn't because of fear that there would be repercussions on her family. The children went and did the next most important things which is to tell their mothers who are concurrently going through a mother's program that *World Vision* was doing. We do often in our community's nutrition, gender equality education, all kinds of things. They went to their mothers, and they told their mothers this wasn't right. This was against the law. 400 mothers stormed the mayor and the police chief's office and said this is not right [Saveetha] needs to be freed and not only [Saveetha] but 86 other children were freed. A simple education program after school freed 86 other children. That's community change I think we all want to see. That's certainly cost effective change as well.

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The program that we're doing in Cambodia is *Peace Road*. We started it in 2006, and it is slowly growing and evolving. Now in one community, they are starting an amber light type of a program, similar to what we have here. They don't have the same technologies that we have. They're using the same principals of how does the community rally around when they hear of a child being trafficked. You know that you have to work fast, because these children can just disappear. We've seen it. We have some great anecdotes about how this is working. By providing education in communities, so the men, the women, the children, everybody understands what's going on. They can use their own resources, develop their own processes for how they're going to keep children safe.

Other ways that we're working around this is to recognize that in every country, and Mary and I were talking about this earlier, is a little different. The culture is different. The context is different, so part of our work is we can't just have a global strategy that is going to meet everything, so we really have to understand where it is that we're working. I think this is one of the things that in *World Vision* is an asset. We have 44,000 employees around the world, and 97% of them are nationals. They're working in their own communities. They know the context. They know the language. They know the culture.

For instance, in the reintegration process of girls who've been trafficked, it's really complex. In Cambodia, as an example, girls are victimized twice often times. When you try to reintegrate them into their communities, they're rejected, because they are basically considered trash. In Cambodia, they say "*A girls like a piece of white cloth, a boy is like gold. If the cloth gets dragged through the mud it's ruined forever.*" She's rejected by her community. We need to do a lot of community engagement in the community to help these girls come back and be accepted and realize they're not trash. They're not worthless. That there's more value for them then their virginity which is again another Cambodian saying.

The other thing is that in areas where you have child bonded labor, it's easy to say okay we've got to get those kids out of there as fast as we can. We also need to recognize we're affecting the economic stability of a family, because those families are depending on that income from the children. One of the things that we've been experimenting with in *World Vision* is are there ways we can come alongside these situations where there's child labor, not completely exclude them from the economic opportunity but bring alongside schools that are part of the factories or brickworks or wherever they are and try to think outside the box of how we can try to help in these situations.

We're doing the same thing with our mining work in Africa. The big mine problems are artisanal mines not corporate mines and a lot of children in labor there. We're trying to think creatively of how can we work alongside those communities and not just go in and come in as the outsiders and say we've got to get everybody out of there. That's just a couple of thoughts.

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Russ Bermejo: That's great. Betsey and I had a great conversation about their work Zoe International's work in Southeast Asia. Can you talk about your work in prevention and aftercare and protection?

Betsey Meenk: Zoe combats human trafficking on those three fronts prevention, intervention, and after care. We've really discovered in the past ten years, those three things are very integrated, and you need all of them. As just a simple definition of prevention is not one more child. You'll hear me talk about children, because that's our focus. Not one more child. Not one more child is trafficked, so we have a rescue team that goes out and does investigations looking for children who are at risk. 145 million orphans on the earth today. A very vulnerable part of our society. No one to take care of them. We've developed this risk matrix that we use when we go out on investigations to measure the level of risk and see if Zoe is the right place for that child. How can we best help that child?

If they're danger...I won't go over the matrix right now, but if we determine that yes they need to come to Zoe we'll secure their rescue. A good example of that is we heard of these three siblings that were on the market to be sold. We did the investigation work, found those facts to be true, so we got there before their traffickers did. We secured the children's rescue, and they're thriving at Zoe right now. That's an example of prevention.

Intervention, a simple definition of that is one less child being trafficked. Over the years we've developed a very good working relationship with some good police officers, in Thailand, who do brothel raids. Through that partnership we've been able to rescue children out of beggar rings, brothels, and labor slavery and bringing them to Zoe Children's Home as well. An example of that is a boy was kidnapped. He was sold into a brothel where he had to service up to 40 clients a day. Through some investigation we discovered this. Working with the police, the police did a raid. Our rescue team was there, and we were able to carry that boy out to safety where he is thriving at Zoe.

Really those two things work hand in hand. They fuel each other. If you do good prevention work, you're going to be able to do great intervention work and vice versa. Great intervention work will lead to good prevention work. An example, if you do really good investigation work that leads to an intervention; you can follow that supply line all the way back to why that child was trafficked in the first place. All along that supply line, you're going to have ample opportunity to do prevention work, the things we've been hearing people talking about today, community.

On the converse, if you do good prevention work, that can lead to referrals, tips which would lead to launching investigation which could eventually lead to another intervention rescue. Just to touch on, because it's been spoken of quite often up here today is the value of empowering community. At Zoe we've established something we call a holistic model of community resiliency. That's going in and finding out why are children in this village being trafficked. What is the factor that's driving that? I love that push, pull. What is causing that?

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How can we come alongside of that village to help them be empowered to protect their own children, so their children are not continually trafficked?

Sometimes it's just not possible. There's no one to take care of these children, and they are terribly in danger. That's where our aftercare facility comes in, and that's really our heart. That's our core competency. What happens after the rescue? So we have a children's home in Thailand where we bring these children, and there are kids forever. They don't age out. They come to a place where they're loved. They're cared for. They are helped to discover who they were created to be. What did God make them to be and help them to discover that, so they can excel in that and be healed in restored. They can have a life that reflects who God made them to be, and we've had tremendous successes.

Russ Bermejo: As a closing question I want each of the panelists to think of a key takeaway, a lasting theme, an impressing theme that each of the attendees should take back home. What is it that you desire if you can capture that in one sentence? What is it that you would like to see the take away? What would be the lasting impression?

Holly Burkhalter: This is my favorite question. The people, your local representative and the members of congress and your state legislators work for you. They are spending your money. Tell them what you want to do. There's lots of advice in the room and on websites about policy recommendations. Seek them out. Our organization has some of them. The domestic group representatives have others. Tell the people who work for you what you want and that is a slavery free California and a slavery free world.

Sandra Morgan: Go back to the roots for structural transformation. We have to equip the next generation. Higher education that's why I'm at a university equipping the next generation to sustain the good work that you've launched.

Betsey Meenk: This is a big battle. It's a battle that must be fought and must be won for the sake of those being victimized, and it can be as we come together and work together. I'm so thankful for Jocelyn and Peter for bring this group of people together that we can win this battle and wipe this atrocity off the face of the earth and restore human dignity to millions.

Kevin Potter: Step in. Our society leads us to isolation, but we need to step in to community. Step into your own community. Be more aware of your community. What's going on in your community, and as you link into that locally, because all these things are interconnected, it will also help you impact nationally and globally. Step into the place where you have influence. Don't impact it. Be like a virus in it. Infect it. Be like a virus in it. Infect it.

Cynthia Brielh: As a nurse virus bad. One thing is partnership. I think partnership is so important. I think this economic recession has even made that more important for all of us, because the dollars are just stretched so thin. I think we all have things to offer. I don't think we need to ask each other to do everything that each other is

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doing, but we need to build on each others core competencies and really work together. We see it in the field. We need to see it here in our national offices and really, really what can we take away and learn best practices from each other and do this work together.

Secondly a trend I see that I have great concern about is the gender imbalance in the world that's coming from some of our large countries like China and India and now Eastern Europe that I think are going to have huge impacts on human trafficking in the future. I think it's a topic we need to bring to the forefront and be talking about. Difficult, but I don't think we're going to win the war unless we deal with that issue.

Mary Heller: I was surprised when I went overseas how many people view modern day slavery as a labor issue. It is not a labor issue. It's a human rights issue, and anytime you own someone there is the opportunity to severely abuse them. It is cruel, and it is brutal. They are voiceless. In India, they're most tribals. They have no power in their social structure, and people have to be willing to stand in the gap. I would say whatever talent you have and stand in the gap. Help the voiceless get out of these situations that they're in.

Russ Bermejo: Let's give our panel a round of applause and thank you everyone.

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