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ASSESSING THE CURRENT STATE OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY
INFLUENCE ON ANTI-CHILD TRAFFICKING EFFORTS IN THE NORTH WEST
REGION OF CAMEROON, AFRICA

by

Emily Nicole Anna Lewis

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master of Arts degree
in International Studies
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Rex Honey

Graduate College
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Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Emily Nicole Anna Lewis

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the Master of Arts degree in International Studies at the May 2010 graduation.

Thesis Committee: _____

Thesis Supervisor: Rex Honey

Greg Hamot

Jeremy Brigham

To my mom

Slavery is theft – theft of a life, theft of work, theft of any property or produce, theft even of the children a slave might have borne.

Dr. Kevin Bales

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The following are names, organizations, and funding sources which supported my research and aided my ever-curious mind include: GLOWA staff (Jamils Achunji, Director of Programs; Mado, volunteer; Valerie, volunteer, and Ferdinand, employee); Joshua Nkwei with CHRAPA (Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy); Iris, Winnie, and Electa Mimba for housing and feeding me, and for keeping me safe; Youth Outreach Programme; the Chapman University film crew from Orange County, CA; Barrister Hilda W. Ndumu; Heather Watson-Ayala, Second Secretary, U.S. Embassy (Yaoundé); Integrated Development Foundation; Mboscuda (Mbororo Social Cultural and Development Association); Archdiocese of Bamenda; Mr. Jean Baptiste Kamdem Kouagang at the ILO sub regional Office for Africa; Ministry of Social Affairs (The NW Regional Delegation Mezam Divisional Delegation Bamenda); the widows and children at Mendankwe Orphanage; and finally, to the dozens of children who let me into their lives in order to understand more about the current situation of human trafficking and exploitation in Cameroon. These children have and will continue to act as my strength as I maintain dedicating my academic career to human rights.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CATW	Coalition against Trafficking in Women
CHRAPA	Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
GLOWA	Global Welfare Association
GPAT	Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings
IDF	Integrated Development Foundation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MBOSCUDA	Mbororo Social Cultural and Development Association
MINLESI	Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NHTRC	National Human Trafficking Resource Center
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

INTRODUCTION

This M.A. project focuses on the power of influence government and community involvement have on anti-child trafficking efforts in the North West Region of Cameroon. Government and community involvement both progresses and combats child trafficking in Cameroon. Significant components of this project include a discussion on the significance of NGO collaboration, individual case analyses highlighting trafficked victims, human rights advocacy work with GLOWA (Global Welfare Association), and a section dedicated to providing recommendations for the Cameroonian government and citizens. Figure 1 illustrates the country Cameroon where I conducted my research in Bamenda and Yaoundé.

Figure 1. Map of Cameroon



All ten regions in Cameroon including the North West Region where Bamenda is located are shown.¹

Human trafficking affects every country in the world regardless of a country's history, laws, economic status, anti-trafficking efforts, or religious beliefs. Trafficking in persons has largely resulted from mass globalization during the 20th century. Human trafficking is a violation of the most fundamental human rights and must be addressed in a critical way. Because the global community has not agreed upon a definition of human trafficking, the United Nations' definition will be applied to situations of trafficking throughout this project. The United Nations defines human trafficking as:

“The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation”.²

Human trafficking, also known as modern day slavery, is considered to be the second largest criminal industry in the world, and the largest growing criminal industry.³

Unfortunately there is no agreed upon estimation of the number of trafficked victims each year due to the devious nature of the industry. Nevertheless the U.S. Department of Justice estimates between 800,000 and 900,000 new victims are trafficked across international borders every year.⁴ This estimate includes men, women, and children

¹ Cameroon. Accessed April 19, 2010. <http://paganel.eu/cameroon/index.html>.

² Gender and Human Trafficking. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Accessed March, 2009. <http://www.unescap.org/esid/Gad/Issues/Trafficking/index.asp>.

³ About Human Trafficking. Administration for Children and Families. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed December 4, 2009. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/about/index.html>.

⁴ Trafficking and Sex Tourism. *Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS)*. U.S. Department of Justice. Accessed November 6, 2009. <http://www.justice.gov/criminal/ceos/trafficking.html>.

although women and children are trafficked to a higher degree. Contrastingly, the United Nations Population Fund cites an estimation of between 700,000 and 2 million women alone trafficked per year.⁵ Neither of the two estimations account for the number of men, women, and children trafficked within a country's borders. Even so, UNFPA estimates up to 4 million persons are globally trafficked each year.⁶ One more recent attempt at adequate data collection is the creation of a global database on trafficking trends established by the Global Programme Against Trafficking in Human Beings (GPAT) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The objective of the database is to systematically assemble "open-source information" that can be compared between different regions in the world.⁷

For the sole goal of profit, traffickers exploit victims through the repetition of buying and selling for the deplorable benefit of businesses, organizations, and individuals. In order for complete submission traffickers often viciously beat, rape, and mentally abuse their victims.⁸ As well, traffickers use a variety of techniques to infuse terror and ensure enslavement. Although some traffickers confine their victims to small quarters, many traffickers use less obvious techniques such as debt bondage (placing financial obligations on the victim and their family), the confiscation of passports, and

⁵ Gender Equality: Trafficking in Human Misery. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Accessed November 6, 2009. <http://www.unfpa.org/gender/violence1.htm>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey. Edited by Frank Laczko and Elzbieta Gozdzia. IOM (International Organization for Migration). Offprint of the Special Issue of International Migration Vol. 43 (1/2), 2005, Pg. 13.

⁸ What is Human Trafficking? Polaris Project Action Center. Accessed March, 2009. <http://www.humantrafficking.org/>.

isolation from the public.⁹ Traffickers gain total control of their victims by forcing them into labor practices, commercial sex industries, and other atrocious services. Women are often sold as sex slaves and/or forced into domestic servitude, while children are coerced into a wider variety of services.

As mentioned, human trafficking is the second largest criminal industry in the world; the reason being, unlike drugs which can only be sold once, human beings can be sold repeatedly generating enormous revenue for traffickers. “The Economics of Child Trafficking (Part II)” by authors Dessy, Mbiokop, and Pallage illustrates the chief economic interests of child trafficking. The authors provide six essential economic characteristics. First, “each market is an international market with an international price.”¹⁰ Governments and individuals within international bodies are economically driven. Second, the authors suggest that child trafficking aligns with the laws of supply and demand. Increasing the price of children attracts new traffickers to the market. However decreasing the cost of children welcomes a wider purchasing audience.¹¹

Third, traffickers prey on vulnerable individuals.¹² Within the trafficking industry, women and children are considered to be most vulnerable; therefore trafficking scams are often targeted toward women and children. Fourth, some governments may implement protective measures including educational programs which require a cost;

⁹ About Human Trafficking. Administration for Children and Families. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed December 4, 2009. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/about/index.html>.

¹⁰ Dessy, Sylvain E. Flaubert Mbiokop and Stéphane Pallage. The Economics of Child Trafficking (Part II). CIRPÉE (Centre Interuniversitaire sur le Risque, Les Politiques Économiques et L’emploi). Cahier de Recherche/Working Paper. April 2005. Pg. 3. <http://132.203.59.36/CIRPEE/cahierscirpee/2005/files/CIRPEE05-09.pdf>.

¹¹ Ibid., 3.

¹² Ibid., 3.

similar costs for protecting children are considered to be an increasing function of the number of child traffickers.¹³ Correspondingly fifth, the article characterizes the success of traffickers as a function of decreasing public and private investments in protection efforts for children. Lastly, child traffickers organize themselves in trafficking rings and follow the standard that competition is counterproductive for business.¹⁴ Traffickers often work together to ensure security and increase business.

Acknowledging these six economic characteristics can help governments to understand how traffickers benefit from child trafficking and what strategies traffickers use to target possible victims. I suggest that further research on how governments can combat human traffickers economically will dramatically aid preventative tactics. The more international knowledge of the trafficking industry exists, the more likely trafficking will be targeted by governments and organizations.

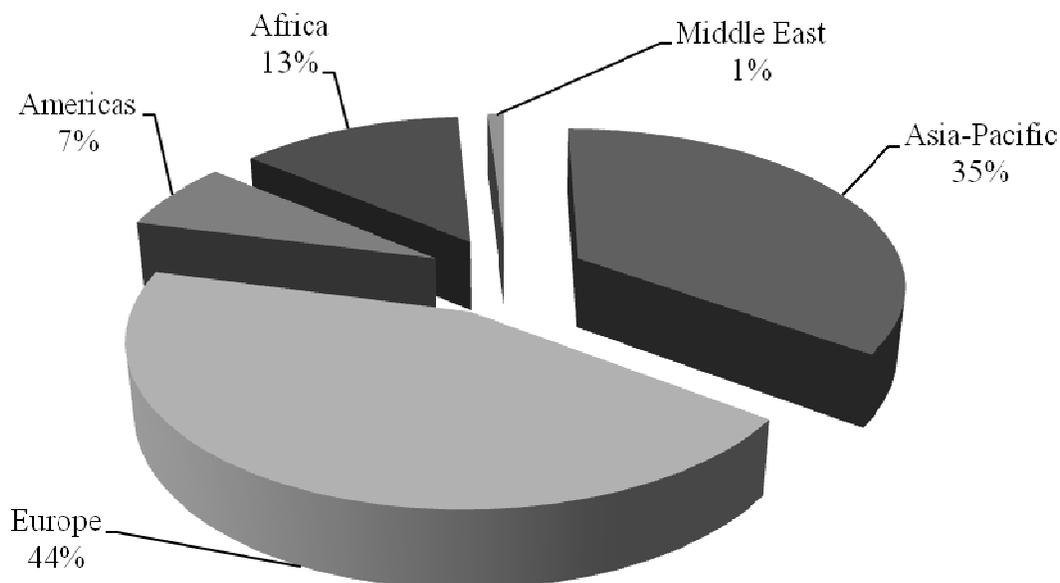
Despite an increasing global interest in human trafficking, studies and research regarding the topic remain inadequate. Even so the United States has improved research initiatives over the past 10 years. Beneficial initiatives include the United States' annual "Trafficking in Persons Report" placing countries on different tiers according to the prevalence of trafficking and efforts made to combat trafficking. Figure 2 illustrates the

¹³ Dessy, Sylvain E. Flaubert Mbiekop and Stéphane Pallage. The Economics of Child Trafficking (Part II). CIRPÉE (Centre Interuniversitaire sur le Risque, Les Politiques Économiques et L'emploi). Cahier de Recherche/Working Paper. April 2005. Pg. 3.
<http://132.203.59.36/CIRPEE/cahierscirpee/2005/files/CIRPEE05-09.pdf>.

¹⁴ Ibid., 3.

regional distribution of studies on trafficking according to the International Organization for Migration.¹⁵

Figure 2. Human Trafficking Bibliography



Note: N=260 titles

The geographical regions which have demonstrated action-oriented approaches and exerted energy and interest in studying human trafficking constitute the significance of Figure 1.¹⁶ It must be noted that the countries which have produced the highest percentages of trafficking studies are not necessarily the countries in which human

¹⁵ Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey. Edited by Frank Laczko and Elzbieta Gozdzia. IOM (International Organization for Migration). Offprint of the Special Issue of International Migration Vol. 43 (1/2), 2005, Pg. 10.

¹⁶ Ibid., 10.

trafficking is most prevalent or least prevalent. Therefore, questions arise as to what motivates a country to research human trafficking and why human trafficking research remains inadequate in many countries. One reason why information on human trafficking is not widely available is because the academic field of human trafficking is fairly new despite the act of trafficking in persons dating back to the nineteenth century.¹⁷ Evaluating human trafficking on a country basis is helpful when attempting to reduce the rate of trafficking while understanding how governments and communities within a culture play a role in efforts combating trafficking.

Because child trafficking both thrives and faces obstruction as a result of certain characteristics, it is necessary to identify the most prominent aspects of child trafficking in Cameroon which both help and hurt anti-trafficking practices. Government influence is one vital component of both the fight against and the progression of child trafficking in Cameroon. In addition to exposing and understanding government influence on anti-trafficking practices in Cameroon, the power of community and its influence on child trafficking practices will be presented. In order to understand how government and community affect the rate of child trafficking in Cameroon, it is first necessary to provide available research.

¹⁷ Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey. Edited by Frank Laczko and Elzbieta Gozdzia. IOM (International Organization for Migration). Offprint of the Special Issue of International Migration Vol. 43 (1/2), 2005, Pg. 5.

CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

An alluring attraction to studying the prevalence of child trafficking in the NWR of Cameroon is the lack of extensive research referencing the criminal industry in this area of the country. As the International Organization for Migration's report titled "Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey" explains, information lacks for reasons including the fact that numerous trafficking cases remain undiscovered, victims may be hesitant and/or fearful of discussing their story, and the deficiency of legal and community support. Of the research that does exist, much is written by non-Cameroonians, NGOs, and government officials. In order to find current and relevant information regarding this topic, journals and internet articles from reputable sources should be primary sources of interest. Although there are notable and prominent books dedicated to addressing global human trafficking, few books discuss the situation of child trafficking victims in Cameroon except for general overviews of the subject and historical struggles leading to the progression of trafficking. Examples include *Children and Youth in the Labour Process in Africa* by Osita Agbu informing readers how the First World War provided a profitable avenue for perpetrators of child trafficking. Food shortages and economic anguish allowed traffickers to take advantage of vulnerable parents unable to provide for their children.¹⁸ The United Nations however is the chief resource for child trafficking and exploitation information for the NWR of Cameroon.

"Child Trafficking in West Africa: Policy Responses" by UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre is a 2002 document providing information about the perceptions of child

¹⁸ Children and Youth in the Labour Process in Africa. Edited by Osita Agbu. Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2009. Dakar, Senegal. Pg. 40.

trafficking in West African countries, varied national policy implementation, and UNICEF programming and policy specifically related to child trafficking in West Africa.¹⁹ This document identifies eight West African Countries plagued by child trafficking and consequently provides a research study on policy trends.²⁰ The chief objectives of three main sections within the report include the importance of focusing on the international normative framework on child trafficking; analyzing current perceptions on the trafficking of children as an issue related to child labor or migration; and finally to provide a thematic review of the national policy responses in West Africa.²¹ This report provides an interdisciplinary understanding of the dimensions of human trafficking in West Africa.

One of the most notable reports produced in Cameroon is “Diagnosis of the Phenomenon of Child Trafficking: the Cases of Kumbo, Wum, Bali (NWR)” provided by the International Labour Organization Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa. I personally received the working document from the ILO office in June of 2009 in order to discuss the significance of the project with ILO officials involved in research and writing portions of the report. One of the central objectives of the ILO Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa is to assist vulnerable families by promoting social justice through the access to decent and appropriate work. This study however focuses on the state of child trafficking and labor exploitation with respect to the aforementioned project

¹⁹ Child Trafficking In West Africa: Policy Responses. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre; UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa. Florence, Italy. 2002.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

zones.²² Despite multiple positive attributes of the study including accessing different areas of the NWR where trafficking is prevalent, the study has certain unconstructive aspects including a study duration of 22 days, and a lack of information regarding the number of surveys used. The evident lack of constructive, relevant, and current research focusing on child trafficking and exploitation in the North West Region of Cameroon has served as motivation in order to identify how community and government influence either the progression or fight against child trafficking.

²² Diagnosis of the Phenomenon of Child Trafficking: The Cases of Kumbo, Wum, Bali (NWR). International Labour Organization Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa. Integrated Development Foundation. 2009.

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGIES

The purpose of my research in Cameroon is to expose and understand community and government influence and involvement with either the fight against child trafficking or the intended or unintended progression of the criminal act. In order to appropriately convey the research objectives it is necessary to acknowledge other aspects of child trafficking prevention, protection, and prosecution tactics which include the state of human rights in Cameroon, the role of human rights NGOs, and contact with trafficking victims. Although relevant research for this project began in August of 2008, a large portion of research including field research was conducted in Bamenda and Yaoundé, Cameroon from June 2009 until August 2009. The upcoming presentation of research composes a M.A. project therefore the use of qualitative methods are used. One of the most significant reasons for the use of qualitative versus quantitative methods for this particular M.A. project is due to the notion that accessing and accurately interviewing those involved in trafficking is challenging. As stated in a survey conducted by the IOM (International Organization for Migration) titled *Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey*, “one of the most challenging problems facing researchers is the fact that most of the populations relevant to the study of human trafficking, such as victims/survivors of trafficking for sexual exploitation, traffickers, or illegal migrants are part of a ‘hidden population’, i.e. it is almost impossible to establish a sampling frame and draw a representative sample of the population.”²³

²³ *Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey*. Edited by Frank Laczko and Elzbieta Gozdziaik. IOM (International Organization for Migration). Offprint of the Special Issue of International Migration Vol. 43 (1/2) 2005, Pg. 5.

While working in Bamenda with GLOWA (Global Welfare Organization) a large portion of our work dealt primarily with community sensitization campaigns. Pamphlets stating Cameroon's 2005 anti-child trafficking law were presented to the community in addition to prevention and protection techniques used to fight child trafficking. Both child and adult meetings were held weekly to educate the community using documents including the UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and the CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child). In addition, GLOWA received a small grant which gave the organization an opportunity to prepare and present an anti-trafficking message on the radio to the city of Bamenda. Part of the campaign work included interviews and discussions with child trafficking victims. I conducted several interviews with children who had been in or still were in trafficking situations. Characteristics of the interviews included attaining an understanding of a child's view of trafficking; practices used by traffickers; needs of children post trafficking including mental, emotional, and physical rehabilitation; and a better sense of how NGOs such as GLOWA can better attend to the needs and wants of child victims. A more in depth view of a child's psyche post trafficking will be identified in the three individual case files.

Another vital aspect of research in Cameroon involved collaboration and interviews with government affiliates and local NGOs. Interviews and visits were conducted with Youth Outreach Programme, an organization dealing with child issues in the Bamenda community; CHRAPA (Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy), a well known Bamendan human rights organization; Ministry of Social Affairs, the North West Regional Delegation; ILO, sub regional office for Africa; Archdiocese of Bamenda, Justice and Peace Commission; MBOSCUDA (Mbororo Social Cultural and

Development Association), and NGO fighting for the rights of the Mbororo people; IDF (Integrated Development Foundation); Nkumu Fed Fed, the vocational training rehabilitation center in Bali for child victims of trafficking; United States Embassy in Yaoundé; and, Mendankwe Orphanage housing more than a dozen child victims of trafficking. Many of these interviews and collaborations will be further discussed in the section of this project dedicated to explaining the importance of NGO collaboration regarding human rights issues and more specifically child trafficking in Cameroon.

Another more subtle aspect of gathering research included observing community events, witnessing child labor and exploitation practices largely consisting of domestic and market labor, and examining cultural aspects of daily life in Bamenda and Yaoundé, Cameroon. While conducting research in Cameroon and working with GLOWA, several opportunities to gather additional information became available including aiding a group of film students from Chapman University in Orange County, California shooting a documentary on child trafficking in Cameroon. I was informed about their documentary goals prior to my departure and was asked by GLOWA to aid the group. For several days I conducted interviews with child victims and assisted the film crew with their gathering of information and footage. An opportunity to understand the role of children within the Bamenda community was at the International Day of the African Child celebration in June of 2009. Government affiliates discussed child rights in Cameroon in addition to briefly alluding to the issue of child trafficking in the country. During this celebration government officials including the assistant of the Mayor of Bamenda discussed the responsibilities children have to protect themselves. Together interviews, community meetings, community campaigns, a documentary, daily observation, and examining

published documents in Cameroon discussing child rights and trafficking, compose an essential portion of my research.

CHAPTER 3. GOVERNMENT

With a population of nearly 19 million people, the Republic of Cameroon has a multiparty system of government although the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) has stayed in power since 1985.²⁴ Cameroon is known for its dominant and influential presidency. President Paul Biya has held power since 1982 despite winning an election in 2004 which was defected as a result of a flawed voter registration process.²⁵ In the spring of 2008 parliament amended the constitution to lift the limit of a president's term enabling President Paul Biya to serve indefinitely.²⁶ Government corruption and restriction of rights are evident in Cameroon. The Cameroonian government has been known to restrict its citizens' right to freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association.²⁷ In addition to corruption of government, Cameroon is known for their pitiable human rights record. In February 2009 riots over increasing fuel and food costs erupted in several cities resulting in multiple unlawful murders by security forces. Torture and other abuses have also been committed by security forces in prison where prisoners are forced to endure "harsh and life threatening" conditions.²⁸ Other human rights abuses are frequent among

²⁴ 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. February 25, 2009.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Cameroon: Parliament Extends President Paul Biya's Rule for Life. April 11, 2008. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200804110831.html>.

²⁷ 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. February 25, 2009.

²⁸ Ibid.

Anglophone citizens, human rights activists, and persons not carrying government-issued identification papers. It wasn't until the 1990's that child trafficking became more noticeable by the government of Cameroon. Cameroon in the 1990's experienced a continuous economic crisis.²⁹ Although trafficking is not solely connected to poverty, Cameroonian children and families often fall subject to trafficking scams as a result of financial destitution. When a country faces an economic downturn it is likely children will become increasingly vulnerable to situations of trafficking.

Violence toward women and children is another common human rights issue in the Republic of Cameroon. Societal violence and discrimination toward women remains prevalent in addition to female genital mutilation (FGM). Trafficking in women, especially children, has become a national and global concern due to child labor, forced labor, and hereditary servitude.³⁰ In 2008 Cameroon made notable efforts to address child rights. The Cameroonian Minister of Social Affairs and other political leaders presented government plans emphasizing improving living conditions for children. In 2008 a vital piece of legislation passed deeming necessary the child's right to education. The law made it mandatory for children to attend school up until the age of 14. According to the U.S. Department of State, the Cameroonian government made additional efforts to improve financial access to schools for families. School loans are one example. Additional efforts were made to improve the recruitment of teachers and

²⁹ Sunderlin, William D. and Jacques Pokam. Economic Crisis and Forest Cover Change in Cameroon: The Roles of Migration, Crop Diversification, and Gender Division of Labor. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 50, No.3 (Apr., 2002), pp. 583.

³⁰ 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. February 25, 2009.

construction of new classrooms.³¹ Despite these steps, national costs for attending primary and secondary school remain preventing countless numbers of children from attending school. Therefore despite an increase in attention paid toward improving children's access to education, child rights development in Cameroon remains insufficient.

Cameroon is a source and transit location for child trafficking due to reasons including geographic setting. As a result of Cameroon's position between West and Central Africa and its position near the Atlantic Ocean, Cameroon has become a location of both national and international child trafficking rings.³² It has been estimated that in 2002 Cameroon had approximately 610,000 child laborers of which 84 percent were documented as child trafficking victims.³³ I suspect that these statistics drastically underestimate the current state of child labor and trafficking in Cameroon. Nationally the South West, North West, and West Regions are reported to be the main providers of trafficked laborers, and the capital city of Yaoundé and the economic capital of Doula are reported to be the chief recipients of child trafficking victims.³⁴ Prevalent child trafficking practices in Cameroon include domestic servitude, agricultural labor, sexual exploitation, restaurant labor, and other forced business labor. Cameroonian children are often exploited in agricultural businesses and trafficked children in the North West

³¹ 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. February 25, 2009.

³² Epstein, Irving and Leslie Limage. The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Children's Issues Worldwide. Social Science, 2008, pp. 80.
http://books.google.com/books?id=6511fiXk_pgC&pg=PA80&dq=child+trafficking,+cameroon#PPA81.M1.

³³ *Ibid.*, 80.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

Region, South West Region, and the Centre Province are primarily forced to partake in cocoa farming labor. Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and Côte d'Ivoire are the leading producers of cocoa in the world. Each of the above mentioned countries is known to employ and exploit children resulting in obvious human rights violations. Authors Epstein and Limage explain that between 1999 and 2005, 54 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 14 were documented to have experienced some form of labor exploitation in Cameroon.³⁵ This is a significant discovery further demonstrating the vast number of child victims of both trafficking and labor exploitation.

In 2005 the Cameroonian government under the advisement of President Paul Biya passed an anti-child trafficking law. Despite a recent draft of law prohibiting all forms of human trafficking, Cameroon to date only forbids the trafficking of children. The 2005 law serves as a promising step in the field of human rights for Cameroon with the hopes and expectations of the reduction of trafficking in children. Nevertheless little has been done to apply the law to child trafficking situations. Hundreds of thousands of Cameroonian children are thought to be trafficked each year yet little has been done to prevent trafficking in children and prosecute traffickers. Although several perpetrators of trafficking have been arrested under the anti-child trafficking law, no traffickers have been prosecuted, much less convicted. A 2000 International Labor Organization (ILO) study conducted in Yaoundé, Douala, and Bamenda reveals that 84 percent of child laborers in these three cities are victims of human trafficking.³⁶ Trafficking scams are

³⁵ Epstein, Irving and Leslie Limage. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Children's Issues Worldwide*. Social Science, 2008, pp. 80. http://books.google.com/books?id=6511fiXk_pgC&pg=PA80&dq=child+trafficking,+cameroon#PPA81,M1.

³⁶ **Cameroon**. United States Department of Labor. Bureau of International Labor Affairs. Accessed March, 2009. <http://www.dol.gov/ILAB/media/reports/iclp/tda2003/cameroon.htm>.

effective ways for perpetrators to force children into slavery. In many cases traffickers disguise themselves as businessmen/businesswomen presenting families with a great opportunity to provide their children with an education or professional training. A small amount of money is sometimes paid to the family. Children are then primarily trafficked to larger cities where forced labor is imminent.³⁷ If children have the opportunity to escape or are released from labor for any reason, children are often confronted with the task of finding a safe retreat. Children are primarily trafficked away from their communities creating great difficulty in locating families or friends. Rehabilitation and reintegration are two aspects of the post trafficking experience which are often neglected by governments. Rehabilitating ex-child traffickers is vital for reintegrating children into society and preventing re-trafficking. Unfortunately there are still no state rehabilitation centers in Cameroon. All rehabilitation and reintegration efforts have been made by NGOs often lacking necessary resources to adequately provide for victims of trafficking.

3.1 Protection of Children from Trafficking

Police investigations in Cameroon often involve advising victims of trafficking not to participate in the investigations because of the young age of most of the victims.³⁸ Unfortunately, victims of trafficking often hold vital information which can greatly aid investigations. Currently, Cameroonian NGOs provide short term residency for

³⁷ 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. February 25, 2009.

³⁸ Ibid.

trafficked victims and may offer legal assistance for moving foreign victims to a location where retribution is possible. Based on information published by the “Trafficking in Persons Report 2008”, the Cameroonian government displayed nominal efforts to protect victims of child trafficking in 2008 despite referring victims to private orphanages and NGOs for additional services.³⁹

The current anti-child trafficking law specifically addresses the protection of children from exploitation in the workplace. The law additionally prescribes penalties for traffickers and employers including fines and imprisonment. Unfortunately despite the 2005 law, child trafficking remains prominent in Cameroon due not only to the lack of monitoring on behalf of law enforcement but also to inadequate implementation of the law. The law states that the minimum employment age of a child is 14. Children are not to work over 8 hours a day, children between the ages of 14 and 18 must be trained by employers, and employed minors must be provided specialized training provisions through work contracts. The law additionally affirms that night employment is banned for children and distinguishes certain labor practices children under the age of 18 can perform versus young adults 18 years of age and older.⁴⁰ Unfortunately those over the age of 18 are further subjected to dangerous tasks, prostitution and other unhealthy jobs.

³⁹ 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. February 25, 2009.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

3.2 Prosecution of Child Traffickers in Cameroon

Cameroon is currently placed on the Tier 2 Watch List for its failure to supply evidence on increasing efforts to combat human trafficking specifically in regard to prosecution and conviction of trafficking perpetrators. The United Nations defines Tier 2 Watch List countries as countries which “do not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but are making significant efforts to do so, and meet one of the following criteria: 1. They display a high or significantly increasing number of victims; 2. They have failed to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat trafficking in persons; or, 3. They have committed to take action over the next year.”⁴¹

Figure 3. “Cameroon Tier Ranking by Year”

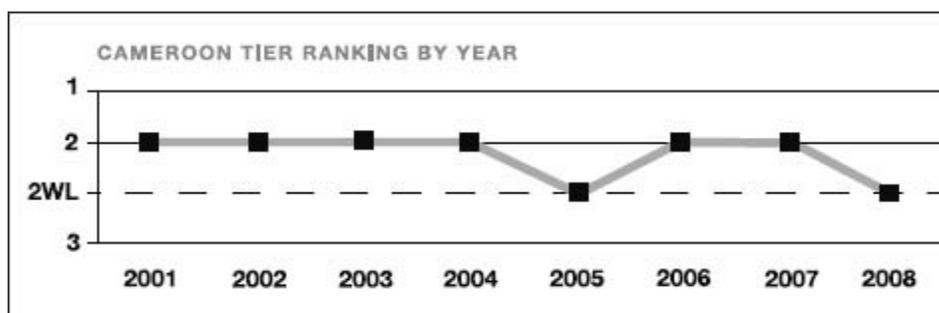


Figure 3 illustrates Cameroon’s Tier ranking from 2001 to 2006. It is evident that the ranking decreased in 2005 and again in 2008, demonstrating a continuing neglect on

⁴¹ 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. February 25, 2009.

behalf of the government of Cameroon to address the child trafficking.⁴² Understanding Cameroon's Tier 2 placement will be beneficial in the upcoming discussion of current prosecution practices in Cameroon in addition to suggested prosecution measures.

In 2008 the Cameroonian government made conservative and insufficient law enforcement attempts to fight child trafficking in Cameroon. The Cameroonian government's 2006 draft of a law prohibiting the trafficking of women has yet to be passed by the National Assembly. Nevertheless, child trafficking and slavery is criminalized in a 2005 law entitled Combating Child Trafficking and Slavery. According to the 2005 law, any perpetrator convicted of child trafficking in Cameroon receives a 20 year sentence. In 2007 and 2008 several arrests were made in child trafficking cases in Cameroon. In December of 2007 the Bamenda gendarmerie arrested a child trafficker when it was exposed that one of the trafficker's victims died due to lack of nutrition and medical attention. Unfortunately the suspect was released on bail. In January of 2008 three child traffickers were arrested by the gendarmerie in the North West Province. The three traffickers were transporting seven children ranging in age from 12 to 17 years to the Center Province in order to exploit them for labor practices; the case is still currently pending.⁴³

UNHCR documents several issues the government in Cameroon faces regarding the prosecution of child traffickers. "The government lacks any mechanism for systematic collection of data concerning arrests, investigations, or prosecutions of trafficking offenses. The government does not provide specialized trafficking training for

⁴² 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. February 25, 2009.

⁴³ Ibid.

law enforcement officials.”⁴⁴ The “2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon” declares the Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance (MINLESI) as chiefly responsible for combating trafficking; unfortunately the ministry is harshly underfunded dramatically affecting their prevention efforts.⁴⁵ Without addressing these issues, implementation of the 2005 law and the 2006 draft law will remain unsatisfactory.

The United Nations Refugee Agency recommends that Cameroon broaden its draft law prohibiting human trafficking in women to include human trafficking in men. Thus, Cameroon must quickly enact and pass its law prohibiting all forms of human trafficking. UNHCR continues to recommend that Cameroon increase its efforts to investigate trafficking cases and prosecute known perpetrators. This is necessary in order to instill among the Cameroonian community the notion that human trafficking of any kind will not be tolerated and any person caught trafficking or participating in child trafficking will be adequately punished. The problem remains that many judges, prosecutors and local authorities are unacquainted with the 2005 law against child trafficking.⁴⁶

3.3 Prevention Practices

There are specific tools used to prevent child trafficking which are considered to be most effective; possibly the most important, education. Polaris Project is one of the

⁴⁴ Trafficking in Persons Report 2008-Cameroon, United States Department of State. 4 June 2008. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,,CMR,456d621e2,484f9a0928,0.html>.

⁴⁵ 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. February 25, 2009.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

largest organizations devoted to educating people on the harms of human trafficking. Several characteristics of the organization include taking a comprehensive approach to conducting victim identification projects, providing social services to trafficked victims, and operating the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC).⁴⁷ Polaris Project published information on trafficking facilitators that has been used to creatively think of additional ways to prevent child trafficking. Trafficking facilitators include criminal and noncriminal businesses and practices. In order to create a support structure for anti-human trafficking practices, accessing financial assistance for the purpose of discovering trafficking networks is necessary. Polaris Project has listed common facilitators which they believe traffickers rely upon. These include hotels and motels, landlords, airlines, bus and rail companies, advertisers, and banks and other financial services.⁴⁸ Educating the Cameroonian government and citizens about anti-trafficking prevention tactics will reduce the rate of child trafficking.

One of the first regional education campaigns occurred in September of 2006 when the Ministry of Social Affairs initiated a radio campaign on 18 stations throughout the country to educate Cameroonians on the dangers of labor exploitation and child trafficking. On World Day against Child Labor on June 12, 2007 Cameroon's Minister of Social Affairs publicly addressed Cameroon on the significance of protecting children from labor exploitation with special reference to agricultural labor. Four days later on the Day of the African Child, Cameroon arranged for a children's National Assembly session. The session's theme was appropriately named, "Let's Say No to Child

⁴⁷ About Polaris Project. Polaris Project. <http://www.polarisproject.org/content/view/13/41/>.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Trafficking.”⁴⁹ Several resolutions were passed by Parliamentarians aiming to protect children from possible trafficking situations. Another area the government included human rights discussion was in peacekeeping mission training. Cameroon has shown efforts to ensure that any Cameroonian nationals sent abroad as a result of peacekeeping missions refrain from partaking in child trafficking of any kind. To date, the government of Cameroon continues to brief their troops prior to deployment about signs of international human trafficking in conjunction with providing seminars updating military and police affiliates about trafficking.⁵⁰ These efforts define several of the necessary steps needed to combat the trafficking of persons.

In 2008 Cameroonian government officials continued their work to increase awareness in areas where trafficking is known to be prominent. Some of these awareness tactics include education campaigns for children and families, and broadcast programs indicating areas where trafficking is known to occur. The government has also begun monitoring both immigration and emigration to identify patterns. Furthermore, in order to protect children from experiencing exploitation or re-exploitation, government officials have stationed police at airports, borders, and ports to identify, stop, and report any trafficking situations.⁵¹ The “2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon” does not however discuss any further details about how officials are training law enforcement to identify, stop, and report traffickers. It is important for readers to consider that not all negative practices by the government are documented. When situations such as human trafficking

⁴⁹ Trafficking in Persons Report 2008. Refworld: The Leader in Refugee Decision Support. *UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency*. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/type,ANNUALREPORT,,CMR,484f9a0928,0.html>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ 2008 Human Rights Report: Cameroon. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. February 25, 2009.

where human rights are violated are ill-addressed by those mainly responsible, it reveals inadequate measures to combat trafficking conducted by the government and community members.

CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH, CAMPAIGNS, AND ADVOCACY WORK

Global Welfare Organization (GLOWA) is a small, underfunded, and understaffed organization in Bamenda, of the Mezam district of the NWR of Cameroon. GLOWA is one of many small organizations in Bamenda which aim to address human rights violations. Much of GLOWA's interest has been upholding the rights of children, women, and the disabled. GLOWA'S message on www.freetocharities.org states:

“The goal of GLOWA is to improve on the situation of neglect, underdevelopment and abuse of the Cameroonian child especially in the rural communities where customs and tradition dominates. Cameroon appears to shrink as child development is concentrated in the cities, at the detriment of rural children who are the most exploited and abused through traditional practices and customs.”⁵²

GLOWA's most recent research initiative has been to produce a child trafficking report which begins by identifying the top five trafficking prone areas in the North West Region and continues by attempting to create safety networks in which law enforcement properly addresses trafficking situations and subsequently prosecutes perpetrators of child trafficking. GLOWA has planned to initially campaign to educate the Bamenda community on human rights and child trafficking before conducting research. The length of the project has an approximate duration of two years. I arrived in Bamenda at the commencement of the project and as a result helped shape how campaigns would be performed, helped create an action plan in order to appropriately deal with victims of trafficking, and created a necessary plan for the future of the project for the purpose of gathering information on how to identify the top five trafficking prone communities in the NWR.

⁵² About Us. GLOWA (Global Welfare Association). Republic of Cameroon. Accessed January 26, 2010. <http://www.freetocharities.org.uk/glowa.html>.

Generate community campaigns for the purpose of educating people about the harms of child trafficking is a vital aspect of GLOWA's project. Before implementing community campaigns a beginning step is to create quality campaign materials. There are two main pamphlets used for this campaign. One of the pamphlets states the 2005 Cameroonian law deeming the trafficking of children (persons below the age of 18) as illegal and punishable. The purpose of this pamphlet is not only to educate the community about their legal rights but also to convey the importance of punishing perpetrators of this human rights violation. The second pamphlet states signs of trafficking that parents and children should be aware of in order to prevent the trafficking of children. Several signs of trafficking found within the pamphlet include being cognizant of children showing signs of mental abuse which may include fear of other individuals, submissive traits, or difficulty in expressing oneself in the official language. The signs of trafficking within this pamphlet are intended to empower children and their parents. The Archdiocese of Bamenda created a separate anti-trafficking pamphlet which was previously distributed within the Bamenda community. The pamphlet is referred to as the "red card" which attempts to serve as a warning to the community and traffickers that trafficking is prohibited under Section 293 of the Cameroonian Penal Code. The card lists what defines a child in addition to listing the type of prosecution traffickers are liable to face.

Campaign materials created by GLOWA were passed out to the community during community gatherings such as the International Day of the African Child in addition to child and adult meetings held weekly at the GLOWA office. Radio campaigns conducted by Jamils Achunji the Director of Programs for GLOWA were also

aimed at educating the community about the child trafficking law and tactics used to prevent the trafficking of children. Radio campaigns have since ended due to a lack of funds. In addition to campaigning against child trafficking and exploitation, GLOWA and I dedicated ourselves to creating and sustaining working relationships with other local NGOs and government offices for the purpose of collaboration and conducting research. Relationships were formed between several important organizations including the Archdiocese of Bamenda. Finally, GLOWA set out to conduct independent research regarding governments influence on anti-trafficking approaches.

It is difficult to find research identifying ways in which governments have either directly been connected to the trafficking of persons or have neglected to prevent human trafficking from occurring. Author Dina Francesca Haynes published an article titled *(Not) Found Chained to a Bed in a Brothel: Conceptual, Legal, and Procedural Failures to Fulfill the Promise of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act*. Although this article directly deals with the United States Trafficking Victims Protection Act, Haynes reveals the need to identify ways in which governments are neglecting to appropriately protect victims of trafficking and prevent future trafficking situations.⁵³ One of the issues directly related to Cameroon is the fact that no trafficking victim protection legislation has been created. The government of Cameroon has disregarded the absolute need to acknowledge the benefits of protecting victims of trafficking and the obligation to prosecute human traffickers despite anti-child trafficking legislation. Interestingly, the IOM states that most of the research related to human trafficking has been on the victims

⁵³ Haynes, Dina Francesca. *(Not) Found Chained to a Bed in a Brothel: Conceptual, Legal, and Procedural Failures to Fulfill the Promise of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act*. Georgetown Immigration Law Journal. Volume 21, Fall 2006, Number 1.

of trafficking, not perpetrators of trafficking including governments which may create loopholes in public policy where human trafficking can thrive.⁵⁴ Research must be conducted at a broader level including not only how children are subject to trafficking scams but how perpetrators traffic victims and evade prosecution.

⁵⁴ Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey. Edited by Frank Laczko and Elzbieta Gozdzia. IOM (International Organization for Migration). Offprint of the Special Issue of International Migration Vol. 43 (1/2) 2005, Pg. 14.

CHAPTER 5. VICTIM CASE ANALYSES

5.1 Case Analysis: Miranda Sah, Age 20

The following child trafficking case involves a young 20 year old woman named Miranda Sah who speaks about her years of domestic servitude. I interviewed her about the day she was trafficked from her home nearly 13 years ago. She speaks eloquently about her struggles as a domestic servant in addition to her hopes for a more positive and productive life. Miranda's child trafficking case is currently not being prosecuted or represented by any legal body. She is currently still in her home of employment. Miranda was given information about GLOWA and GLOWA's mission at the local food market in Bamenda. She came to the GLOWA office by herself and spoke to both Jamils and me individually about her child trafficking experience.

When Miranda was eight years old a woman came into her house and took her away from her home and family. She acknowledged that her parents gave permission to the woman to take her to be a domestic servant in the woman's home. When the woman came to get her, she was told that she would help in the house and take care of the woman's children. Once she was in the woman's possession, they took a 6 hour bus ride from Bamenda to Mbluo where the woman's house was located. Once she settled into the home, she asked if she could attend school in Mbluo. Prior to leaving Bamenda Miranda had completed class four through seven and received her first equivalency certificate. The woman briefly allowed her to attend school; however, Miranda sold goods in the morning before school and was repeatedly late to school as a result of her

morning duties. The school eventually expelled her from school due to repeated late attendance.

Miranda was in charge of dry cleaning, cooking, cleaning the dishes, other household cleaning activities and taking care of the children in her new home of employment. When I asked about personal time allocated to her for school work or to relax, she responded by saying “No time to read.” She was forced to aid the family she lived with in anything they requested both day and night. I asked her how she felt about her required duties and she responded by saying, “It was my work.”

Miranda has worked for the woman and her family for seven years. She has received no money for her services although she says she is fed every day. She is hit constantly by the woman and her family and has become used to a loud and volatile living situation. The woman verbally abuses her and repeatedly teases her by calling her “poor girl” referencing her family’s struggle with making an adequate income. Miranda expressed to me that it was not her fault that her parents were poor; however the trafficker and her family were by no means wealthy either.

The woman’s husband died several years ago and Miranda was initially forced to work as a hairdresser in addition to selling goods at the market for an additional income. Miranda hopes of continuing school, which has not happened. “If I could go to school I would be very happy.” I asked her if she wanted to go home to her mother and father but she insisted that the situation would not be any better than her current one. Her mother and father are old and unable to provide for Miranda.

5.1.1 *Case Analysis Recommendation*

I reflected upon this interview with Miranda for quite an extensive period of time after we talked and concluded that her openness and eloquence allowed us to better understand the situation she is forced to be in and how her circumstance is similar to other situations of child trafficking. She is an intelligent young woman and should be enrolled in school. A proper education would allow her an opportunity to provide for herself and better avoid exploitation. Because sexual exploitation is common in situations of female trafficking, I asked if she has experienced sexual abuse. She said she has not been exposed to sexual exploitation but in my experience of working with victims her answer does not necessarily mean it's true or that it couldn't occur in the future. Medically, Miranda currently experiences severe monthly cramps as a result of her period and has no feminine products or pain relievers to aid her. Because of her condition it is necessary that the woman Miranda is living with is visited by an organization with some legal influence in order to better her situation. The difficult aspect to a home visit is the possibility of angering the family and causing an even more destructive situation for Miranda.

Miranda is a child trafficking victim needing continual counseling to build confidence in addition to receiving information to prevent re-exploitation. She needs to be around young adults like herself in addition to educated people who can motivate her academically. Miranda explained to me, one "has to accept whatever comes your way, maybe God plans for it." I truly hope she continues to visit GLOWA and that the staff

members of GLOWA investigate her case to a deeper extent for the purpose of removing her from her exploitative situation.

5.2 Case Analysis: Amihbe, Age 17

The following child trafficking case involves a young adult named Amihbe. Amihbe was brought to the GLOWA office as a victim of child trafficking by the American film students from Orange County, California. At the time, these students were filming a documentary on child trafficking in Cameroon and sought assistance from both GLOWA and me. GLOWA became invested in Amihbe's story and dedicated its efforts to seeing her case through the legal process. Her case is still pending. Amihbe is a 17 year old girl who was trafficked for multiple reasons and continues to be neglected by her mother through labor exploitation and maltreatment through inadequate medical treatment. Throughout the interview she appeared shy, scared, and acted fairly coy about the details of her trafficking experience. Additionally I interviewed her mother who provided details of Amihbe's case. The details provided by her mother may or may not be factual.

Amihbe's mother, Masso Maffo, said that she sent her daughter to live with her grandmother for reasons unexplained. After living with her grandmother, Amihbe was taken by a man named Niko from her grandmother's home at the age of 13. Niko trafficked her on foot from Bamenda to an unknown city. Niko immediately loaned Amihbe to his sister who had a home in this city. The sister (whose name we were not given) rented out a small room where she kept Amihbe. For a period of two months,

Niko's sister accepted payment from men who would come and take Amihbe to motel rooms where they would rape her. Not only was she repeatedly raped by an unknown number of men, but she was also physically beaten and emotionally tormented.

After two months of continual rape and physical beatings, Niko trafficked Amihbe by foot from Cameroon to Gabon. It took about four days until Amihbe, Niko, and several other men traveling with Amihbe and Niko reached Gabon. For a short period of time Amihbe worked with Niko in the field of labor in Gabon. She did not indicate the type of labor in the interview. When I asked her if she was sexually exploited or abused during this time she said no. She did however tell me of a situation where her stomach was sliced with a knife by one of the men who raped her when she was being exploited by Niko's sister. Amihbe was unsure of the man's motive.

For an unknown reason Niko decided to bring Amihbe back to Cameroon after a few weeks in Gabon. Astonishingly, law enforcement was informed by an unknown source that Niko was a human trafficker and would be returning to Bamenda, Cameroon. Once Niko and Amihbe arrived in Bamenda, Niko was arrested. To date the case is supposedly pending. Little information has been released as to whether or not the case will continue through the court system.

Amihbe currently suffers from emotional and physical damage as a result of her trafficking experience. When she first came to GLOWA's office she informed us that she was sick. She said she had HIV most likely due to the repeated unprotected sexual experiences forced upon her. A colleague of mine at GLOWA and I took Amihbe to the local hospital in Bamenda to have her tested for HIV. As expected her tests came back positive. Unfortunately at first her mother disallowed Amihbe from taking anti-retroviral

treatments in her early stages of the HIV virus. Her mother instead insisted on taking a more alternative approach to healing not involving medicine of any sort. The type of alternative treatment was not disclosed. GLOWA expressed to Amihbe's mother the importance of anti-retroviral medications when one is HIV positive. When interviewed about her mother's feelings toward her HIV positive status, she said that her mother wanted her dead so her mother wouldn't have to spend any more money for her health. When I interviewed Amihbe's mother, she had no obvious negative feelings toward her daughter or her illness; nevertheless, it is entirely possible that her mother hid these emotions when interviewed.

5.2.1 Case Analysis Recommendation

When I left Cameroon in August of 2009, Amihbe was being treated for an additional sexually transmitted disease which had caused an external rash on her body. According to the HIV/AIDS clinic at the hospital in Bamenda, she has had this disease for a period of time insinuating that Amihbe most likely contracted it during the time she was being sexually exploited. She has not yet started anti-retroviral treatment however her mother has agreed to start her on medication when the doctor deems it necessary. GLOWA has agreed to pay for Amihbe's treatment for as long as they can raise the money.

Amihbe is a young, shy, and emotionally tormented girl who has experienced exploitation and other human rights violations. She needs continual mental, emotional, and physical rehabilitation. Because Amihbe is HIV positive she will require support

from her mother and organizations such as GLOWA. Unfortunately due to the corrupt nature of the government and judging from previous human trafficking cases which have reached the court, it is unlikely that Niko will be charged for human trafficking or serve any extensive sentence.

5.3 Case Analysis: Hospital Case; Mother, Age 34

The following child trafficking case occurred at the local maternity clinic at the Bamenda hospital. Upon my departure from Cameroon the case was still pending so all presented “facts” were gathered while I was in Cameroon. The following information is primarily from a secondary source revealing possible incorrect or altered information for personal gains by a local reporter and family of the trafficked child. This case is an appropriate representation of the desperation mothers endure as a result of poverty, inadequate education, and ignorance. This case also appropriately represents the current legal system in Cameroon and the lack of interest by the government to prosecute perpetrators of child trafficking.

GLOWA received information that there was a 34 year old woman who had given birth to a baby at the maternity clinic of the local hospital in Bamenda, and sold the child upon delivery. Jamils Achunji, the Director of Programs for GLOWA, Joshua Nkwei the Director of Programs for CHRAPA, and I traveled to the hospital to meet with the woman. Upon our arrival at the maternity clinic a hospital employee told us that the woman had departed the hospital. The hospital employee had no substantial contact information for the woman except for her name. She explained that when women enter the maternity clinic their names are written down but no other patient information is

required such as an ID card. It is possible and likely in this case that the woman wrote down a false name.

Joshua Nkwei from CHRAPA was told that a reporter spoke to additional hospital employees and received more information about the trafficking case. Joshua, Jamils, and I located the reporter and after arguing with him to release information, the reporter reluctantly admitted that he was not at the scene where the purchase of the child took place. Instead, the reporter heard a tape recording from a photographer who was at the hospital moments after the child was sold. The following information was released by the reporter on the 17th of June, 2009:

A woman came to the maternity clinic at the hospital in Bamenda with no items for the delivery of the child (i.e. clothes or diapers). She presented her name to the hospital but showed no documentation, as it is not required by the hospital. The woman gave birth to an underweight child and was quickly met by an older woman who had items for the child. The hospital witnessed the mother of the child handing the child to the woman who showed up at the hospital with the child care items. The hospital said that a visible transaction was made for the child. The nurse at the hospital said that the doctor who delivered the child did not want the child leaving the clinic because the child was not at a healthy weight. Nevertheless, the older woman took the child.

Joshua went to the local authorities in Bamenda and discovered that they had identified the woman who purchased the baby at the hospital. The woman was apprehended but was quickly released. The information Joshua received was that the mother of the child could not pay her bills and was staying in a town called Incambé with her sister. The mother of the child became pregnant and decided to sell the child. The

trafficker told the mother of the child to call her when she went into labor. The trafficker insisted that the mother of the child travel to Douala to have the baby due to the reason that no one in Douala knew the family or the trafficker. There wasn't enough time for the mother of the child to travel to Douala so she reluctantly traveled to the maternity clinic at the hospital in Bamenda which is closer to Incambé. When the mother of the child arrived at the hospital, the nurses expressed their surprise that the woman had not arrived with any supplies for the child. When the mother gave birth, the trafficker showed up at the hospital and told the mother she would pay 1,000,000 CFA for the child. There happened to be people from Incambé at the hospital who knew the mother of the child and as a result told hospital employees what was occurring. Unfortunately since the older woman was released and the mother of the child fled the hospital we have no information about the current state of the child. It is possible that the woman has since repurchased and trafficked the child from the mother.

5.3.1 Case Analysis Recommendation

One of the most insightful statements regarding this case and may others like it came from Joshua of CHRAPA. He said, "Justice in Cameroon is like a commodity, it can be bought by the highest bidder." Unfortunately in Cameroon corruption plays a vital role in the implementation of laws. In Bamenda cases are quickly dismissed if even acknowledged. Cases such as this where mothers sell their children out of desperation or ignorance are often ignored by the government. Just as astonishingly, traffickers who

purchase or steal innocent and vulnerable children are also commonly ignored by law enforcement.

Unlike the first two case analyses, GLOWA is not invested in this case because it is unlikely the child will be found. GLOWA does not have the resources to travel to other cities and find the child. This case demonstrates the need for police enforcement to identify and adequately punish perpetrators of trafficking. It is not until the Cameroonian government strictly prosecutes child traffickers in addition to making a vital effort to allocate funds for community sensitization, will child trafficking cease.

CHAPTER 6. NGO COLLABORATION AND INFLUENCE

A vital aspect of my research in Cameroon and an essential component to the fight against human trafficking is creating and sustaining relationships with governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. NGO collaboration occurs regularly with respect to most prominent human rights issues for reasons including accessing information and recourses. Certain organizations in a community may have access to more resources due to grants and donations or societal status. Sharing information regarding prevention, protection, and prosecution is not only helpful but necessary in order to establish a community wide effort to address human rights violations such as the trafficking of persons. There are situations in which collaboration impedes advocacy due to competition and finances, nevertheless NGO collaboration aided my research and GLOWA's mission greatly. While conducting research in Cameroon, several relationships were created with local organizations aiding GLOWA's mission to publicly campaign against child trafficking and exploitation. Several of the beneficial relationships include that between Youth Outreach Programme, CHRAPA (Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy), the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Archdiocese of Bamenda, MBOSCUDA (Mbororo Social Cultural and Development Association), IDF (Integrated Development Foundation), Nkumu Fed Fed (vocational training rehabilitation center), the U.S. Embassy of Yaoundé, Mendankwe Orphanage, and the ILO Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa. Each of these NGOs, governmental and intergovernmental organizations offer support unique to their particular circumstance. The most significant international collaboration however is with the ILO Sub-Regional

Office for Central Africa. I met with ILO official Jean Baptiste Kamdem Kouagang to discuss a work in progress titled “Poverty Reduction within Communities Vulnerable to Child Trafficking through the Promotion of Decent Work in Cameroon”. This compilation of research discusses trafficking and labor exploitation with reference to Kumbo, Wum, and Bali in the North West Region of Cameroon.

The objective of this project according to the ILO is to,

“assist families which are exposed to various forms of vulnerabilities to support their own development process by highlighting the promotion of social justice through access to decent and productive work under conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity for all, the TC-Ram projects aims at achieving this goal by seeking to support the protection of girls and boys from trafficking/labour and making them benefit from education, vocational training and school-to-work transition and social protection.”⁵⁵

ILO Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa worked with the Integrated Development Fund in order to carry out a diagnostic study in areas of the North West Region including Kumbo, Wum, and Bali. The project aims to create strategies and intervention techniques necessary in regions plagued by child trafficking and exploitation. The ILO Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa hopes to assist communities to provide “decent” jobs for the purpose of addressing and combating poverty.

Sustaining relationships with government offices and NGOs is necessary not only for attaining information otherwise difficult to find, but also to aid other bodies working toward the same goal of combating child trafficking in the North West Region of Cameroon. As is evident by the third case study, some organizations (in this case CHRAPA) have made special relationships with police enforcement, hospital workers, or other informative individuals. NGOs such as GLOWA and CHRAPA rely upon one

⁵⁵ Poverty Reduction within Communities Vulnerable to Child Trafficking through the Promotion of Decent Work in Cameroon. Integrated Development Fund (IDF). International Labour Organization Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa. February 2009.

another for information due to reasons including a lack of funding for thorough independent field research.

CHAPTER 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Possibly the most important aspect of conducting research and compiling notes and information is the ability to assess a situation and analyze ways in which a situation can be improved. Part of making educated suggestions regarding this topic is to acknowledge positive and negative efforts to reduce child trafficking in addition to how the market of trafficking can/will change. Despite the detrimental situation of human trafficking in Cameroon, there are many actions to be taken by the government and communities to better protect children from trafficking scams. Suggestions on how to reduce and eventually eradicate child trafficking will be presented in two sections. First, I will discuss ways in which civil society can combat trafficking. Three significant efforts include educational programs, non-governmental organization program efforts, and challenging government if ineffective decisions are implemented. Second, I will discuss ways in which the Cameroonian government can effectively combat child trafficking particularly in the NWR. These initiatives include an implementation of human rights related education in schools; appropriate training and supervision of law enforcement for the purpose of detection; adequate government support for applying the government instituted anti-child trafficking law; and finally, instituting state rehabilitation and reintegration centers.

Community involvement is vital to protect community members from trafficking scams particularly in the NWR of Cameroon. As previously discussed parents uneducated about trafficking who want to provide a better future for a neglected child whether intended or unintended often become victims of trafficking scams. The

implementation of education is a vital tool for many human rights issues, but education may be the most important tool used to combat child trafficking and exploitation in the NWR of Cameroon. Whether schools accept human rights centered programs, or human rights centered programs are used in church curriculum or community programs, services and opportunities where children and adults are able to learn about self respect, respect for others, human rights, and responsibilities are necessary tactics to reduce the rate of child trafficking.

Education for adults is essential because of the perpetuation of child trafficking due to the family structure in Cameroon. Cameroonian children are often seen as children of the community. Parents and grandparents are willing to loan their child in order to help someone else. Unfortunately adults are uneducated, unaware or ignorant about the treatment of their child by another person. Traffickers take advantage of families' trust and often their destitute situations which lead families to sell their child. Positively there are several knowledgeable non-governmental organizations in the NWR able to produce community based campaigns and provide informative group sessions which aim to educate the community about human rights and human trafficking. CHRAPA is one such organization which deals with human rights issues on all levels. CHRAPA has previously brought local human trafficking cases to authorities. Still, due to the escalating number of trafficking victims and traffickers in the NWR, I suggest involving international organizations with the ability to implement small teams of advocates within the region for the sole purpose of anti-trafficking education. Local and international NGOs will additionally have the ability of creating community alert systems for citizens to monitor the safety and protection of possible victims of human trafficking.

Additional research is necessary to identify where alert systems should be located and how they would work.

Human rights organizations are often credited for bringing human rights violations to law enforcement that might otherwise not have been acknowledged. This is particularly true with regards to human trafficking where law enforcement is generally inadequately educated about identifying trafficking situations. Cameroonian citizens and NGOs must take a national stand against trafficking by demonstrating to the government the need to appropriately educate law enforcement about detecting trafficking and protecting victims. Government corruption largely affects the handling of trafficking in the country. President Paul Biya is a powerful figure in Cameroon and predominantly oversees both human rights initiatives and human rights violations. Although corruption is evident within the government of Cameroon, the form of government is still a republic, meaning Paul Biya can be removed from office and replaced with a more human rights conscious president.

Although Cameroonian citizens have responsibilities to combat trafficking and protect victims, the government is responsible for implementing effective policies, and properly punishing perpetrators of child trafficking. The Republic of Cameroon can perform these tasks in three ways. First, the government can propose anti-human trafficking education programs in schools. The government can provide incentives for schools to teach students about trafficking scams, and more generally, human rights. Possible incentives include school supplies, a computer (used or new), or some sort of tax inducement. It is necessary for NGOs to educate and explain to governments why

providing an incentive to a school for a human rights program is beneficial for the health and well-being of Cameroonian students.

Second, law enforcement officers and agents remain inadequately trained for the purpose of identifying trafficking situations, placing victims in safe rehabilitation programs, and keeping perpetrators of trafficking in custody. Either the Cameroonian government does not find it beneficial to train law enforcement to detect situations of trafficking, or funds are limited for training programs. Either way, there are solutions for employing adequate training programs for individuals held responsible for recognizing child trafficking and exploitation. NGOs educated in the field of trafficking should be welcomed by the Cameroonian government to aid the government in strengthening their law enforcement agency for the benefit of Cameroonian citizens. NGOs are capable of providing low cost and highly effective training programs if requested by the government. Human rights organizations are invested in providing substantial protection for victims of possible human rights violations. If funding is of concern, the Cameroonian government may apply for international grants from larger international organizations willing to aid the country in reducing the prevalence of human trafficking. Nevertheless, it is likely that increasing spending on educational programs will in turn reduce spending in areas such as legal aid for victims of trafficking, and court costs. Surprisingly, the government of Cameroon has shown recent educational efforts with the briefing of troops traveling for international peacekeeping missions regarding trafficking issues. As well, some seminars discussing international human trafficking issues for military and police affiliates have been generated. Nevertheless, consistent national efforts remain largely unnoticeable.

Thirdly and possibly the most important aspect of prosecuting perpetrators of child trafficking and exploitation from the government's end is appropriately implementing and supporting the 2005 anti-child trafficking law. Although traffickers have been arrested under the law for human trafficking, there still remains to be any actual convictions. In order to fully support the 2005 anti-child trafficking law, Cameroon must finalize its national plan of action against trafficking. The government in 2009 made dismal efforts to minimize the demand for sexual labor. Without a full implementation of the law, the government will continue to send a message that perpetrators of the crime will not be punished due to the lack of interest to apply the law to its entire extent. It is necessary that victims of trafficking feel supported by their government in order to act as viable and productive members of society.

Finally the Cameroonian government needs to institute state rehabilitation and reintegration centers for victims of trafficking attempting to physically, emotionally, and mentally rebuild their lives for the purpose of entering society in a healthy and prolific manner. Specifically regarding the NWR of Cameroon, one NGO run rehabilitation center exists in Bali however this rehabilitation does not have physical, mental or emotional rehabilitation opportunities. The center solely focuses on vocational training for the purpose of teaching trafficked victims a trade. This fact is disappointing for two reasons; one, the center is sending a message to victims of trafficking that the saddening and destructible physical and emotional effects of human trafficking are not worth treating. Second, instituting vocational training only conveys the notion that in order to live a productive life in Cameroon, victims of human trafficking must learn a trade no matter how young. The Cameroonian government cannot assume that victims of

trafficking can lead healthy and dynamic lives without the assistance of mental health and medical trained professionals. Due to the alarming number of trafficked children in the entire country of Cameroon, the government must implement several large adequately staffed and appropriately funded rehabilitation and reintegration centers in areas of the country where trafficking is especially prominent. Non-governmental organizations will need to assist transporting victims to these centers in addition to educating victims and their families (if available) about the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration practices.

CONCLUSION

In order to effectively address the prevalence of child trafficking in Cameroon the global community must look at government involvement, whether it is protection or prosecution, in addition to acknowledging how the family structure in Cameroon often perpetuates child trafficking. There are numerous other organizations and agencies similar to GLOWA that dedicate their efforts toward reducing human rights violations specifically with reference to children. Coalition against Trafficking in Women is one such organization which has developed a program to specifically address child trafficking.⁵⁶ CATW conducts research on preventative measures against child trafficking in Mexico, the Philippines, and Italy. CATW aims to educate young males about sex trafficking in hopes to gain their partnership in the campaign against the trafficking of women and children. CATW additionally works to combat sexual exploitation globally through the production of articles, books, film, and reports illustrating the trafficking of women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation.⁵⁷ CATW is an appropriate example of an NGO conducting research for the benefit of men, women, and children. The coalition has received acknowledgment from international organizations for their ability to detect human trafficking cases and develop appropriate preventative techniques to prevent further trafficking cases.

GLOWA is another human rights organization with a mission to address the prevalence of trafficking in children. Educational campaigning is one avenue GLOWA

⁵⁶ Child Trafficking: Child Trafficking is a Serious Crime. Coalition Against Trafficking in Women. Accessed March 2009. http://www.catwinternational.org/child_trafficking.php.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

works through to inform communities about the destructive practice of human trafficking. Because Cameroonian children continue to receive little education regarding human rights and human trafficking, GLOWA has dedicated itself to addressing this issue by conducting a school based campaign where the organization will travel to different schools in the most trafficking prone areas in the NWR of Cameroon and educate children on the importance of human rights education. It is not foreseeable that GLOWA's efforts will necessarily increase the rate children attend school but it is GLOWA's mission that children will become informed about ways in which one can avoid labor exploitation and human trafficking. Educational campaigning is one necessary step of many the global community must take in order to acknowledge the detriments of child trafficking in Cameroon.

Community members including parents of vulnerable children need to be educated about how to protect possible victims of child trafficking. As explained, aspects of the family structure in Cameroon perpetuate trafficking. Specifically related to Cameroon, often destitute families are promised a bright and healthy future for their child if they sell their child to a person who will transport them to a more productive environment. Nevertheless, it is extremely rare that children are taken care of in their trafficking situation. There are children such as Amihbe who are kidnapped from their homes by traffickers but this is considered to be not as prominent in Cameroon. Adults have the capability of not only accessing education for themselves but instilling the idea in their children that human rights, self-respect, and empowerment are vital personal characteristics which aid the prevention of trafficking. Although victims, families, and community members have the responsibility to protect possible victims of trafficking and

prevent offenders from trafficking children, the government of Cameroon has significant and indispensable responsibilities.

The government faces several necessary and achievable changes that need to be made for the purpose of improving the standards of human rights in Cameroon. The state of human trafficking and more specifically child trafficking in Cameroon is devastating and must be considered intolerable. As sections within this project have demonstrated, the government of Cameroon has neglected to make significant efforts to reverse the state of child trafficking especially with reference to prosecuting and punishing trafficking offenders. Until the government of Cameroon fully complies with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, child trafficking will continue to flourish. Reasonable and attainable government objectives include increasing efforts to prosecute and convict perpetrators of human trafficking; educating law enforcement including judges, lawyers, and police officials; finalizing and implementing the draft law criminalizing the trafficking of persons above the age of 18; and, employing educational programs in schools informing children about fundamental human rights, self respect, and empowerment; and finally, instituting government run or government assisted rehabilitation and rehabilitation programs focusing on emotional, mental, and physical rehabilitation in addition to vocational training.

Child trafficking and exploitation in the Republic of Cameroon is a significant human rights issue requiring immediate attention from international organizations, the international community, and more importantly the government of Cameroon, and Cameroonian communities where trafficking is prevalent. Positively, progressive and determined non-governmental organizations and some government officials are interested

in and motivated to prevent child trafficking, to protect victims and possible victims of trafficking, and to prosecute offenders of the act. The 2005 anti-child trafficking law passed by the Cameroonian government has proved to be ineffective to date; nevertheless, this does not mean that the law must remain ineffective. It is essential that the citizens of Cameroon put pressure on the government to effectively and appropriately enforce the 2005 law. As essential, finalizing the 2006 draft law deeming trafficking illegal for persons above the age of 18 and further acknowledging men as victims of trafficking, sends a message that the trafficking of any person in the country of Cameroon will not be tolerated. It is a reasonable and possible goal to reduce the prevalence of child trafficking and exploitation in Cameroon, and eventually eradicate the unlawful and immoral act.

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