

ICAN TASK FORCE ON THE
COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN
(CSEC)
VICTIM SERVICES
REPORTS OF THE THREE WORKGROUPS

A) DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING

B) TRAFFICKING OF FOREIGN NATIONALS

C) TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION CRIMES

NOTE: THESE REPORTS ARE DRAFT/PRELIMINARY IN
NATURE AND WILL BE CHANGED AND UPDATED AS
THE EFFORTS OF THESE THREE WORKGROUPS MOVE
FORWARD

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REPORT FROM THE DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING
WORKGROUP

REPORT OF THE DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING SUBGROUP OF THE ICAN-CSEC SUBCOMMITTEE

I. Current situation: There is no program currently in place in Los Angeles County to effectively address the special needs of sexually exploited youth. Incarceration is not an effective tool as it criminalizes and stigmatizes youth engaged in sexual exploitation. The youth who are caught up in prostitution are being victimized and should not be treated as criminals. The practice has been among others, to incarcerate these youth “for their own safety.” However, available custody time is short¹ and the youth, when released, return to the same situation they were in before being incarcerated. The fact that they are victims of abuse is not the focus of current programs. A great deal of effort is made to physically contain these youth as they are very prone to running away to rejoin pimps. Moreover, no other self-destructive behavior is met with this same type of punitive approach. Youth involved in sexual exploitation need treatment and not punishment.

Statistics provided by various agencies confirm 140-150 arrests and prosecutions per year of youth in Los Angeles who are being sexually exploited.² It is believed that in reality, the number of youth involved in the sex industry is much larger. The discrepancy may be due to the fact that some youth are not observed by law enforcement,³ or because the youth are being arrested for offenses other than solicitation (P.C. §647(b)) and loitering (P.C. §653.22).

A shocking percentage of youth who are sent through the juvenile justice system in Los Angeles are African-American girls. L.A. County Probation statistics for 2008 reflect 95% of the youth arrested are female. L.A. County Probation statistics for 2010, which are broken down by race, reflect 78% of arrestees are African-American.

Not unexpectedly, the 2008 statistics as analyzed by Professor Denise Herz demonstrate that 33% of the youth arrested were dependents of the court pursuant to W.I.C. §300 at the time of their arrest. Professor Herz also concluded that girls with prostitution arrests were more likely to live in group homes or foster care and less likely to live at home or with a relative.

Another predictable statistic in Professor Herz’ analysis is that girls with prostitution arrests were more likely to have a co-occurring mental health and substance abuse problem.

¹ Six months for the misdemeanor charge of solicitation of prostitution – P.C. — §647(b) or loitering for the purposes of committing prostitution– P.C. §653.22.

² L.A. County Probation, 2008, total 146 juvenile arrests for P.C. §647(b) and 653.22.

L.A. County Probation 2010, total 153 arrests for P.C. §647(b) and 653.22.

³ One article suggested that pimps are luring customers through the internet as opposed to waiting for customers to drive through an area known for prostitution, reducing public exposure.

LAPD statistics for juvenile “prostitution” arrests⁴ for January 2009 – January 2010 reflect that the Hollywood Division of LAPD saw the greatest number of arrests (33), followed by Van Nuys Division (23) and 77th Division (23). The L.A. County District Attorney’s Office statistics for the calendar year 2010 (154 petitions) revealed the largest number of petitions filed for P.C. §647(b) and 653.22 in juvenile court in Compton (45), followed by Eastlake (36) and Sylmar (32). The number of petitions filed in Compton reflects arrests occurring in the southern part of LAPD 77th Division, and also reflects arrests by the L.A. Sheriff’s Department in Compton and unincorporated L.A. County areas in the Compton area. Statistics have not yet been provided by LASD.

A focus group conducted in February 2011 of 21 female probation wards on camp orders and 16 females detained in juvenile hall, offered the following statistical information:

- 41% age 16 (ages from 15-18)
- 41% African-American, 38% Hispanic
- 27% in custody due to violation of probation, 22% for warrants
- 46% had 4-6 prior arrests
- 59% were detained 1-3 times
- 92% arrested in LA, 8% in Las Vegas
- 30% were in foster care or are presently still 300 dependents

The girls articulated that the main obstacle to completing probation was the use of drugs and alcohol.

II. Identified needs:

The following services were listed in results of a survey of committee members with regard to identified needs for exploited youth:

1. Housing providing physical and psychological safety from pimps
2. Food, clothing and other basic necessities
3. Medical examinations and health care
4. Voluntary STD/AIDS testing
5. Counseling programs geared to sexually exploited youth
6. Mental health services including medication consultation
7. Substance abuse counseling
8. Sexual assault counseling
9. Domestic violence counseling
10. Peer support groups
11. Developmental screenings including a screening for fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS)
12. Reconnection with education, including tutoring
13. Independent living services including transitional housing, financial aid for higher education.
14. Life skills classes
15. Specially trained social workers and probation officers
16. A center staffed by physicians, mental health professionals, DCFS and probation

⁴ It is uncertain whether these are arrests for both P.C. §647(b) and 653.22.

17. Victims of Crime assistance
18. Family reunification
19. Family group decision making
20. Family finding
21. Employment opportunities and job training
22. Intensive case management
23. Medi-cal/EPSDT eligibility
24. Run-away education program
25. Public schools to address exploitation, independence, awareness and self-esteem

III. Challenges:

Due to never-ending budget cuts, agencies charged with the protection and rehabilitation of our youth have extremely limited resources. In addition, there is an inherent difficulty in coordinating the efforts of the various agencies who serve the population of this vast county.

There is a debate as to whether a period of detention in a locked facility is an appropriate tool. Some argue that due to substance abuse issues that plague this population, that these youth will never be amenable to treatment unless they spend time in lock-up to detox from their addictions. Others maintain that the trust-building process is severely compromised when youth are placed in detention “for their own safety” and when they are released, they return to the same situation they were in prior to detention.

IV. Strengths

Members of the CSEC subcommittee are committed to developing a model program that will uniquely serve the needs of our sexually exploited youth. There is already a wealth of programs and agencies that do their part in serving this population. The domestic trafficking subgroup consists of representatives from:

1. The court: LA Superior Court bench officers from Civil, Juvenile branches, Juvenile Court research attorneys and externs
2. Attorneys and their staff: Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles, County Counsel, Public Defender, District Attorney, Legal Aid Foundation, Mental Health Advocacy Services
3. Victim-Witness Assistance Project of the LA County DA’s Office
4. County agencies: DCFS, Probation, DHS
5. Medical services: Dr. Astrid Heger, Violence Intervention Project
6. Law enforcement: FBI, LAPD, LASD, Long Beach PD, El Monte PD,
7. Legislative representatives: Senator Fran Pavley, LA City Councilmember Jan Perry
8. Education: LACOE

9. Community service providers: LA Gay and Lesbian Center (Hollywood, W. Hollywood), Los Angeles Youth Network (Hollywood), Mary Magdalene Project (San Fernando Valley), Project Sister Family Services (E. San Gabriel Valley & Inland Empire), Crittenton Services (Fullerton), World Vision International, Traffick Free Communities (Pasadena), National Council of Jewish Women, Junior League, Child Abuse Training and Technical Assistance Project of the California Institute of Human Services
10. Academia: Loyola Law School Clinical Director Maureen Pacheco and Professor Denise Herz from Cal State LA, researcher
11. Shelters, Residential Programs, and Transitional Housing: Children of the Night (Van Nuys), Los Angeles Youth Network (Hollywood), LA Gay & Lesbian Services (Hollywood), Crittenton Services (Fullerton)

V. In Process:

1. Caty Reynoso, a senior at UCLA, has volunteered to put together a directory of services for CSE youth. She will start in April with a goal of completing the directory by the end of the summer.
2. Judge Jan Levine was instrumental in obtaining a \$5000 grant from the Administrative Office of the Courts. The \$5000 has been paid to Julie Posadas Guzman, President of JPG Consultants, the consultant for Alameda County's CSEC Diversion Project. Ms. Guzman in conjunction with Probation Directors Michelle Guymon and Hania Cardenas conducted a focus group with 21 girls who were either detained in Juvenile Hall or placed in a camp community placement and who had CSE backgrounds. In addition to the focus group, the girls completed a written survey. Next steps are for Ms. Guzman to conduct a focus group with members of the ICAN-CSEC subcommittee as well as disseminate a written survey to those members. Ms. Guzman will be developing a strategic plan that we can then use to seek funding for a diversion project here in Los Angeles. A report will be presented to the ICAN-CSEC subcommittee regarding these developments at the April 12 meeting.

VI. Goals:

1. 24 hour triage center such as Dr Astrid Heger's HUB Center at County USC and her "Violence Intervention Project." The center will provide emergency medical, mental health, and substance abuse treatment. Law enforcement will transport sexually exploited youth directly to the center. An assessment will be performed to determine whether youth will return home, to a relative, or on to a 30 day residential program for more intensive evaluation, treatment and services. Crisis case management will be provided for immediate needs.
2. Pilot project area – in proximity of the triage center, determined in conjunction with law enforcement partners.
3. Developing or utilizing an already existing intake and assessment tool.

4. 30 day treatment/assessment program – Probation is in process of identifying already existing group home facilities to serve as a dedicated treatment/assessment center for CSE youth.
5. Identify resiliency factors with respect to CSE youth.
6. Develop or adopt existing gender responsive curriculum.
7. Develop training program for law enforcement and partner agencies.
8. Step up SCAR hotline referrals for CSE youth.
9. Develop a resource guide of services for CSE youth.
10. Develop partnerships with businesses, schools, faith-based organizations, neighborhood watches to act as watchdogs in the community.
11. Explore the possibility of starting a Girls' Court in LA County
12. Developing interagency protocols.
13. Gathering statistics to measure outcomes.
14. Engaging in successful fundraising, applying for grants, seeking foundation donations.

Respectfully Submitted:

Judge Donna Quigley Groman

Dated

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REPORT FROM THE TRAFFICKING OF FOREIGN
NATIONALS WORKGROUP

INTRODUCTION

In the last year, members of the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect Child Sexual Exploitation Committee (ICAN/CSEC) Foreign National Working Group have gathered to examine sex trafficking cases involving Foreign National Youth (FNY) in Los Angeles County. The term FNY is being defined as youth that have no legal residency in the United States. The FNY Working Group is composed of local NGOs, federal law enforcement agencies, and local government agencies. The Working Group had the opportunity to reach out to organizations and agencies that come in contact or have the potential of coming into contact with this population including youth group homes, community based organizations, faith based organizations, government agencies, local law enforcement, federal law enforcement, and community based legal services. We learned that social, legal, immigration and housing services are available to identified victims. However, existing challenges are under-identification of victims, coordination of services, and lack of training for groups, agencies, and local law enforcement that may come in contact with potential victims. In the following report, we include a case study, highlighting a major sex trafficking ring uncovered in Los Angeles involving young Guatemalan girls. The case highlights the coordination of multiple nongovernmental agencies, government agencies and law enforcement in the Los Angeles area that collaborated to connect victims with services and ultimately prosecute multiple defendants. The ICAN/CSEC FNY Working Group hopes that the following information, and recommendations will inform policies and practices to increase victim identification and proper service coordination to this population.

BACKGROUND

According to the United Nations, human trafficking is the process by which a person is recruited to be controlled and held captive for the purpose of exploitation. Human trafficking is essentially modern-day slavery. Each year thousands of women, children and men are trafficked into the United States. According to the US Department of Justice, between 15,000 to 17,500 men, women, and children are trafficked into the US each year. They are brought to the US for the purposes of forced labor in homes, sweatshops, hotels, farms, agriculture fields and commercial sex. The United States is one of the top three destination points for trafficked persons, and California is particularly vulnerable to human trafficking because of factors such as: proximity to international borders, number of ports and airports, significant immigrant population and large economy. Los Angeles is one of the primary points of entry into the U.S. for victims of slavery and trafficking. The diverse communities of this sprawling city make it easier to hide and move victims from place to place.

Children are particularly vulnerable and often fall prey to traffickers. Child trafficking is an under identified crime in Los Angeles as well as throughout the United States. The estimate on the number of immigrant children being trafficked into the US annually range from 7,000 to 17,000. Studies have indicated that up to 30 to 50 percent of trafficking cases may involve minors, however, currently 13 percent of trafficking cases that have been identified and assisted by the US government are minors. According to the 2010 US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report), 38 percent of sex

trafficking cases identified involved foreign national youth, of which sixteen (16) percent involved young boys. In a study on child sexual exploitation in the US, Los Angeles was acknowledged as a major point of entry and departure for trafficked foreign national youth (Estes and Weiner, 2001). The analysis did not uncover any figures on the number of foreign national youth being trafficked in the Los Angeles area. Furthermore, the current literature does not present information on the nature and extent to which minors are being trafficked in Los Angeles.

Since 2007 only 142 foreign youth have been certified by the US government and have received services from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). The figure includes both labor and sex trafficking cases. In Los Angeles 5 sex trafficking cases have been identified since 2000.

STATISTICS

One of the many obstacles in researching the extent of the problem in Los Angeles was attaining figures of how many sex trafficking cases involving FNY have been identified. As noted earlier, only five (5) cases have been identified since 2000. Four of the cases were identified from a single case in 2006. Measuring the number nationwide has also posed a problem for the US government and other anti-trafficking agencies. The latest figures from the US Department of Justice, range from 14,500 to 17,500 persons, including children who are trafficked annually into the US (USDOJ 2005). Some studies point out that the government figure does not differentiate between adults and children. Furthermore, other methods tend to lump women and children together. Few studies have centered on children and youth only.

In interviewing LA based organizations and law enforcement, no new cases had been identified since 2006. A number of reasons were shared why agencies did not record any recent sex trafficking cases. First, due to the nature of the crime being investigated, and researched, this population will attempt to maintain undetected. Victims may have stayed away from assistance due to fear of law enforcement involvement and/or deportation. Also, agencies shared that they did not keep specific data on FNY that may have come in contact with their agency or organization. Youth homes and community based organizations, shared that they did not have a specific assessment tool used when assessing new intakes or clients they suspect of being trafficked. Most agencies shared that they had little or no training on sex trafficking and would not know how to identify a potential victim. Furthermore, if a victim was identified, some organizations shared that they did not know whom to contact, other than filing a suspected child abuse report with the DCFS. Also, important to note that victims do not self-identify, and may not be aware of the type of crime(s) or of any crime that has been committed against them. NGOs that have a history with working with trafficking victims, shared that many adult victims at times are unaware they have been trafficked until a detailed assessment has been conducted.

Local and federal law enforcement bodies were also approached to share any recent cases involving FNY. The Los Angeles Police Department shared that they had only come

in contact with US Domestic Minors that have been trafficked. Investigators and officers had not found a single case in the last few years. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agents and Victim Witness Coordinators were also contacted and they too shared that no cases had been identified involving foreign national minors. It is important to note that in 2010 the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office reported 118 filings of prostitution and/or prostitution related charges involving domestic minors. Furthermore, 155 youth were referred to the Probation Department for prostitution and/or prostitution related charges. Since minors are not legally able to consent to sex, every child participating in a commercial sex act is, by definition, is a victim of child sexual exploitation (Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, 114 STAT. 1470 (8) (A)). Anyone who profits from this child's sexual activity is, according to law, trafficking that child. (Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, 114 STAT. 1469 Sec. 103 (3)). These figures involving minors entering the criminal justice system in the LA County for commercial sex acts is a credible indicator that, even victims whose activities are made known to law enforcement are not being identified as victims of trafficking and are not receiving the services to which they are entitled.

ABSENCE OF SERVICES

Minors that have been trafficked experience a variety of symptoms due to trauma. Victims have reported physical, emotional, psychological, and a spiritual impact from the trauma of sexual exploitation. Some physical problems associated with the physical and sexual trauma include HIV, STDs, pregnancies, infertility, and malnutrition. Like torture victims, victims of human trafficking (both sex and labor trafficking) often experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depressive disorder, other anxiety disorders, and substance abuse (De Jong, et al, 2001; Shrestha, Sharma, Van Ommeren, Regmi, Makaju, et al., 1998).

Some minors have exhibited depression, anxiety, fear, self-destructive behavior (suicide, and self mutilation), low self-esteem and distrust towards others.

In US refugee foster care and URM programs there are a wide range of mental health treatments offered which include: individual therapy, group therapy, counseling, movement based therapy, and art therapy. There exists a lack of long-term studies conducted on the effects of sex trafficking and the response to traditional Western forms of mental health services by foreign national minors (Gozdziak, et al, 2006).

Furthermore, in the limited literature on mental health services offered to this population, there exists a gap related to culturally competent service delivery (Gozdziak, et al, 2006). There were instances where victims were resistant to being viewed and defined as victims and were despondent to treatment. Victims also prioritized other needs like employment, rather than education and mental health services (Gozdziak, et al, 2006).

LEGAL PROTECTION

Trafficked persons are protected under US law. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) defines "severe forms of trafficking in persons" as

- Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Under international law, child trafficking is a crime involving the movement of children for the purpose of their exploitation.

IMMIGRATION RELIEF

Under the TVPA of 2000, all trafficking victims are entitled to the following: safety, privacy, information, legal representation, medical assistance, compensation for damages, and social assistance. Victims also have options for relief and recovery that include repatriation, immigration, criminal prosecution, and civil law remedies. Special consideration must be taken when examining relief and recovery options for minors v. As mentioned above, minors are especially vulnerable to abuse. Family reunification should be explored as a priority, however, service providers need to ensure that claimants have not contributed to the trafficking situation; are genuine family members who are not connected to the trafficker(s); and finally, they are capable of providing adequate care and safety to the child.

There are two principal immigration relief forms offered to foreign nationals under the TVPA of 2000. One relief is known as Continued Presence (CP), which allows temporary immigration relief and may allow work authorization for potential victims who are potential witnesses in an investigation or prosecution. Secondly, child victims may also seek a T nonimmigrant status, also known as a “T-Visa”. The T visa is specific to trafficked persons. The visa is valid up to four (4) years. Adult victims are required to cooperate with law enforcement officials or make themselves available during an investigation. However, minors are exempted. Recipients of the T-visa are eligible to adjust their status to a Law Permanent Resident (LPR) after three years. It is important to note that minors that apply for a T-visa have the option to petition to bring parents and unmarried siblings under the age of 21 to the U.S.

Minors may also be eligible for the following immigration relief:

Asylum – For persons who suffered or fear persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular group in country of origin.

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) – Children eligible for long-term foster care due to abuse, neglect or abandonment; may apply for adjustment of status to a LPR.

U-Visa – This visa is for victims of certain crimes who suffered substantial physical or emotional abuse.

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) – It allows battered immigrants to file for immigration relief without the abuser’s assistance or knowledge.

SOCIAL SERVICES

The Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for the care of minors through the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) Program and the Division of Unaccompanied Children (DUCS). The URM Program services include housing, food, clothing, and medical care. Some of the housing options include, family foster homes, group care, independent living or residential treatment. Placement is dependent on the minors’ needs.

Child victims are connected with agencies within ORR to provide specialized services. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) are nonprofit agencies that work to place child trafficking victims in appropriate housing. Under the TVPA, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is authorized to issue an Eligibility Letter to non-US citizen, non-Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) minors who have been subjected to a severe form of trafficking in persons in the US. The Eligibility Letter allows these victims to access benefits and services that are normally designated to refugees. Children are not required to assist law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of a trafficking case to receive an Eligibility Letter, nor are they required to have been granted Continued Presences (CP) or a T-Visa before receiving an Eligibility Letter. The law requires federal, state, or local officials who discover a non-US citizen, non-LPR child in the US, to notify HHS within 24 hours of their discovery so services can be promptly administered. Government agencies and NGOs may request, on behalf of the unaccompanied child an Eligibility Letter when there is strong indication that the child has been a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons.

In Southern California, Crittenton Services for Children & Families located in Orange County is a licensed group home that specializes in assisting unaccompanied minors. Funded by ORR, Crittenton’s URM Program includes medical, case management, mental health, educational, recreational, and life skills services. Any minor that is suspected to be a trafficked victim participates in an assessment soliciting background information of their journey to the United States, questions regarding any outstanding debts, any indication that force or coercion was used against them, and if any trauma or abuse occurred. If there is an indication that the minor was trafficked a referral is made to the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and ORR is notified. An attorney is provided to the minor. After all appropriate parties have been notified appropriate case planning begins.

Angel’s Flight Runaway & Homeless Youth Services, a Catholic Charities agency, offers street and community outreach, case management services, food, counseling and shelter services. Angel’s Flight is an ORR funded organization and has sixteen (16) emergency

beds available. If staff suspects that a child has been trafficked, ORR is contacted and a referral is made to DCFS.

The Los Angeles Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), has a specialized unit that serves undocumented minors, known as the Special Immigrant Status Unit (SIS). Cases of undocumented children are referred to this unit after the referral has been investigated and appraised by DCFS workers. After all efforts of reunification with family members have been exhausted, the minor may request SIJS status. Members of the SIS Unit, have the potential of coming in contact with trafficking victims, or identifying victims while assessing and interviewing minors for SIJS status. The SIS Unit may not have knowledge that the minors may have been trafficked prior to beginning the SIJS process.

Los Angeles based youth shelters and drop-in centers were also contacted to learn if they offered specific services to this population. All youth shelters shared that all youth regardless of immigration status would be eligible to receive emergency housing services, food, clothing, counseling, and case management. Over 80 beds are available in the LA City area for runaway youth. The majority of shelters and drop-in centers accept minors between the ages of 10-17 years of age. Drop-In centers assist youth between the ages of 12-24 years of age.

Furthermore, most programs shared that staff did not have specific training on how to identify victims of human trafficking or the services available to this victim population. Interestingly, some staff shared that they had recently learned of the term “Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children” or CSEC. One senior staff member had shared that several years ago she recalled working with a couple of Central American female minors that had been brought to the US by relatives to work as sex workers. However, the staff member did not identify them as trafficking victims. She shared that at the time, she was not aware of human trafficking issues. She recalled contacting the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and filing a child abuse report. A DCFS worker responded to the referral and picked up the two minors and placed them in foster care. The staff member had no further contact with the minors or the DCFS worker. The lack of training in human trafficking issues was identified as a major concern and a major reason by these programs as to why they have no recorded cases of human trafficking involving both domestic youth and foreign youth in their files.

CASE STUDY

In the Fall of 2006 a sex trafficking ring was discovered that involved young girls that were smuggled into the US from Guatemala. The case formally known as *US vs Vasquez-Valenzuela, et al*, also known as the Guatemalan Case, involved 9 defendants and 10 victims that included 4 minors. The case highlights the collaboration among NGOs, DCFS, and law enforcement. It also illustrates the coordination of emergency services. All agencies that were involved in the case are active members of the Los Angeles Metro Taskforce on Human Trafficking. However, the case also illustrates some of the challenges in identifying victims, in minimizing the trauma of victims when taking part in the judicial system, and the delivery of long term comprehensive services.

As mentioned above, the Guatemalan case involved 9 defendants, in which 5 were convicted after a 6 week trial. The five included 3 sisters, a female cousin, and the cousin's boyfriend. The main ring leader, named Gladys, was feared the most by all of the victims that were interviewed by law enforcement and service providers. All victims were subjected to severe physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse. Victims recalled instances where they were forced to watch while other victims received beatings or were raped by the traffickers. The beatings and rapes were meant to send strong messages to always obey the traffickers. In addition, there were threats of harming the victims' families back home, manipulation of spiritual beliefs, and debts to coerce them to engage in sexual acts. All victims were forced to see 25-30 clients per day and charge customers \$6-\$15 for 15 minutes of sex. Traffickers also threatened victims with deportation. All victims were locked inside homes where they resided with the traffickers and the traffickers' families. At times, the sex acts took place inside their own bedrooms. However, there were many times when victims were driven to areas in Los Angeles, dropped off and left to lure in customers. The sex acts would take place in a park, alley or a special hotel room that was reserved by the traffickers. The victims also came in contact with other community members and medical offices while in their trafficking situation. The youngest victim, aged 13 at the time, was driven in a van by the traffickers or by hired drivers so attention would not be drawn to the young victim. Customers were invited into the van to participate in sex acts.

The victims and the victims' families were duped into coming to the United States by promises of legitimate employment opportunities. The families were informed that their daughters would be working as nannies or in a bakery. However, once brought to the US, the victims were forced into prostitution. There is no indication that the families of the minors were aware that they were negotiating with traffickers. Families were under the impression that the individuals that approached them were smugglers that had potential employment contacts in the US.

The case was discovered after one of the drivers, hired by the traffickers to drive the victims to customers, tipped a *La Opinion* newswriter. Interestingly, the driver had attempted to notify local police, but police refused to take the tip seriously. The newswriter approached a local NGO, and the NGO notified federal law enforcement. The tip was followed up by federal law enforcement in October 2006 and search warrants were finally issued in December of 2006. After a lengthy investigation, during which FBI and ICE Agents traveled to Guatemala to interview victims' family members, the trial began in January 2009. Finally in August the 5 defendants were sentenced to 30-40 years.

Unfortunately, the victims appeared to have had many opportunities to notify someone during their interactions in the community. But most importantly, if community members had taken the time to ask appropriate questions, the victims may have been identified. Victims shared that they were taken to clinics for certain medical issues. At other times they were taken to traditional folk healers to treat other medical concerns. Some victims reported being taken to reputable hotels where on numerous occasions hotel staff may have taken notice of the situation. Victims also recount instances where

police officers were in the vicinity when they were interacting in the community. Lastly, the victims were also trafficked in a highly visible sex workers' area of Los Angeles where there was heavy police presence.

The case ended with a successful prosecution and the victims were granted immigration status to live in the US. However, there were many challenges during the investigation and the trial phases for all parties involved, especially for the victims. Balancing the conflicting needs of law enforcement and service provision became a challenge. As mentioned earlier, minors are not required to cooperate with the investigation for immigration relief. However, in this case, victims did cooperate with law enforcement. While the US Attorney's Office and law enforcement agencies attempted to build the strongest case possible, the victims experienced unintended consequences including negative effects on their mental well-being and sense of safety.

There was an instance when a victim's age could not be established. Prosecutors and investigators were having difficulty with attaining the victim's true age. It was crucial that prosecutors could prove that the traffickers were aware of the victim's minor status. Prosecutors and investigators requested to speak with the victim's family to verify her age. Furthermore, they requested that the victim's family be flown to the US for testimony purposes. The victim was adamant that her family not learn of her trafficking experience. However, prosecutors and investigators insisted that the family be contacted and interviewed. Service providers also advocated that the family not be contacted. The victim had already demonstrated mental and physical symptoms due to her trafficking experience. The disclosure to family would exacerbate her symptoms. Unfortunately, the victim was forced to disclose to her family about her experience prior to investigators arriving in her home country. The notification resulted in the victim's rejection by her family (who blamed her for participation in commercial sex) and exacerbated her existing mental health problems.

Victims also feared for their families' safety in the event that investigators contacted and interviewed them back home. The traffickers knew where the families resided. Once again, advocates stated their concerns to law enforcement. However, prosecutors and law enforcement proceeded with the interviews.

Other challenges involved foster care placement and the victims acclimating to their new living environment. DCFS was initially contacted when the minors were liberated. Three minors were placed in long-term foster care. One of the minors had a difficult time adjusting to her placements. She had to be moved from three different placements.

As noted above, the minors identified in the above case were granted immigration relief. Two of the victims continue to be in the care of the DCFS foster care system. However, they continue to struggle to integrate into society and continue to feel the effects of their trafficking experience.

CONCLUSION

Several months ago, our working group set out to examine and research sex trafficking cases involving foreign national youth in the Los Angeles County Area. The group found that victims are eligible for a number of services, including housing, legal, immigration, counseling, and case management services. There are a number of organizations and agencies available to assist and connect victims to appropriate services. However, the challenge was learning how extensive the problem is not only in the LA area but also the rest of the country. This specific population is hugely under identified. Under identification is due to a number of reasons, e.g. lack of training of service providers and local law enforcement. Due to the nature of the phenomenon, these victims will elude any type of detection from law enforcement or government agencies due to fear of deportation. Furthermore, it is important to note that these victims are particularly vulnerable because they may not know that a crime has been committed against them. Specific assessment tools need to be developed by service providers to assist them in identifying potential victims.

In the limited studies that are available regarding this population, it is shown that victims suffer from a number of mental and physical health issues. Once in the care of service providers, culturally and linguistically competent services need to be made available for these victims. Long term care is also a major need, considering the long lasting effects of the trauma and the need for assistance in integrating into a new society.

WORKS CITED

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DRAFT

ICAN TASK FORCE ON THE
COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN
(CSEC)
VICTIM SERVICES

REPORT FROM THE TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION CRIMES WORKGROUP

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Appendices

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Identified Resources

Building Capacity in Assisting Victims of Child Abuse Images and Other Technology Facilitated Sexual Exploitation Crimes in Los Angeles County

I. Mission/Goal

The mission of the Technology Facilitated Sexual Exploitation Working Group is to identify services and issues of importance to minor victims and their families, as well as adults, who were sexually exploited through child abuse sexual exploitation images and other technology facilitated crimes as a child. (The term “child abuse images” will be used broadly to include other technology facilitated crimes as well). In addition, the Working Group seeks to:

1. Identify those gaps in direct services within Los Angeles County (LA) agencies that serve these victims and their families.
2. Identify current best practices among agencies providing direct services in Los Angeles.
3. Promote ways to enhance collaborative efforts within existing direct services programs to develop a coordinated, seamless and effective network of services for minor victims, adults sexually exploited as children and their families.
4. Identify needed additional services, changes in policy, laws and funding in order to promote further direct services to these populations.

II. Working Group Members

The Working Group includes professionals who work with children in the medical field, federal and local victim services programs, the District Attorney’s Office, the City Attorney’s Office, probation offices, child protection services and universities. Moreover, public school district representatives, representatives from child advocacy centers, sexual assault centers, counseling programs, at-risk youth advocates as well as other nonprofit organizations are also members of the Working Group. A full listing of participants is included in the Appendix.

III. Brief Summary and Key Data/Statistics

A. Historically and still in most public venues, the term ‘child pornography,’ ‘kiddy porn’ or ‘child porn’ is used to describe many of the crimes associated with what is termed child abuse images. This label is changing in part to the recognition that the term pornography implies consenting adults- but children cannot consent. The use of the term child pornography “does not properly convey the real harm that is experienced by young victims and the seriousness of the activities of those persons who sexually

exploit children in this way.”¹ In addition, the facilitation of technology using the Internet has led to the development of additional crimes, including ‘sextortion’, sex tourism, and cases involving perpetrators who meet child victims online and then arrange meetings to commit a sexual abuse crime, often called ‘travelers’. The crime of sextortion may occur when a victim (for our purposes, a minor) has naked or other intimate photos kept online or on a cell phone. Adult predators may take advantage through hacking, or having the minor download files that unknowingly allow access to their computer or phone, allowing the perpetrator to access pictures, Facebook accounts, and emails (often for a whole family). These adult predators then ‘extort’ victims, in most cases asking for more photos or other criminal behavior. “If you don’t give me more or if you don’t meet me for sex, then I’m going to post this picture on the Internet or distribute it to my friends and embarrass you and ruin your life.”²

In other reported cases, the perpetrators may include threats to inform the victims’ parents. (While the focus of the Working Group has been on sexual exploitation based on technology facilitated means of communication, the Working Group recognizes additional harm from cyber bullying and other crimes that may be nonsexual in nature but nevertheless harmful where direct services to victims may also be needed.)

B. It has been very difficult to obtain statistics regarding the number of identified child victims of these types of crimes within Los Angeles, as well as demographic information such as age, sex of the child and other related data. However, some national statistics are available. Many children of child sexual abuse images are identified through law enforcement efforts. Reports are often made to a local law enforcement agency or the local Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Innocent Images National Initiative is composed of FBI agents and local police in proactive task forces located around the U.S., including Los Angeles, who work undercover online to investigate those who prey on children.³ U.S. Immigrations, Customs and Enforcement (ICE) and the U.S. Postal Inspectors and other federal investigative agencies may also be involved in these types of investigations. In addition, Los Angeles participates in the Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce

¹ Every Image Every Child, Internet- Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse in Canada. Government of Canada, <http://www.victimfirst.gc.ca/pdf/childp-pjuvenile.pdf>, page 14. Retrieved March 16, 2011.

² The Dangers of Sexting: Sextortion, A Growing Crime, by Dana Brueck, posted November 10, 2010, http://www.nbc15.com/home/headlines/The_Dangers_of_Sexting_Sextortion_a_Growing_Crime_107074968.html, retrieved March 27, 2011.

³ For information on the Innocent Images National Initiative go to www.fbi.gov/innocent.htm

(ICAC) that provides federal funding to train and support local law enforcement efforts against Internet predators.⁴

C. Furthermore, the CyberTipline, operated by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), has a 24 hour hotline number 1-800-843-5678, where anyone can report child abuse and exploitation, including the possession, manufacture, and distribution of child pornography, the online enticement of children for sexual acts and child prostitution as well as child molestation.⁵

D. The latest published data from the Cyber crime tip line⁶ for the week ending January 11, 2011 includes the following national data, which provides a snapshot of the large number of potential cases reported to law enforcement nationally since 1998:

Type of Incident (nationally):

Child Pornography	Weekly: 3,456	Project to date (from March 9, 1998): 906,449
Online Enticement of Children for Sexual Acts	Weekly: 77	Project to Date: 51,781

E. The FBI has a national program called Child Pornography Victim Assistance (CPVA) to identify known images of child sexual abuse images in order to ensure that perpetrators with those images are investigated and prosecuted and to identify the children (or now adults) to provide services for these victims. Through September 2010, CPVA has information on more than 3,100 child victims from around the world depicted in sexually abusive images. Through September 2010, CPVA analysts have reviewed and seized child pornography collections from more than 25,000 investigations across the country through the Child Recognition and Identification System (CRIS). Also, CPVA has reviewed and analyzed more than 41,078,300 pornography images and videos.⁷

⁴ U.S. Dept. Justice, Office Justice Programs-Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at <http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/progsummary.asp?pi=3> provides a summary of ICAC's functions. Retrieved March 28, 2011.

⁵ National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, CyberTipline http://www.ncmec.org/missingkids/servlet/PageServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US&PagelId=2446. Retrieved March 17, 2011.

⁶ National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, CyberTipline report, http://www.ncmec.org/en_US/documents/CyberTiplineFactSheet.pdf. Retrieved March 17, 2011.

⁷ National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Statistics: http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/PageServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US&PagelId=2810#9. Retrieved March 17, 2011

Unfortunately, some of these identified children are located in Los Angeles. When a parent learns that their child has been a victim of a child abuse images or related exploitation crime, that information may be investigated by either local or federal law enforcement. A local child advocacy center may be selected for a forensic interview and follow-up support services, including a medical exam if warranted. Federal law enforcement also has access to federal forensic interviewers who may choose to utilize local child advocacy centers to do their interviews.

There is a growing recognition of the need to provide immediate services to a minor victim and his or her family once a minor victim is identified. However, currently, there is not a single agency prepared to provide the most urgent and meaningful services, which involve counseling for the minor victim, adult survivor or family, instructions on safer computing and establishment of support groups for victims, adult survivors and/or parents.

IV. Challenges and Hurdles-Gaps in Services

The Working Group has identified several challenges that currently inhibit the ability to provide appropriate and effective services to these victims and their families, once identified by law enforcement or other government agency such as DCFS, or self reported by a victim or family member.

A. Victim Identification

The participants of this Working Group found it very difficult to obtain any statistics regarding the number of male and female children in Los Angeles County who are victims of child sexual abuse images and related technology facilitated sexual exploitation. While there is data collected by some agencies regarding crimes involving the actual molest or crimes based on criminal touching of a child, it did not separate out those crimes that included a component of child abuse images or related crimes, or involved only that type of crime. Based on the various government and social service data bases checked, both from local and federal law enforcement sources, it appears that databases are not currently set up to extract this type of information: the Los Angeles County Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS), Los Angeles County Mental Health Department, child advocacy centers and sexual assault centers were queried. Without this type of data, it will be difficult to assess the true need for services for these victims and their families.

B. Minors' Identification of Themselves as Victims

Adolescence is a time of rapid social and physical development. It has been described as a time in which critical developmental processes, including the brain, are

still 'a work in progress.'⁸ At a training event titled, "Compliant Adolescent Victims" presented on December 9, 2011, sponsored by ICAN and this Working Group, FBI Forensic Interviewer Kathryn Connell described the types of developmental tasks and challenges that adolescents face.⁹ These were described as including the following:

- Risk taking
- Curious about many things including their sexual behaviors and beliefs
- Subject to intense self-blame
- Rule testing and breaking
- Separation from parents
- Interest in developing intimate relationships
- Importance of appearance particularly with their peer group
- Accepting criticism or advice reluctantly, and longing for independence and privacy particularly from their parents
- Not understanding or considering all the consequences of words or acts, in part due to their limited life experiences and their still developing brain
- Feeling that they are 'indestructible' and that "it will never happen to me," which is a common belief particularly in regards to not considering the fact that their behavior may make them more susceptible to becoming a victim of a crime.

While these traits have been indicative of adolescent development in the United States for many years, it is only recently that adolescents have had new technologies to factor into the above traits: technology facilitated communication devices such as the Internet, using computers, smart phones, iPads, cell phones and other devices and programs. While the benefits of these forms of technology are well known, these devices also allow minors to connect with possible predators and share information or photographs that are not limited, once placed in the 'virtual world' of the Internet.

While many adolescents are devastated once the crime is discovered, others may not share that feeling of devastation. Unlike many cases of traditional sexual abuse, victims of child abuse images and other technology facilitated sexual exploitation may not identify herself or himself as a 'victim', nor as a 'victim in need of services'. These minors, usually adolescents, have been identified as 'compliant victims'.¹⁰ Compliant

⁸ National Institute of Mental Health Teen Age Brain, A Work In Progress <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/teenage-brain-a-work-in-progress-fact-sheet/index.shtml>. Retrieved March 17, 2011.

⁹ Kathryn Connell describes this issue in various trainings, and PowerPoint distributed December 9, 2010 at an ICAN training on child abuse images victimization in Los Angeles.

¹⁰ Kathryn Connell describes this issue in various trainings, and PowerPoint distributed December 9, 2010 at an ICAN training on child abuse images victimization, in Los Angeles.

victims are identified as children or adolescents who ‘cooperate’ or ‘participate’ in their victimization, (although legally, such minors cannot give consent to the crime involving their sexual activity), including the transmission of sexually explicit pictures or other material. These types of crimes may rely on a predator grooming a victim to be induced to sharing the sexually explicit material and experiences,¹¹ or accessed by a predator through compromised computers in a home or cell.

C. Is This Trauma?

Some adolescents may not define a sexual ‘relationship’ with an adult who has groomed them, often online, as traumatic. “Trauma is more about what happens inside the brain of an individual than outside.”¹² If an event is not defined by an individual as traumatic, is there trauma? Do we need to be careful not to define an experience for an adolescent as traumatic in this kind of a situation? Should there be treatment? If so, what should it look like? Should treatment be available to parents and guardians who may fit assessments for trauma, even if the minor refuses treatment, or may not feel victimized?

Unfortunately, much of society including some helping professionals may perceive compliant victims as less in need of assistance than some other victim categories. “Sympathy for victims is inversely proportional to their age and sexual development.”¹³ In his study dealing with online victimization, David Finkelhor found that only 5% of online cases involved violence, and only 3% involved abduction. Only 4% of offenders concealed their ages from their victims and 80% were truthful and upfront about their sexual intentions.¹⁴

Teens may take risks in online relationships due to normal developmental factors including sexual curiosity and sexual desires, and because of certain factors that may make some children more vulnerable. These may include prior sexual abuse, difficult relationships with parent/s, poor adult supervision, and psychological problems such as depression, substance abuse, self esteem issues, and the lack of an important peer group or associating with deviant peers and other ‘risky’ behavior. Other factors may include loneliness and easy access to the types of technology that can facilitate the involvement with these crimes.

For some compliant victims, they may reject any type of intervention or assistance. They may be hostile to questioning by law enforcement and social services. They may deny or minimize their involvement or that of the adult perpetrator/s, or even

¹¹ Depicted in very real terms in the movie “Trust” to be released April 1, 2011, www.Trustthemovie.com. Retrieved on March 17, 2011.

¹² Kathryn Connell ICAN 12/9/2010 PowerPoint

¹³ Kathryn Connell

¹⁴ David Finkelhor Crimes Against Children Research Center 2009, retrieved March 17, 2011

exaggerate violence done against them to minimize their own shame and perceived complicity.¹⁵ They may even wish only to return to the same relationship/s and behaviors with no parental or law enforcement interference. For some, they truly believe they are in a romantic relationship with hopes to marry or 'be with' the adult perpetrator.

In so many of these cases, the parents did not understand how heavily their child was involved with the Internet. They also were not aware of the increasing number of tools that are available to educate parents about internet/online safety. (Some of these are available in the Cyber Safety for Parents guide accessible online at the City Attorney's Website.)

D. Limits In Services Provided in Child Advocacy Centers and HUBS

The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) is a child-focused, facility-based program in which representatives from many disciplines, including law enforcement, child protection, prosecution, mental health, medical, victim and child advocacy work together to conduct interviews and make team decisions about investigation, treatment, management and prosecution of child abuse cases. Los Angeles County has six CACs located throughout the county to serve minors in sexual abuse cases. Currently, in general, Los Angeles CACs respond to cases of inter and intra-familial child abuse involving pre-school, school age, and adolescent suspected victims.

Under the leadership of DCFS, and in partnership with the Departments of Health Services and Mental Health, a countywide Medical Hub System (HUB) has been developed to create better outcomes for children by providing expert medical examinations and care. There are seven Medical Hubs in Los Angeles that provide initial medical exams, forensic evaluations, and mental health screenings for DCFS that serve children who are newly detained.

At the current time, it does not appear that CAC and HUB are including information in databases specifically to identify these victims and families. There is an emerging need for CAC staff and HUB staff to develop expertise in responding to cases involving youth who are victims of child abuse images and related technology facilitated sexual exploitation crimes (as well as the commercial exploitation of minors through human trafficking.). This may include counseling, support groups, case management, and classes or tutoring in internet safety.

In informal surveys and observations by staff at CAC and HUB, employees have indicated that often they (the interviewer) are not provided all the initial facts known to a law enforcement officer or DCFS worker, that would lead to more extensive questioning about exploitation such as child abuse images taken, or exchanged with one or more adult perpetrators, or solicit information on online based predators who travel or encourage a minor to travel for illicit sexual purposes, and other related crimes.

¹⁵ Kathryn Connell 12/9/2010 PowerPoint

Members of both CAC as well as HUB identified this as a major obstacle to identifying these minors and providing services.

While some CACs may include basic information on internet safety for parents and victims, it is not a major component of services and safety information at this time.

Both CAC and HUB personnel have shared the need for more training on issues related to this victimization to assist in meeting victim need in forensic interviewing, case management, counseling, and providing tools and strategies to families regarding the safer use of technologies such as the internet after a crime is discovered. The Working Group has identified these agencies as one of the cornerstones to developing capacity within Los Angeles County to assist these child victims and their families.

E. Limits To Services In Sexual Assault Centers

Los Angeles County sexual assault centers are also geographically situated to provide services to victims from the ages of 12 through adulthood. They provide a variety of services to victims of sexual violence and stalking. Working Group representatives at some of these centers have been informed that these victims have not been a focus of their agencies. However, the Working Group members representing these agencies suggested that with requested additional training, that sexual assault centers would be an appropriate and critical direct service agency for these victims. The Working Group has identified sexual assault centers as one of the cornerstones to developing capacity within Los Angeles County to assist victims (ages 12 through adult) and their families. These centers may be extremely important as they offer free counseling (up to 10 sessions), and support groups, that can begin within a short time after a victim is identified. Counseling opportunities may not be dependent on crime victim compensation eligibility or the long wait it may need for its determination. These centers currently do not focus on training victims (including parents) internet and other safety program tools to a great extent, but have indicated an interest in doing so, once trained.

F. California Crime Victim Compensation Program (CalVCP) Limitations And Lack Of Guidance In Policies

Parents of some victims of these crimes have reported difficulty in applying or being found eligible for the CalVCP and have found it difficult to find available free counseling for themselves and/or their children. While under CalVCP guidelines, child enticement crimes (PC 311.4c) are eligible,¹⁶ these types of crimes may be federally investigated (with no direct corresponding California criminal code), or include criminal aspects that are not included in the California penal code that allows for compensation. In fact, for victims of child sexual exploitation involving child abuse images, the Working

¹⁶ California Victims of Crime Program Desk Manual, "Emotional Injury"
<http://www.vcgcb.ca.gov/docs/references/DeskManualForVictimAdvocates.pdf>. Retrieved March 17, 2011.

Group members were advised by a manager for the LA County Victim Witness Assistance Program that in cases of child enticement including child sexual abuse images, that parents should be advised that if a child is not 'sexually touched', that such cases will be decided on a case by case basis. This eligibility process may take several months and even then, result in not being eligible. Many parents may not wish to consider beginning counseling until the costs are resolved. The Working Group has identified finding viable trained therapists who provides counseling that is immediately accessible to families, incorporates victim safety issues, and does not require 'out of pocket' costs to a victim in a critical need.

For example, under 'traveler' cases, in which an adult perpetrator or child over age 14 (victim) traveled to have sex, a family was told they would not be eligible for CalVCP. In other cases, the parents were told they would not be eligible, although their child would be, since the crime was determined to be 'statutory rape' with a victim over the age of 14. It is difficult to make a referral to a family based on a 'may be eligible assurance' particularly when there can be long delays in the approval process for such claims.

G. Limits on expertise of child abuse treatment providers, including therapists

A very large issue explored by this Working Group is the lack of training for counselors working in the field of sexual exploitation for minors, adult survivors and their parents. As noted earlier, some adolescent victims (and others) may be considered "compliant victims" with few if any of the required behaviors that would indicate a diagnosis indicating trauma. Many agencies may be required to use evidence based Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)¹⁷ as part of their funding. If a child does not exhibit 'traumatic' behavior, is this the most appropriate therapy model to be using? What, if any, treatment model should be followed? How do the issues of victim safety, especially involving internet use interplay with counseling needs? What of children or adult survivors who may not recognize the need for treatment until years later (or when they are later identified as adults) and then find that they are not eligible for victim compensation and do not have access to trained therapists? "Little is known about the full and long term impact of being used in pornography upon children and their families, their coping strategies and the support they do or do not receive."¹⁸

Under funding provided through the California Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63), the Los Angeles County Mental Health Department and its contractors

¹⁷ The California Evidence Based Clearinghouse, <http://www.cebc4cw.org/search/topical-area/7>. Retrieved March 21, 2011.

¹⁸ Every Image Every Child, Internet- Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse in Canada. Government of Canada, <http://www.victimfirst.gc.ca/pdf/childp-pjuvenile.pdf>, page 34, citing M.H.Silbert, Effects on Juveniles of Being Used for Pornography and Prostitution, in D. Zilman and J. Bryant (eds) Pornography: Research, Advances and Policy Considerations, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1989. Retrieved March 16, 2011.

ensure that prevention and treatment are evidence based, and, in cases of child victimization, prevention and treatment are based on cognitive therapeutic techniques. This raises potential issues in the area of research, providing therapy and providing training on counseling best practices for this population. When a minor agrees to see a counselor but exhibits none of the standard assessment behaviors for trauma, some of the staff on this Working Group shared concerns that funding requirements for many programs require using a trauma based treatment plan. This may not be appropriate for some of the minors who have been victimized in these types of crimes. More research is needed on this important issue.

Members of the Working Group, who work as therapists, have identified a very large need for better evidence based training on this victim population. They have also stated that in cases where a child has been identified as being both a molest victim and had child abuse images taken, that the therapist may feel more comfortable 'treating' the molest issues, and not really have the confidence or training to deal with the images issues, even if that crime is identified as resulting in more lasting harm. "Usually when a kid is hurt and the abuser goes to prison, the abuse is over. But because XXX put my pictures on the Internet, the abuse is still going on. I am more upset about the pictures on the Internet than I am about what XXX did to me physically. (Quoted by a 13 year-old sexual abuse victim whose images were put on the Internet.)"¹⁹

There was great agreement among Working Group members for both more research into the needs of victims of internet facilitated sexual exploitation as well as training local therapists on effective practices for victims of all ages and their families. Child sexual abuse images and technology facilitated sexual exploitation crimes are a form of ongoing abuse and exploitation whenever these images are accessed. Individual counseling, parent counseling, support groups, counseling for those adults who had images recently identified while children are all victim groups for whom much more research is needed.

As one example of trying to assist in providing support to parents, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) has initiated a team of specially trained parents through Team Hope Offering Parents Empowerment (who are parents of children victimized by child abuse images and related crimes), a program available to individual parents after one of these crimes is identified, through phone support, an often vital lifeline of support.²⁰

"Among many regions, there is a lack of understanding about the experience of victims who have been sexually exploited on the Internet compared to other forms of child maltreatment; there is a relatively small amount of research and literature about

¹⁹ Every Image Every Child, Internet- Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse in Canada. Government of Canada, <http://www.victimfirst.gc.ca/pdf/childp-pjuvenile.pdf>, page 37. Retrieved March 16, 2011.

²⁰ National Center for Missing And Exploited Children, Project Team Hope http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/ServiceServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US&PageId=1583. Retrieved March 27, 2011.

Internet child exploitation.”²¹ Canada has in some ways been on the forefront in recognizing the need for special programs for these victims and their families. One program involves psychological assessment and treatment which is being developed for children and their families through the Ontario, Canada Provincial Strategy to Protect Children from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation on the Internet.²² In addition, the Ontario Victim Services Secretariat at the Ministry of the Attorney General offers a program to pay for counseling for young victims of sexual exploitation on the Internet who were under 18 when the crime took place, as well as for their family members. Over 385 victims have been assessed as of the writing of the report “Every Image, Every Child.”²³

H. Limits on Programs that Emphasize ‘Safer’ Computing for Families With These Types of Victimitizations, that are Tailored on Intervention Rather than Prevention

In informal surveys taken among the Working Group member organizations, there is little currently being done to provide victim safety tools and programming or counseling in participating in the Internet for minors, adult survivors or a minor’s parents. Yet, this is often a much requested need identified by parents whose child/children have been identified as victims.

In addition, often this crime may require that law enforcement seize a victim’s computer perhaps for a long time. This can become very difficult when it is needed by a victim for school work or for a family that cannot easily replace it. Also, victims describe they may not have expertise or money to ‘clean’ the computer once identified as being hacked or compromised. Many are not even aware of the basic computer websites that can educate the public on safer computing, such as the Federal Trade Commission’s website www.onquardonline.gov.

²¹ Every Image Every Child, Internet- Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse in Canada. Government of Canada, <http://www.victimfirst.gc.ca/pdf/childp-pjuvenile.pdf>, page 35. Retrieved March 16, 2011.

²² Every Image Every Child, Internet- Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse in Canada. Government of Canada, <http://www.victimfirst.gc.ca/pdf/childp-pjuvenile.pdf>, page 35. Retrieved March 16, 2011.

²³ Every Image Every Child, Internet- Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse in Canada. Government of Canada, <http://www.victimfirst.gc.ca/pdf/childp-pjuvenile.pdf>, page 35. Retrieved March 16, 2011.

V. Recommendations

One of the basic tenants in providing victim assistance is to begin ‘where the victim’ is, in regards to identifying and serving their needs, and enabling them to build on their own resiliency and coping mechanisms to deal with these crimes. For many of these minors, access to forensic centers and sexual assault centers with medical exam assistance, and follow up free counseling services and case management by trained, experienced counselors and staff is critical. In addition, direct service providers are encouraged to provide intervention services in safer computing, and the provision of specific tools that parents can use to encourage the safer use of such devices. This may include using donated computers to hold classes or brief sessions with parents and children who have been victimized about safer computing and providing useful tools and suggestions for parents dealing with these issues.

A. Victim Identification for Statistical Purposes in Developing Capacity

There is a great need to begin ‘counting’ this victim population who are accessing our county systems through, for example, DCFS, Child Advocacy Centers, HUBS, sexual assault centers and the Los Angeles Department of Mental Health hotline number, as well as local and federal law enforcement agencies. Databases with fields relevant to these forms of victimization need to be included. Assessments regarding victimization, including SANE and forensic interviews, and access to sexual assault centers need to be inclusive of these crimes. There is a need to create the inclusion of data for this victim population in various government and nonprofit organization databases that can be extracted to determine the incidents of these types of crimes on children in Los Angeles to assist in identifying the need for further capacity of victim services for these populations.

B. Develop Capacity in CAC’s, HUB’s and Sexual Assault Centers

Los Angeles is blessed with a wide network of HUBS, sexual assault centers and CAC’s that are currently already working to provide services to child abuse victims and their families, and victims of sexual assaults which occurred as children. This Working Group encourages enhancing capacity at each of these centers to include effective services for these victims and their families. Forensic interviewers should be provided any and all information they need to do a forensic interview- including information from law enforcement or DCFS workers that indicate there is child abuse images and other technology facilitated sexual exploitation involved. These services should be available to both male and female minors, and their families. Training on such forensic interviewing and related support including medical exams and case management should be coordinated as well.

There is a vast need for internet safety classes and individual counseling to victimized families on internet safety, support groups for parents and teens, services that may loan a computer out if the family or child’s computer has been seized by law enforcement, as well as linking with colleges or businesses that could offer services that would ‘clean’ a computer of viruses and malware, for those victims or families who can’t

afford to have this done. CAC, HUB and sexual assault centers could play a major role in assisting through case management, counseling, support groups, information and classes on internet safety and in identifying and advocating for assisting in other needs identified by the victim and family. In addition, sexual assault centers could have an important role in cases of sextortion and other internet facilitated sex crimes, as well as in providing free counseling and support to those adults, male and female, victimized as children, who are either recently identified or ready to seek help. This may be through individual counseling, support groups, computer cleaning services, computer loan programs, as well as computer safety classes and resources.²⁴ There are several free guides available to parents, children and adult victims that could be made available at these centers.

C. Encourage Opportunities To Train Direct Service Providers On This Aspect Of Victimization As Part Of Trainings Already Received On The More Traditional Forms Of Child Abuse

The lack of training was mentioned as a major obstacle to almost every participant of the Working Group. Efforts to identify effective trainers so that such training can be provided through the Working Group and ICAN are underway, in hopes to ‘train future trainers’ to assist in the development of a seamless web of services for these victims and their families. Victim services, school district personnel, including nurses and counselors, contract agencies who work with children referred by DCFS and Juvenile Probation, medical personnel and public health workers need training that is comprehensive and collaborative.

D. Encourage Training Programs Led By Researchers at Our Universities, Colleges And Knowledgeable Therapists Currently Working in Los Angeles, and in Collaboration with Los Angeles County Mental Health

Los Angeles is fortunate to have two major universities, USC and UCLA, which are very involved with issues of commercial and sexual exploitation of minors, including child sexual abuse images and related crimes. In addition to the UCLA and USC programs, the Working Group includes experienced professors in other colleges, and other researchers and therapists that are committed to identifying ‘best evidence’ practices for training with this victim population and their parents. They are also willing to offer their services as trainers for programs that can be set up for therapists throughout Los Angeles County. The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health may be one of the preferred ways that these training opportunities can be advertised and facilitated. Schools such as the Chicago School of Psychology have interested interns, and nonprofit counseling centers such as La Casa de la Familia are working to train and ensure that victims are provided with the appropriate types of support and counseling, including offering counseling services to victims in their homes.

²⁴ For example, free resources are often available through downloads or ordering on line. The FTC offers a free booklet Net Cetera Chatting With Kids About Being Online available at www.bulkorders, Federal Trade Commission (www.onguardonline.gov)

Los Angeles Department of Mental Health is the logical agency to provide leadership in this issue.

E. Internet Safety Protection

Many promising programs have been developed or are underway to assist in prevention efforts in regards to online victimization including cyberbullying and online predators. The focus of this group is on providing those services for those already victimized by adult sexual predators- more of an intervention than prevention. Some programs that may be beneficial in both have been identified.

The Los Angeles City Attorney's Office has a very comprehensive online guide titled "Cyber Safety For Parents", available at http://atty.lacity.org/stellent/groups/electedofficials/@atty_contributor/documents/contributor_web_content/lacityp_006988.pdf This is a guide that could easily be linked to police and sheriff departments, DCFS, Child Advocacy Centers, Sexual Assault Centers, school district websites and others as a free resource.

Various programs are now doing outreach into the schools and developing annual conferences to train parents and community groups to deal with online safety, child exploitations and cyber crime issues. This includes efforts by members of the Working Group, as well as the ICAN Cyber Crime and Child Exploitation Prevention Subcommittees, efforts by the City Attorney's Office, law enforcement and others.

E. California Crime Victim Compensation Guidance

The Working Group would like to encourage more policy guidance by management in the California Crime Victim Compensation Program to include special materials that more clearly define the types of child abuse images and technology facilitated sexual exploitation that can be included as 'emotional harm' and therefore eligible. Victims should be encouraged to apply and appeal any denials for compensation, so these can be documented.

The Working Group proposes that a request be made to the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board (VCGCB) by the District Attorney's Office so that the Board develops policy guidelines that will aid victim assistance centers and others who assist in filing claims on behalf of a victim, or for those parents filing claims, that make clearer what types of claims are allowed under this type of crime.

This request could include that the VCGCB create an online assistance page and brochure that can be provided to parents/guardians of these types of crimes, describing eligibility factors, types of 'child abuse images and technology facilitated sexual exploitation crimes' that are eligible (perhaps listing examples), type of assistance that can be included, and how to apply. The information should include that this claim, once approved, could also be accessed by the minor when he/she becomes an adult, if not maximized as a child. This would be similar to the website that describes compensation for victims of human trafficking at <http://www.vcgcb.ca.gov/docs/brochures/fs/HumanTrafficking.pdf>.

F. Promoting Resources Available Through ICAN

ICAN has a webpage that may be a very good source for listing resources for parents and professionals looking for resources and guidance in both prevention and intervention efforts regarding these crimes and safer computing. Listings of participating CAC's, HUB programs and sexual assault centers that share a commitment and willingness to include these victims and their families in services offered should be included. Information on internet safety tools and resources should be provided on this website with links to other useful programs nationally or in Los Angeles.

VI. Conclusion

The above recommendations of this Working Group will greatly assist in developing capacity among direct victim services providers throughout Los Angeles, which, in turn, will allow service providers to more effectively and collaboratively assist victims and families. This Working Group looks forward to promoting collaboration, providing training and consulting with others under the leadership of ICAN.

