

Toward Constructive Engagement Between Local Law Enforcement and Mobilization and Advocacy Nongovernmental Organizations About Human Trafficking: Recommendations for Law Enforcement Executives

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Introduction

It is not every day that Centro Legal de la Raza, the nongovernmental advocacy and legal-aid organization serving Spanish-speaking immigrants in the San Francisco Bay Area, can attest to successfully collaborating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), but in the spring of 2008, La Raza contacted ICE to report one of their clients was a victim of human trafficking—held as a domestic slave for nearly two years in Walnut Creek, California, by Mabelle de la Rosa Dann. The victim's daily routine included preparing meals for Dann and her children; cleaning the small apartment, including the floor where the victim slept; washing laundry; collecting the children from school; preparing dinner; and entertaining the children and preparing them for bed. Working from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM every day, the victim was never paid by Dann, was afraid to leave, and could not have returned home to Peru since Dann had hidden her passport. This seemingly unlikely collaboration between La Raza and ICE was the first step in what would become the first human trafficking trial in the Northern District of California, with Dann convicted on forced labor and other charges, and then sentenced to five years in federal prison (Russoniello, 2009).

Labor and sex trafficking cases have been documented in increasing numbers all across the U.S. These forms of criminal exploitation take place in and through many sectors of legitimate businesses as well as in illegitimate businesses. Over the last decade, since the passage of the origi-

nal Trafficking Victims Protection Act in 2000, the U.S. government has launched multifaceted efforts to combat all forms of human trafficking—within the U.S. as well as internationally. In many cities and states, state-level and municipal agencies, including law enforcement, have been striving for better legislation, investigations, and prosecutions of crimes related to trafficking in persons. They do not work alone. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) work alongside government agencies at municipal, state, and federal levels—sometimes separately, sometimes collaboratively—to combat human trafficking. Until recently, the trafficking-oriented NGOs with which law enforcement bodies at any level have had the most interaction have typically been providers of direct services to trafficking victims. In many locations, some of these types of service provider NGOs receive state or federal funding for at least some of the services they provide and/or they are part of referral networks for law enforcement and other government agencies.¹

However, increasing societal awareness of human trafficking over the last few years is both due to and resulting in the growth of a different type of NGO: those focused on mobilizing citizens against human trafficking and on (mostly) local and state-level advocacy for stronger anti-trafficking laws and better services for trafficking victims. These mobilization/advocacy NGOs (MANGOs) rarely if ever provide direct services for victims and, thus, may not have any direct contact with law enforcement or other government entities.

In our respective experiences as a social science researcher of anti-trafficking efforts (Foot) and an investigator of trafficking incidents and manager of a federally-funded anti-trafficking task force (Vanek), we have observed firsthand the growth in both size and number of anti-trafficking MANGOs in the U.S. Relatively well-established, large MANGOs continue to extend their reach (e.g., by creating local chapters or enrolling smaller community-based groups in their networks). And new, small MANGOs seeking to combat human trafficking “seem to be popping up like mushrooms in a forest” rather than joining existing, nationally organized MANGOs, observed a leader of one such well-established MANGO we interviewed in 2009. The growth of anti-trafficking MANGOs across the U.S. is attributable to several factors, including successful mobilization efforts by the MANGOs themselves, increasing news media coverage of human trafficking, the growth of cause-promoting social media platforms such as Change.org, and issue-oriented uses of general social networking sites such as Facebook. Some citizens become aware of human trafficking directly through outreach efforts spearheaded by MANGOs. Other citizens are exposed to human trafficking through the news media or other sources, and then they seek out others who share their concerns about the issue and thus find their way into MANGO networks. It behooves law enforcement to be aware that individuals who contact them about human trafficking concerns are likely to be affiliated with—and thus influenced by and potentially influencing of—one or more MANGOs, whether or not they identify themselves as representing a MANGO.

Tensions and opportunities for fruitful collaboration between service provider NGOs and law enforcement are well-documented (Clawson, Dutch, & Cummings, 2006; Farrell, McDevitt, & Fahy, 2008a, 2008b; Konrad, 2008; Laczko, 2005), but the growth of MANGOs is precipitating new challenges and opportunities for local law enforcement agencies in combating human trafficking—and these have not yet been studied. Law enforcement agencies that have not yet been contacted by MANGOs about human trafficking concerns are likely to be soon since citizens are being

encouraged by an array of government bodies and NGOs to do so. As participant observers in interactions between MANGOs and law enforcement in, collectively, five metropolitan regions in three states over the last several years, we have witnessed significant differences in the perspectives, aims, and operational modes of MANGOs and law enforcement, the tensions that can arise between them, and the positive outcomes that can result from substantive dialogue between these sectors. Our aim in this article is to describe three kinds of overtures that we have observed MANGOs make toward law enforcement, and to suggest ways that law enforcement can engage constructively with MANGOs. The three kinds of interactions we consider are (1) reporting of concerns about specific instances of potential human trafficking by citizens (whether explicitly affiliated with a MANGO or not), (2) requests for participation by law enforcement in MANGO-organized community events and coalitions on combating human trafficking, and (3) requests for support of MANGOs’ anti-trafficking activities.

Suspicious Activity Reporting

With the advent of Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) programs, new formats for relaying potential crime information to police (via social media tools), and—specifically related to human trafficking—the ever-increasing number of faith- and community-based organizations looking to identify slavery in their communities and report their suspicions to police, law enforcement leaders must be aware of this changing landscape and the breadth of new potential reporters of crime. In fact, this confluence of two new phenomena (law enforcement encouraging the public to report potential crime or threats in new ways and the growing mobilization within communities to proactively look for human trafficking and expect law enforcement to respond) brings challenges to leadership and line officers alike. While leadership will want to engage and support responsible community activists, line officers and investigators will be left to navigate through leads of varying quality, delivered by persons and organizations with disparate levels of training on human trafficking and how to properly identify it, and, perhaps most importantly, be

responsible for creating and maintaining positive relationships with community mobilization and advocacy groups. Examining these new reporters of potential human trafficking cases, they can be broadly categorized into two groups: (1) the MANGO and (2) the as-yet-unaffiliated reporter.

The Not For Sale Campaign (NFSC), an anti-slavery organization based in San Francisco which supports a variety of projects worldwide, drew attention from some in law enforcement circles in 2009 when they launched their Investigator Academy to train citizen investigators to recognize trafficking within their communities, with the hope to then engage local law enforcement by providing this open-sourced intelligence. The NFSC “Academy” illustrates a programmatic strategy increasingly employed by some MANGOs to recruit and train concerned citizens in reporting potential trafficking cases. Recently, NFSC subsumed its Investigator Academy within a broader Abolitionist Academy program that now also includes a Supply-Chain Academy, an Educators Academy, and an Entrepreneurs Academy, among others. The NFSC “Academy” programs have been expanded, exported to other cities, and emulated by other MANGOs. The San Francisco Abolitionist Academy now offers a variety of courses, such as “Supply-Chain: Understanding and Confronting Consumer Connections” and “Innovative Aftercare: Models of Treatment that Work,” as well as “Investigation: Understanding and Eradicating Human Trafficking in Your Community” (Not For Sale Campaign [NSFC], 2011). A typical course often includes attendees from across North America, as well as from Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Prospective students submit a written application, applications are vetted prior to acceptance into the courses, and acceptance is competitive. Most of those accepted are either university students or graduates, and the students’ average age is over 30 (personal communication with a NFSC leader, 2010).

The NFSC promotes “smart and open-source activism,” urging academy students to locate potential trafficking victims in ways that will not endanger themselves or victims, while at the same time striving to help them avoid any tactics that could compromise (unknowingly)

an ongoing law enforcement investigation. Although there is no way for the NFSC to guarantee compliance by attendees of their Abolitionist Academy, the NFSC leadership stresses the importance of attendees taking time to initiate and establish positive relationships with local law enforcement, as well as gaining a realistic understanding of their local agency’s own understanding of trafficking and their willingness and ability to respond. The NFSC has drawn on the expertise of the FBI and the San Jose Police Department Human Trafficking Task Force in the Investigation Course, having representatives paint a real-world picture for the students. Some NFSC graduates have taken their 40 hours of training home and implemented successful investigations leading to the identification of victims and the arrest of traffickers. For instance, in 2009, a graduate of the initial NFSC Investigator Academy returned to her home in Canada and located a brothel using open-source investigative techniques. After sending the information to local law enforcement, several women were identified as trafficking victims. In this case, local law enforcement was already aware of the brothel but gave credit to the academy graduate for providing additional information helpful to the investigation. The NFSC had a similar success in South Africa where another 2009 Academy graduate helped identify women trafficked into South Africa for commercial sexual exploitation during the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup and successfully reported the information to law enforcement in Cape Town, where their collaboration continues (Bacino, 2011).

The NFSC model, and others like it, will become more visible to law enforcement as the number of graduates grows, graduates’ attempts to provide useful information to law enforcement increase in frequency, and their efforts—when successful—are recognized. Individual reporters of potential human trafficking cases have included some highly experienced individuals such as retired law enforcement officers or current officers who are working on their own or are loosely affiliated with an anti-trafficking organization. At the other end of the experience spectrum are individual reporters who may be passionate abolitionists but have little if any

training on how to properly identify potential trafficking situations, and who have little understanding of their local law enforcement agency's ability to respond to their information.

Among the most successful national initiatives to channel suspicious activity reports concerning human trafficking are the National Human Trafficking Resource Center and the National Human Trafficking Hotline, operated by the NGO Polaris Project in Washington, DC. Operated, in part, through funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Hotline helps connect local and federal law enforcement agencies, and victim service NGOs. The Hotline operates 24/7 and supports over 150 languages. Callers often are looking for additional information on trafficking or how to get involved locally, but the core purpose of the Hotline is connecting reporters of trafficking with knowledgeable and responsive law enforcement agencies, and connecting victims with local service providers. In 2010, the Hotline received 11,874 calls of which 15%, over 1,700, were tips or intelligence on potential trafficking situations (Polaris Project, 2011). As of December 1, 2011, the Hotline had received over 18,000 calls for the year with 18% classified as tips, intelligence, or crisis calls—that is, victims in immediate need of assistance.²

The following case exemplifies how timely and coherent information provided by a citizen via the Hotline can be beneficial to law enforcement and, therefore, why it is in local law enforcement's interest to promote the Hotline to MANGOs in their community. In July 2011, police in Albuquerque, New Mexico, arrested a 32-year-old male for pimping a 17-year-old girl for \$180 an hour. Police initiated an undercover investigation after receiving information from the Hotline, which had received a call from a concerned citizen. The citizen had observed the duo in an Albuquerque business and witnessed what the citizen believed were signs of potential trafficking. The citizen was able to provide enough information via the Hotline that police were able to locate the woman in a prostitution ad on the website Backpage.com (Schwartz, 2011).

The Hotline originally leveraged the connections among various federally funded task forces and now filters relevant information and intelligence to any law enforcement agency willing to accept information. In light of the proven successes of the Hotline, we encourage all law enforcement executives to participate in the anti-trafficking network it facilitates by registering their units with the Hotline. The registration process is simple: Call the Hotline at 1-888-3737-888 (this is how the phone number is officially presented on the website and in promotional materials) and provide the Hotline with the contact information for your unit tasked with addressing human trafficking.

As an example of the mutual frustration that can develop between law enforcement and less-experienced but passionate anti-trafficking activists, consider the case of "James," a college student and dedicated proponent of citizen investigations. In 2009, James and some of his similarly concerned friends were routinely spending 10 to 20 hours performing surveillance of massage parlors in the hopes of developing intelligence deemed valuable by his local police department in Southern California. On Christmas Eve, James was visiting relatives in Northern California. Making use of some free time, he scanned Craigslist.com's Adult Services section looking for signs of potential trafficking.

James maintained a list of names and related phone numbers from his routine scanning of Craigslist ads, and he was surprised and excited to find an ad placed by "Yvonne" stating that she was available for out-call service in the San Francisco Bay Area. James was familiar with Yvonne's postings and had tracked her ads from Los Angeles to Las Vegas and the Midwest. Yvonne had placed similar ads in three different cities with the same photographs, using the same cellular phone number as her contact number. To James, this movement between cities was a clear sign of Yvonne being trafficked (or at least controlled) by another person or pimp.

James immediately phoned the office of the San Jose Police Department's Human Trafficking Task Force believing they could quickly launch an operation to make a "date" with Yvonne and, hopefully,

rescue her from her traffickers. The office was closed for Christmas Eve and Day. Not knowing where else to turn, James phoned the San Francisco office of the FBI. The Duty Agent politely explained to James the realities of trying to respond to this type of information on a holiday with minimum staffing. James eventually made contact with San Jose's Task Force the day after Christmas at which point his information was analyzed. The ad was no longer posted, and the phone number provided by James was not being answered.

It is apparent to us that James' lack of training on the tactics used by those involved in the commercial sex trade (whether voluntarily or not) and his lack of understanding of the roles played by both local and federal law enforcement agencies (including how special units are not always staffed during holidays) gave him an unrealistic expectation for response under the circumstances. We suggest that a constructive response by law enforcement to unaffiliated activists like James would be to point them to an established MANGO in the community and to encourage them to get involved with its efforts. However, our advice assumes law enforcement officers are acquainted with MANGOs and know which one(s) could help channel the enthusiasm of individuals like James in beneficial ways. In the next section, we discuss briefly some ways for law enforcement to develop that capacity.

MANGO Requests for Participation by Law Enforcement in Local Events and Multisector Community Networks

In addition to attempting to bring suspicious activity reports to law enforcement, it is increasingly common for MANGOs to invite law enforcement officers to participate in awareness-raising events in local communities. For instance, some local MANGOs extend invitations to law enforcement to speak to community groups or religious congregations, or simply to groups of concerned citizens gathered together by the MANGO, about the kinds of human trafficking that have been investigated in the community. Some MANGOs ask law enforcement to lead training classes on the indicators of labor

trafficking that might be evident locally. Other MANGOs organize fundraising events such as a pledge walk/run, golf tournament, or screening of a trafficking documentary to be followed by a question-and-answer session with a panel of local trafficking experts—and they invite law enforcement to participate on the panel. To the extent possible, it behooves law enforcement units to accept such invitations from credible MANGOs for two reasons: (1) participation fosters goodwill toward and accessibility on the part of law enforcement for the MANGO members and event attendees and (2) participation enables law enforcement to help educate their local community about both the problem of human trafficking and appropriate ways for citizens to be involved in combating it. However, these types of invitations raise questions on the part of law enforcement about how to screen and whether to endorse MANGOs as organizations and/or the projects or campaigns they develop or in which they participate—we will address these in the next section. First, though, we discuss the merits of law enforcement moving beyond occasional participation in MANGO-initiated community events to regular participation via ongoing interaction in multisector collaboratives.

Across the United States, many organized anti-trafficking efforts are taking shape via a task force or coalition which typically includes representatives from law enforcement (local and/or federal), victim services provider NGOs, immigration assistance agencies, trafficking-focused MANGOs, and often faith- and community-based organizations looking to support anti-trafficking efforts. Participation in such collaboratives provides law enforcement with excellent and increasingly important opportunities to engage with the public and other service agencies in a positive manner, to develop mutual understanding and trust with anti-trafficking actors from other sectors, and to help shape the efforts of MANGOs as they develop. For these reasons, we urge law enforcement executives to examine anti-trafficking efforts in their community and deputize members of their agencies who have an interest in anti-trafficking efforts and can represent the agency well to participate regularly in the gatherings of local coalitions/task forces.

MANGO Requests for Endorsement by Law Enforcement

We return now to the questions that have arisen for some law enforcement units about how to screen MANGOs that want to involve them in community events, and whether to endorse MANGOs as organizations and/or their projects or campaigns. Several law enforcement officers have expressed concerns to one or the other of us over the last couple of years about how to assess the MANGOs that are emerging and/or operating in their region. The main reasons for their concern are that some NGOs, including but not just MANGOs, have claimed on their websites and elsewhere to be raising funds to engage in particular anti-trafficking efforts, such as undercover investigative operations, rescuing trafficking victims, and sheltering trafficking survivors, but have not provided any substantiation of these activities. Due diligence is called for in checking out the legal status, financial transparency, and activity reports of all NGOs, including MANGOs, before accepting invitations from them. An online resource that can be helpful in the screening process is the U.S. Freedom Registry (<http://freedomregistry.org>), an online directory of organizations with anti-trafficking programs with which any organization can register, developed by NGOs but with input from law enforcement.³ The web form for the registry requests not only contact and program information about each organization, but it also requests disclosures about a range of good practices, including legal status, financial transparency, coalition membership, and whether they have any official relationship with a law enforcement unit. It also requires documentation for every claim. Going forward, law enforcement agencies could require that any MANGO which seeks interaction with them first register with the Freedom Registry.

In addition to requests for participation in community events, law enforcement units are increasingly receiving requests from MANGOs for endorsement of MANGOs' anti-trafficking projects and campaigns. For instance, a MANGO in a metropolitan area recently developed a multilanguage poster addressed to trafficking victims and witnesses, which provides a

brief, simple summary of state and federal law, and the national hotline number. The MANGO sought and received endorsement from the city's police department, which gave the poster greater legitimacy than it may have had otherwise. In an interview about the poster, law enforcement officers said they felt comfortable endorsing the poster because it was a basic summary of law.

In contrast, a few months later another MANGO in the same city requested approval and endorsement of a draft code of conduct intended to encourage businesses to eradicate forced labor and sexual exploitation in their business practices, worksites, and supply chains. The draft code invited businesses in the city to commit to "comply with relevant laws and regulations" as well as to six other good practices for eradicating forced labor and sexual exploitation in and through business activity such as monitoring supply chains and training employees to report suspected exploitation. Although each of the elements of the draft code were defensible as useful means for combating business-based trafficking, law enforcement's initial response—articulated during an open forum in a meeting attended by law enforcement and MANGOs along with other types of organizations—was hesitation about making any explicit statement of approval or endorsement of the draft code. One reason provided was that the code asks businesses to state their willingness to obey laws, but legal compliance is mandatory without a voluntary code. Another reason stated was that the practices listed in the code went beyond compliance with the law. The volunteers from the MANGO who were requesting approval and/or endorsement from law enforcement were puzzled and taken aback by what they perceived as a lack of support for an initiative they had expected would be welcomed by law enforcement.

Another notable case involves the MANGO Stop Child Trafficking Now (SCTNow), which is organized around a three-part strategy of awareness, advocacy, and action (Stop Child Trafficking Now, 2011). One area of action that it promotes is assisting law enforcement through two functions: (1) conducting on-the-ground assessments of potential trafficking operations

(primarily brothels) and (2) offering law enforcement access to its database of potential trafficking locations, and of individuals who have engaged in sexually focused “chat” with its investigators who are posing online as minors—essentially conducting online investigations akin to those conducted by the U.S. Internet Crimes Against Children task forces. These particular functions are performed by Global Trident (<http://global-trident.com/partners.htm>), a recipient of SCTNow funding. A novel example of a public-private partnership, accessing the services offered by Global Trident can be a force multiplier for local law enforcement agencies. The San Jose Police Department entered into a memo of understanding with Global Trident in May 2011; Global Trident also works with other local agencies within the U.S. SCTNow and Global Trident have drawn criticism from some who cite a lack of results commensurate to the amount of money SCTNow has raised. Our intent here is not to endorse or condemn the mission or performance of SCTNow or Global Trident but to raise the law enforcement executives’ awareness that well-funded MANGOs with new strategies for combating human trafficking are emerging with increasing frequency in the anti-trafficking movement, and each of these must be examined carefully for potential benefits as well as risks.

We recommend that law enforcement leadership, when approached by MANGOs offering new ideas or capabilities, make an effort to not reject these opportunities out of hand. In our observations, many MANGOs are approaching law enforcement with good intentions, creative strategies, and potentially valuable human and material resources that can be useful within the complex fight against slavery. Over the last few years, we have both seen MANGOs enter the anti-trafficking space with a seemingly problematic strategy or project initially, and then witnessed these organizations make a real contribution after that strategy was tweaked through honest feedback by law enforcement and other NGOs. Clearly, any law enforcement agency, before they engage in any formal agreement or endorsement of a MANGO’s activity or product, should consult with their City Attorney, State Attorney General’s office, or other legal counsel.

Of course, law enforcement is not the only entity which can benefit by practicing the values of patience and empathy; we have also counseled MANGOs to take the time and make the effort needed to learn the dynamics of their local law enforcement representatives before proceeding with significant anti-trafficking initiatives. We routinely encourage MANGOs to commit to establishing strong professional ties with law enforcement, to demonstrate their credibility, and, perhaps most importantly, to realize that most law enforcement agencies are only now beginning to understand the intricacies of the multidisciplinary anti-trafficking response—and doing so while they continue to perform all of their other responsibilities. As MANGOs’ understanding of how law enforcement operates in combating human trafficking grows, they will be better able to develop creative and effective ways to assist law enforcement (Foot, 2011).

Discussion

The range of interactions between law enforcement and MANGOs that we have presented above evidence some of the differing objectives that are typical of each of these sectors, and some of the tensions that underlie interactions between these sectors. People in each sector hold distinct perspectives and concerns about people in the other sector. In order to move toward more constructive interaction, we urge people in each sector to consider the other’s viewpoints.

For law enforcement officers, awareness of trafficking-oriented MANGOs in general may be slim, and detailed information about any particular MANGO may be hard to find. From their perspective, MANGOs’ invitations to participate in community events on human trafficking may seem like unproductive time sinks. Requests for endorsements or approval statements on MANGO-initiated projects may evoke concerns about overreaching the legal bounds on law enforcement units and incurring liability. Reports of suspicious activity related to potential human trafficking, especially reports that are more impressionistic than factual, or not fully coherent, may be received by law enforcement as useless, at best, and annoying

or resource-draining. Law enforcement may be concerned about the potential for MANGO-initiated, citizen-conducted “investigations” of potential trafficking situations disrupting law enforcement’s own investigations, potentially endangering trafficking victims or the citizen investigators themselves.

It is also frustrating to some law enforcement officers, particularly those who have invested significant amounts of time in investigating human trafficking cases, that some MANGO-involved citizens are unaware of (or unimpressed by) law enforcement investigative efforts and successful arrests of traffickers. For instance, in talking about a national MANGO’s online slavery incident report platform, which includes data fields for citizens to report whether law enforcement was involved and to what effect, a law enforcement investigator confided to one of us the angst he felt over the fact that because much of what he and his colleagues do cannot be disclosed to the public until charges are filed, and because local news media do not always (nor accurately) report trafficking charges, law enforcement’s response to trafficking cases is often overlooked or misrepresented. He was frustrated that citizens documenting incident reports on MANGO platforms too often base their reports on partial and sometimes inaccurate information, making law enforcement seem passive or, worse, ineffective.

On the other hand, from the perspective of trafficking-oriented MANGOs, some individual law enforcement officers and units seem to be less informed and/or concerned about human trafficking than the MANGOs think they should be. Furthermore, most citizens involved in MANGOs are aware that in the current economic situation in the U.S., all public services are hard-pressed, and law enforcement agencies are underfunded and overstretched. For both of these reasons, and potentially other reasons, many trafficking-concerned citizens want to assist law enforcement in identifying potential cases of human trafficking. As we have described above, MANGOs explicitly encourage citizens to provide reports on suspicious activities to

law enforcement, and some offer trainings on how to do that clearly and systematically.

Some MANGOs perceive law enforcement as largely reactive—unwilling or unable to engage in or even support proactive efforts to prevent human trafficking. In the words of a MANGO-affiliated citizen who expressed a strong commitment to trying to work in partnership with law enforcement but relayed some difficulties in doing so, “While I hope that [law enforcement] would see a good reason to help with prevention, I feel like I get blank stares when I talk about efforts related to systemic prevention. I wonder if this is because [law enforcement personnel] are not trained to think about prevention or because they are not incentivized to help prevention efforts. As horrible as this sounds, at a subconscious level they are paid to catch criminals, so it’s in their interest to catch crime rather than prevent it from happening” (personal correspondence with an anonymous MANGO volunteer). We suggest that the fact that law enforcement units are indeed structured around responding to legal violations does not have to preclude individual officers or units from supporting MANGOs and other types of organizations in implementing prevention strategies. Prevention has been one of the U.S. government’s core principles for combating human trafficking since federal efforts commenced in 1999. Although the State Department’s *2010 Trafficking in Persons* report acknowledged that the U.S. Trafficking Victim Protection Act does not “give much guidance in setting forth prevention activities,” it reiterated its commitment to a broad and robust view of prevention, observing that around the world, “governments are expanding their understanding of prevention to include policies and practices that cut off modern slavery at the source” and that “governments, corporations, and consumers can come together” to implement prevention strategies (U.S. Department of State, 2010).

Finally, some MANGOs view law enforcement as slow or unwilling to act on potential human trafficking cases. Sometimes this perception is based on a lack of understanding of what it takes to conduct an investigation and why that process

can require a significant amount of time. However, some MANGO-involved citizens have developed that perception after initiating overtures to local law enforcement and not receiving what they feel are timely and substantive responses. Both of these (mis)perceptions can be largely remedied by more frequent and robust interactions between law enforcement and MANGOs; however, that will require greater responsiveness and time investments on the part of law enforcement.

Conclusion

In summary, we have presented evidence herein that there are significant potential benefits to be reaped in the fight against human trafficking from more robust collaboration between law enforcement and MANGOs. We have also demonstrated that there are potential risks from a lack of collaboration, or antagonism, between these sectors. If law enforcement units perceive overtures from citizens as increasingly frequent, annoying interruptions or distractions by individuals, they may miss the underlying organizing dynamics of MANGOs in the growing social movement against human trafficking as well as the opportunity to achieve greater success in identifying victims of trafficking or preventing trafficking in the first place.

In a nutshell, we have argued that because MANGOs focused on human trafficking are growing in number, geographical distribution, and size, local law enforcement units need to get acquainted with the leading MANGOs in their area and develop avenues for constructive dialogue. We have suggested encouraging high-quality reports of suspicious activity by MANGO-affiliated citizens and helping them learn how best to communicate their tips, responding positively when feasible to MANGOs' invitations to participate in community awareness-raising events and being as supportive as possible to MANGO-initiated strategies for not only halting human trafficking but preventing it.

Some law enforcement executives may not be aware that a federally organized multisector response to human trafficking has been developing since 2000, and that many states have

multisector response networks as well. The overview of the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance's (2011) multisector task force initiative is a good place to start developing knowledge and finding contacts. Since 2010, partnership within and across sectors has become one of the U.S. government's explicitly stated core principles for combating human trafficking. However, the State Department (2010) itself acknowledges that "While there is broad agreement on the purpose and benefits of a partnership approach to human trafficking, there is less agreement on and documentation of proven, successful strategies—something all should endeavor to create and share in the years ahead." An e-guide on multisector task force strategy and operations produced in 2010 by the U.S. Office for Victims of Crime and the Bureau of Justice Assistance provides excellent recommendations for initiating and sustaining collaborations to combat human trafficking (U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2011).

Under the mandate of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, every credible report of suspicious activity pertaining to human trafficking received by a law enforcement unit should be investigated or referred. Ideally, every local law enforcement body will ensure their staff is trained and networked via state and federal training and response networks and that they have a designated liaison for MANGOs and as-yet-unaffiliated citizens who want to report suspicious activities. Law enforcement agencies that have built capacity around human trafficking can serve as referral nodes for geographically proximate agencies. At minimum, every local law enforcement body should designate a staffperson to contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline with any human trafficking-related tips or potential cases brought to them by MANGOs or others.

In conclusion, the presence of human trafficking in every region of the U.S. is undeniable in light of the cases prosecuted over the last decade. In light of this unfortunate reality, local law enforcement units must engage with this complex crime as mandated by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and laws in most states. As public awareness of human trafficking increases, MANGOs will

continue to increase in number, and in the scope and level of their activities. Moving forward, law enforcement executives have an opportunity that should be considered carefully. Actively engage with, assist, and thereby influence the MANGOs in their communities, working together to foster positive relations with citizens who want to prevent this crime and report suspicious activity they observe, or dismiss these citizens as “just activists” who do not understand law enforcement and are focused on a crime that some law enforcement officers view as “not occurring in our city.” We hope the information provided herein inclines law enforcement executives toward active engagement with MANGOs for the benefit of both sectors and especially for the victims of human trafficking.

Endnotes

- ¹ Examples include the service provider NGOs that constitute the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking (see www.coloradocrimevictims.org/human_trafficking.html), which coordinates with the Colorado Law Enforcement Anti-Trafficking Task Force, and the member organizations of the Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (see <http://warn-trafficking.org>), which coordinates with law enforcement via the Washington Advisory Committee on Trafficking.
- ² Year-to-date data for 2011 was provided by Nicole Moler, Hotline Operations Coordinator, Polaris Project, via personal communication on December 2, 2011.
- ³ At the time of this writing, we both are members of the national steering committee for the U.S. Freedom Registry because we think it is a necessary and potentially valuable resource across sectors.

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