

World Day against Trafficking in Persons

The horrific crime of human trafficking may be closer to you than you realise. The United Nations' World Day against Trafficking in Persons takes place on 30 July each year. Find out more by reading this article.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–j) with the vocabulary (1–10).

Vocabulary

1. to abduct
2. a consequence
3. to deceive
4. to exploit
5. traumatic
6. a minor
7. to recruit
8. vulnerable
9. trafficking
- 10..... a slave

Definition

- a. to make someone believe something that is not true
- b. easily hurt or harmed
- c. to take someone illegally by force and keep them for a reason
- d. a person under the age of 18 and legally still a child (according to the UN Rights of the Child)
- e. a person who is controlled by another person, is forced to work for no or little pay and cannot leave easily
- f. the activity of buying and selling products or people illegally
- g. to use someone in a way that is unfair
- h. a result from a situation
- i. to persuade someone to join an organisation or work for a company
- j. shocking, upsetting, disturbing

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The crime

According to current research, up to forty million people are living as slaves today, and of those, ten million are minors. While some people have been born into slave-like conditions, most are victims of human trafficking, legally known as the crime of Trafficking in Persons, or TIP for short. This illegal trade in human beings is estimated to generate over US\$150 billion per year.

Is trafficking in persons the same as smuggling?

The word 'trafficking' might suggest travel. However, the crime can exist even when no transportation of a victim happens. Someone can be a victim of human trafficking in their own country – even in their own street. If they are forced to do things they do not want to do and another person is profiting financially – this is Trafficking in Persons. Human trafficking is a crime based on exploitation and it is often confused with human smuggling. But human smuggling is a different crime based on transportation and requires the illegal crossing of an international or state border.

The victims

Anybody can become a victim of trafficking. However, traffickers usually target people who are desperate and vulnerable. Poverty, unemployment, little or no education, war and natural disasters, such as earthquakes or floods, can all cause extreme vulnerability. Human traffickers also target people who are emotionally vulnerable, especially teenagers and children who feel lonely and unloved and are desperate to feel 'special'.

Methods used to recruit victims

Traffickers use different strategies during the recruitment process, but deception is generally involved. Fake job advertisements, false promises of economic opportunity and a better life are typical lies that traffickers will use to deceive people that a bright, happy future is waiting for them. Also, the 'lover boy' method of recruitment is often used, with promises of true love and a romantic adventure. Sadly, this adventure is likely to be violent exploitation with traumatic consequences. But the traffickers will make a profit from the sale of their victims, and that is their main goal. Despite what films show, traffickers do not usually abduct victims.

Forms of exploitation

Different forms of exploitation include forced labour, especially in the construction industry and mining, fishing and agriculture. Domestic servitude, commercial sexual exploitation, child soldiers, child brides and forced marriage are also forms of human trafficking. We often believe that trafficking is a crime that happens far away, in another country, but think again. The office building we work in or sports stadium we go to may have been built by modern-day slaves. Daily products, such as fruit and vegetables, seafood, clothing, chocolate and the minerals used in electronics, might also include slave labour at some point in the production process.

Ways to take action

Go online to find out the national anti-trafficking hotline number and to discover which anti-trafficking groups are in your local community. Be alert. If you hear about someone, especially a young person, who has been offered employment in another city or country that seems 'too good to be true', help them check that the job really exists. It is strongly advised that you do not try to rescue someone who appears to be a victim. This could endanger yourself and the victim. Instead, call the hotline or police emergency number. Also, think before you shop! As a consumer, find out about the backstory to the products you buy. Try to buy items that are produced ethically so that your money does not support companies that use trafficking victims.

And the good news is ...

Thousands of people around the world, from corporate leaders, academics to artists, are using their skills, resources and passion to fight trafficking. One such organisation is The NO Project, an award-winning, global educational campaign that specifically targets youth awareness of the crime through music, art, dance, film, theatre, poetry, journalism and social media. Around the world, students and educators donate their time and talent to this campaign. As the founder of The NO Project says, 'Youth are the agents of change. Only through a well-informed, pro-active, realistic understanding of this crime can the next generation effectively confront slavery and trafficking.'

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. Victims of human trafficking include adults and children.	True	False
2. Only very poor people become victims of human trafficking.	True	False
3. Traffickers use deception when trying to recruit people.	True	False
4. Products that we eat could be produced by victims of human trafficking.	True	False
5. You should not try to rescue victims personally.	True	False
6. A person can only be a victim of human trafficking if they are taken to another city.	True	False

Task 2

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets.

1. It is very difficult to find a job in my town and (employ) is very high.
2. With smiling eyes, traffickers lie and use (deceive) to get people to trust them.
3. Many people do not realise that (slave) still exists today.
4. During the (recruit) process, the young woman believed the trafficker's lies about his love for her.
5. Both boys and girls are recruited for commercial sexual (exploit).
6. The company is facing serious (economy) difficulties and will need to borrow money.

Discussion

What did you learn from reading this article?

Answers

Preparation task

1. c
2. h
3. a
4. g
5. j
6. d
7. i
8. b
9. f
10. e

Task 1

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. False

Task 2

1. unemployment
2. deception
3. slavery
4. recruitment
5. exploitation
6. economic