

Editorial: How is the money to combat human trafficking spent?

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This Issue—Following the Money: Spending on anti-trafficking

This edition of the *Anti-Trafficking Review* explores what happens to the money that is allocated by governments and private donors to stop human trafficking and to assist people who have been trafficked.

It has been an honour to play the role of guest editor, though it has not been easy to steer a route between amazement (at the sums apparently involved), concern (at the lack of real insight into how money is allocated and spent) and cynicism (at what appear to be rather modest achievements).

It was challenging for potential authors to choose a method of analysing anti-trafficking spending. Should they simply describe what money is available and the drawbacks of the ways which donors make it available to organisations to use? Some authors take this descriptive approach. Should articles be about the efficiency and effectiveness of aid flows in general, in which case the shortcomings in anti-trafficking funding may mirror the generic flaws in aid flows? Only one author (Ucnikova) has tackled this. Or, should studies focus on the way the purse strings are controlled by a small number of donors who appear poorly informed about the needs of trafficked persons or the factors that cause them to be trafficked? Several of the articles touch on this (e.g. those of Hoff and Nwogu).

Early on, it became apparent to the editorial team that people working for large organisations with anti-trafficking programmes were wary of contributing articles on this topic. In this sense, although the *Anti-Trafficking Review* aims to promote public debate, we have not yet found the best way of opening up a debate about funding, for practitioners evidently fear that writing about their own sources of funding could result in the tap being turned off! So, it is mainly the Debate section that tackles the question of funding strategies. Even these contributions do not make assessments of the various actors involved (donors and the organisations they fund) in as full and frank a way as is needed.

The articles in this edition represent a start on the topic of anti-trafficking funding, but a great deal remains to be explored.

Data on the Money Allocated to Stop Human Trafficking

Since Issue 2 of the *Anti-Trafficking Review* was published in September 2013, there have been significant developments, intellectual and financial, in the field of anti-trafficking. Along with related issues such as forced labour and modern-day slavery, human trafficking is attracting greater academic interest. As a result, the *Anti-Trafficking Review* was joined in its field early in 2014 by a journal entitled *Slavery Today: A Multidisciplinary Journal of Human Trafficking Solutions*. We welcome this arrival. All of us publishing in this area have a responsibility to ensure that the level of scholarship in our articles is appropriately high and that we contribute to building an evidence base concerning the issues about which we write. This remains a challenge in a field where it is often difficult for practitioners to get a wider perspective about who is doing what and why, and where

some authors offer a personal vision of what needs to be done, but without providing as much evidence as they should.

On the funding front, in September 2013 three private foundations announced the establishment of the new Freedom Fund to support efforts to eradicate what they label as ‘modern slavery’ (including human trafficking), allocating USD 30 million to the Fund themselves and suggesting the Fund should attract (from others) and spend USD 100 million by 2020. One of the organisations backing this fund, Walk Free, reports that, by its reckoning, donor countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are allocating a total of about USD 120 million each year ‘to combat modern slavery internationally’.¹ While it is difficult to be sure that every dollar spent on anti-trafficking is counted, it is important to note that to this total must now be added the considerable and increasing funding being made available to the sector outside of normal government aid channels.

A report by the International Labour Organization, *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour*,² estimated in May 2014 that the illegal profits from exploiting forced labour total USD 150 billion each year, indicating that exploitation is an entrenched characteristic of today’s global economy. A simplistic sum–dividing these profits by the amount invested in stopping human trafficking–might suggest that not enough is being spent. However, USD 120 million in OECD government spending is already a vast amount to spend when relatively little is known about the effectiveness of much anti-trafficking programming. With so much money available, it seems appropriate that this edition of the *Anti-Trafficking Review* looks at what happens to the money.

A critical problem identified by the editors in assembling this journal is the almost complete lack of transparency among governments, international organisations and civil society concerning funding for anti-trafficking. Some simply refuse to make current and complete information available. This makes the task of assessing ‘value for money’ almost impossible.

When potential authors learnt of the theme of this edition, some commented that neither anti-trafficking organisations nor academics had much idea about how much money donors were allocating to support anti-trafficking work. Some were aware that a report by the United States (US) Government Accountability Office in 2006 had estimated that USD 373 million had been budgeted by the US authorities to support anti-trafficking work outside the US in the years 2001–2005,³ but few knew where to obtain up-to-date data.

For this reason, the editor and guest editor took on two unusual tasks. They prepared an article (‘Do We Know Where the Money for Anti-Trafficking is Going?’) for discussion at a workshop in Europe attended by anti-trafficking practitioners. The editor also prepared a ‘Global Funding Information Sheet’ containing details of web sources on budget allocations (by government or private donors) or spending that related fairly directly to anti-trafficking. This was disseminated to potential authors and others in July 2013 and a July 2014 version is available at

http://www.gaatw.org/publications/ATR_funding_factsheet.07.29.2014.pdf

The ‘Global Funding Information Sheet’ is a stand-alone piece of research in its own right. It reports on the sums allocated to combating trafficking at the national level in over

¹ Walk Free Foundation, *Global Slavery Index 2013 — Progress Update* (see ‘OECD Spending Barometer’, retrieved 22 July 2014, <http://www.globalslaveryindex.org/update/#results>). See details of the study in Ucnikova’s article in this issue.

² International Labour Organization, *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour*, retrieved 22 July 2014, http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_243201/lang-en/index.htm?shared_from=shr-tls

³ US Government Accountability Office, *Human Trafficking: Better data, strategy, and reporting needed to enhance US anti-trafficking efforts abroad*, page 9; ‘Report No. GAO-06-825 to the Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary and the Chairman, Committee on International Relations’, House of Representatives, Washington DC, July 2006, retrieved 2 July 2014, www.gao.gov/new.items/d06825.pdf

eighty countries (with some information available from government websites, but mostly only from the US government's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*). It cites sources for the larger amounts provided by both government and private donors for 'international' spending (in the form of grants to international organisations, bilateral aid or grants to organisations operating in one or more countries). It suggests that by 2011, before private donors such as Walk Free and Humanity United began allocating substantial amounts to anti-slavery activities, the annual amount for such 'international' spending topped USD 65 million (including almost USD 15 million by the European Union (EU) and USD 51 million by the US). We hope this information on donor spending will continue to be useful to both researchers and donors.

Thematic Articles Section

Only one author, Ucnikova, reports on funding from a global perspective, presenting information about aid flows from the top twelve aid-donating OECD countries for the decade 2003–2012, though she does not describe changing spending patterns during this period. Reflecting the interests of the organisation where the author works, Walk Free, the article analyses aid flows to the 'anti-slavery' sector without analysis as to how this overlaps with the anti-trafficking sector. She identifies a total of USD 1,238 million spent over ten years, but does not mention how much was contributed by the EU's twenty-eight Member States to the various trafficking-related budgets of the EU, which might take the total over the decade to nearer USD 1,500 million. Not surprisingly, the largest contributions identified by Ucnikova have come consistently from the US, reported as USD 687 million over the decade. More surprisingly, perhaps, the next largest donors are reported to be Norway, estimated at USD 127 million (NORAD figures suggest USD 109 million to the anti-trafficking sector, confirming that government donors are more inclined to account for spending in terms of 'anti-trafficking', than the slavery terminology favoured by this author), and Japan, at USD 112 million. The variations detected among the twelve donors are interesting, though there is little scrutiny of how the aid has been used (notably, the measures conventionally checked by evaluators: 'efficiency', 'effectiveness', 'impact' and 'sustainability'), for the author's view is that the aid allocations for combating 'modern slavery' are inadequate, contrasting the sum of USD 1,238 million with total recorded aid flows of USD 916,407 million during the same decade.

Two articles scrutinise expenditure at a national level. The first, by Sharapov, compares expenditure in two European countries, Ukraine and the United Kingdom (UK), demonstrating how different the expenditure of the two has been and attributing this to the quite different interpretations by the respective governments of what human trafficking involves and what actions are appropriate to stop it. These interpretations are heavily influenced by the countries' different geographic positions: one (Ukraine) a country from which people have been trafficked (and to which badly abused people have returned home in need of further assistance); the other (the UK), a country of destination where the authorities regard human trafficking as an 'immigration crime'.

The second country-specific article, by Nwogu, focuses on Nigeria, one of the first countries in Africa to organise an official response to its citizens being trafficked and one of the few with a specialist anti-trafficking law enforcement agency (NAPTIP). The author describes the difficulties she encountered in obtaining data about anti-trafficking allocations and expenditure (with numerous requests left unanswered) and the fact that NAPTIP is still regarded by anti-trafficking specialists outside Nigeria as under-funded, even though other government agencies in Nigeria consider NAPTIP to be far better off than themselves.

The three remaining articles all focus on the predicaments of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) engaged in anti-trafficking work and, in one case, in supporting the rights of sex workers. Surtees and De Kerchove review the experience of a group of NGOs in the Balkans that a private donor, the King Baudouin Foundation (KBF, based in Belgium), financed for almost a decade. KBF's money went toward a programme to re-integrate trafficked persons, part-financed in recent years by Germany's Development Cooperation Agency (GIZ). The difficulties experienced by this network of fifteen NGOs with considerable expertise in establishing sustainable funding may lead readers to conclude that they are being punished rather than rewarded for their expertise. The article notes that the situation in 2013 was much the same as in 2006, when the King Baudouin Foundation commissioned an evaluation of anti-trafficking efforts in the Balkans and concluded that, in spite of donors spending millions of euros to combat human trafficking, only limited funds were available to support trafficked persons while they rebuilt their lives.

Hoff reviews the funding challenges experienced by member organisations of La Strada International (LSI). The situation she describes sounds like a game of snakes and ladders, with all manner of restrictions on what can be funded and some major hurdles to jump, such as the US government's anti-prostitution pledge (requiring organisations based outside the US that seek US funding to agree an organisation-wide policy opposing prostitution). The EU's various budgets are reported to be the main source of income for most LSI member organisations, but the EU takes a long time to decide on competitive tenders, so its grants are not helpful when there is a need to react fast to new developments. Hoff worries that a large proportion of donors' resources are channelled via international organisations (where a portion is consumed by administrative costs) and that not enough reaches trafficked persons or local communities. She refers to ways in which specialist anti-trafficking NGOs have been pushed aside, sometimes by government policies (denying NGOs foreign funding) and sometimes when inter-governmental organisations compete with NGOs to provide similar services.

Finally, Clancey, Khushrushahi and Ham describe the experience of a Canadian organisation supporting the rights of sex workers and their difficulties in accessing funds allocated for 'anti-trafficking' in Canada. The authors examine the side-effects of the assumptions and prejudices of anti-trafficking donors, pointing out that several Canadian donors, both private and statutory, make an unwarranted assumption that most women engaged in transactional sex in Canada have been trafficked and frame their calls for applications accordingly. The authors are concerned about the consequences for immigrant sex workers, whom they describe as 'anti-trafficked'. Noting that the Canadian federal government currently makes CAD 6 million (USD 5,520,000)⁴ available to implement its anti-trafficking plan, the authors reflect on the dilemmas faced by the NGO: should it even apply for funding when the applications are framed in anti-prostitution discourse, and should it dedicate any resources (mainly the time of its volunteers) to challenging the conflation of trafficking with prostitution, instead of concentrating on providing services to the women they support?

The article criticises two specific donors, so the editors wondered whether these should be invited to respond before the article was published. However, as several of the articles report on perceived donors' weaknesses, we concluded that they, along with others mentioned in the *Anti-Trafficking Review* articles, could respond in a future edition, should they wish to do so.

⁴ Converted using a rate of CAD 1 = USD 0.92 on 8 August 2014.

The Debate Section: What would be the best way to use ten million dollars?

The five contributions to the Debate section offer personal views on what strategies should be adopted by donors supporting anti-trafficking initiatives. The contributors were invited to summarise how they thought USD 10 million could best be used. Most of the authors can be seen to be advertising their wares. This was not unexpected, for they were asked to present their personal view on how money should be spent. Indeed, it was desirable, for, in the anti-trafficking field, where strategies seem to be determined more by ideology than by evidence of impact, it is still vital to consider innovative and different ways of investing money in stopping trafficking and the related exploitation. The approaches taken by the five are markedly different, although most mention the importance of donors taking into account both evidence of trafficking and evidence about a project's impact.

Representing a donor already involved in supporting the new Freedom Fund (Humanity United, established in 2005), Newcomb comments on past flaws among donors: their lack of coordination; their aversion to risk (and consequently to financing new and untested methods); and the large amounts spent on public information activities (so-called 'awareness raising'). He calls for more transparency (including 'candour about the failures as well as about the success') and more innovation, requiring donors to sometimes increase the risks they are willing to take to ensure better results.

Friedman emphasises the significance of innovation, but also stresses the importance of achieving results—actual reductions in the number of people trafficked. He uses the example of a single country, Bangladesh, to suggest how donors' money could be used to reach clear conclusions on where future investments should be scaled up. Tournecuillert calls on donors and anti-trafficking organisations to analyse the benefits that traffickers offer to their victims, so that anti-trafficking organisations match these advantages—what he calls 'working in parallel' to traffickers. He urges donors to be more flexible and to enable funded organisations to respond rapidly to new trafficking patterns. He comments that closer relationships between donors and the organisations they support would result in greater trust and help bring this about.

Ellinger and Sharma also argue for closer and longer-term relationships between donors and the organisations they fund, along with greater clarity about each project's expected results. They want more benefits to accrue directly to trafficked persons and other migrants (implying that less should go to the various actors in the anti-trafficking industry and the criminal justice system). Finally, Varia argues her case specifically with respect to migrant domestic workers, concluding that too much emphasis has been given over the past decade to funding criminal justice responses, at the expense of prevention, protection, compensation and rehabilitation. She argues that extra money should be channelled specifically to benefit victims of abuse and potential victims (i.e. on compensation and prevention). She suggests priority be given to upholding basic labour rights in sectors of employment where these are neglected and would allocate funds specifically to workers' rights groups 'to keep relentless pressure on governments' to enact required changes.

Concluding Remarks

Readers will detect some common messages from our authors: large amounts of money are available, but the proportion available to pay for assistance is far too small. None of the authors specialise in criminal justice responses, so, not surprisingly, they comment that

the proportion of anti-trafficking funds allocated to developing criminal justice systems is too great. But only one article (Nwogu) comes close to reviewing these proportions in any detail.

In general, donors are criticised as too bureaucratic and inflexible, and for not insisting that better evidence is made available about the results of activities that have been funded. However, none of our authors tackle the thorny question of how donors should reach agreement on what is 'effective' and on the lack of consensus on this at international level.

In view of the theme for this edition, it is surprising that no authors chose to focus on how money intended to stop human trafficking has been used inappropriately (for some certainly has). For example, a court case in the US state of Missouri in 2012 criticised two NGOs for failing to use donations for the intended purpose (stopping child trafficking). In May 2014 the magazine *Newsweek* carried a headline, 'Sex, Slavery and a Slippery Truth' (*Newsweek*, 21 May 2014), suggesting that the founder of a Cambodian anti-trafficking NGO had told lies about her own past to secure international support and funding for her organisation.⁵ On a rather larger scale, we received no articles about the ways in which United Nations (UN) organisations used a donation of USD 15 million from the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (in the United Arab Emirates), known as the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT), that was intended to provide key support for international efforts to stop human trafficking. Talking to those involved and reading between the lines of an evaluation of the UN.GIFT, one gets the impression of a huge missed opportunity, with money used neither efficiently nor effectively.⁶ The view expressed by Newcomb in the Debate section suggests that anti-trafficking organisations need to find ways of expressing collective disapproval of 'bad practice', so that criticism is not perceived to be simply ideological or personal.

Both the 'Global Funding Information Sheet' and the article by Ucnikova confirm that substantial amounts continue to be allocated by some governments to stopping human trafficking. However, virtually no analysis has been carried out about which second-tier organisations are the main beneficiaries or how many tiers there are in the sub-contracting hierarchy before money is put to use (and what proportion of the money is consumed by the administrative charges of the various organisations involved), though the information published by the US Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons concerning the USD 19.3 million allocated in grants for the US fiscal year 2013 shows that 44% went to international organisations, where staff costs are high.

Anti-trafficking practitioners probably have little interest in doing this sort of analysis, so we will have to hope that academics or donors will take up the challenge. Still at the macro level, none of our articles analyse the purposes for which anti-trafficking money has been used; for example, what proportions are intended for different purposes, such as law enforcement, prevention or protection/assistance. Consequently, we are still unable to answer some basic questions about the strategic use of donors' money: has there been an overall reorientation over the past five years from focusing on the sex industry to other sectors where trafficking and forced labour occur? Is less money (or more) being allocated in 2014 to pay for assistance to trafficked persons than in previous years and what are the reasons for any changes?

⁵ The NGO concerned raised and spent more than USD 3 million a year in 2010 and 2011. See: <http://www.somaly.org/financials> (retrieved 8 August 2014).

⁶ The official evaluation (*In-depth evaluation of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking*) was accessed on 30 June 2014 at http://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/Indepth_evaluation_of_the_United_Nations_Global_Initiative_to_Fight_Human_Trafficking_2011.pdf

Finally, for advocates of human rights, it remains clear that aid flows to stop human trafficking continue to be decided with next-to-no consultation with the main people concerned—those who are trafficked. Immense challenges lie ahead when donor decisions still do not appear to be anchored in human rights considerations or even in meaningful evidence about results.

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