

WHAT'S THE COST OF A RUMOUR?

A guide to sorting out the myths and the facts about sporting events and trafficking



Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

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Writer and researcher: Julie Ham

Cover Photo by Jay Simmons
jay.simmons@rgbstock.com

Layout & design: Alfie Gordo
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Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

P.O. Box 36, Bangkok Noi Post Office

Bangkok 10700 Thailand

Email: gaatw@gaatw.org

Website: www.gaatw.org

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How to read this information guide?

What's this for?

There has been a lot published on the supposed link between sporting events and trafficking, but how much of it is true and how much of it is useful? With this guide, we've tried to pull out the most useful information on this topic. To do this, we reviewed literature from various sources including anti-trafficking organisations, sex workers rights organisations, other types of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academic researchers, UN bodies, government offices, the media and the GAATW network.

We hope that the information here will help readers:

- Develop proportionate and evidence-based anti-trafficking responses, rather than measures based on ideology or public myths;
- Critically analyse claims and assumptions about trafficking and sporting events;
- Share factual information about trafficking and quickly correct misinformation about trafficking;
- Quickly respond to measures that stigmatise sex workers and migrants, including prostitution abolitionist campaigns; and
- Learn what worked and what didn't in past host cities.

Who's this for?

Audiences that are interested in anti-trafficking issues:

- Media
- Government representatives
- General public
- Local officials, city planners
- Law enforcement
- Civil society, including anti-trafficking organisations and sex workers rights organisations



How to use this guide

Pull out what you need – Given the diverse needs of different audiences, we've tried to make each chapter work as a stand-alone document.

Listen to what different 'voices' are saying – Messages can resonate in different ways with different audiences, so we've tried very hard to include a variety of quotes representing different 'voices' that have worked on this issue. The quotes and source materials referenced here come from anti-trafficking organisations, sex workers rights organisations, law enforcement, journalists, government representatives, UN bodies, and researchers.

A note about language:

'Sex work' and 'prostitution'

The terminology around commercial sex can be very politically loaded. Sex workers rights organisations typically refer to commercial sex as 'sex work' and some have argued against using the term 'prostitution'. Groups that are seeking to eliminate all forms of sex work use the term 'prostitution' and reject the term 'sex work'. Since its inception, GAATW has supported sex workers' rights and valued the role of sex workers rights groups in anti-trafficking efforts. However, both 'sex work' and 'prostitution' are used throughout this document. In most cases, this is to maintain continuity between whose opinion is being stated; for example, 'prostitution' is often used when abolitionist efforts are being described, and 'sex work' is used when sex workers rights groups are discussed. In other instances, 'prostitution' is used when discussing frameworks that use the term 'prostitution' rather than 'sex work', e.g. laws in many countries refer to 'prostitution' rather than 'sex work'. Terms in quotes used in this document have also not been altered.

'Abolitionist' and 'prohibitionist'

There is also contention around how to identify those who wish to eliminate all forms of sex work. Many of those who wish to eliminate all forms of sex work identify themselves as 'abolitionists', i.e. working to abolish prostitution. In this document, these groups are identified as 'prostitution abolitionists' to differentiate them from 'abolitionists' in other movements (e.g. movement to abolish slavery). It should be noted that some sex workers rights allies feel that 'prohibitionist' is a more accurate description of these groups, as the measures abolitionist groups call for are generally based on increasing criminal penalties around consensual sex work. While prostitution abolitionists see their efforts as akin to abolishing slavery, sex workers rights allies and others see them as prohibitionists and their efforts more akin to prohibiting a social 'vice'.

Executive Summary

Human trafficking is a very serious human rights violation that demands a sustained and holistic response based on real evidence. We are concerned that valuable resources and public momentum are being channelled towards a false link between sporting events and trafficking for prostitution, resources that are needed elsewhere.

LOOKING AT THE EVIDENCE

- Trafficking is not the same thing as sex work. There is a difference between women trafficked into prostitution and sex workers who migrate to other countries for work.
- Prostitution abolitionists have argued that large groups of men at sporting events result in increased demand for commercial sex, and that this demand is supposedly met through trafficking women. Anti-trafficking organisations, sex workers rights organisations and other stakeholders have strongly refuted this claim.
- There is a very wide discrepancy between claims that are made prior to large sporting events and the actual number of trafficking cases found. There is no evidence that large sporting events cause an increase in trafficking for prostitution.

Event	What was predicted?	What actually happened?
2010 World Cup (South Africa)	40,000 foreign sex workers/trafficked women would be 'imported' for the event.	South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development did not find one case of trafficking during the event.
2010 Olympics (Canada)	"an explosion in human trafficking"	Data is still being finalized, but anecdotal and preliminary reports suggest no trafficking cases were identified and business fell for sex workers.
2006 World Cup (Germany)	40,000 foreign sex workers/trafficked women would be 'imported' for the event.	5 trafficking cases were found to be linked to the 2006 World Cup.
2004 Olympics (Greece)	Increase in trafficking for prostitution	No instances of trafficking for prostitution were linked to the 2004 Olympics.
2011, 2009, 2008 Super Bowl (US)	10,000-100,000 sex workers invading, flooding or trafficked for the event.	Law enforcement observed no increases in sex work-related arrests during the event.

DE-CONSTRUCTING A RUMOUR

Fortunately, more stakeholders are increasingly becoming aware that there is no evidence that large sporting events increase trafficking for prostitution. During previous sporting events, sex workers rights organisations in particular, have worked hard to inject an evidence-based approach and human rights-based approach into anti-trafficking discussions.

There are a number of reasons why an increase in trafficking for prostitution during large sporting events is unlikely:

- Statistically not feasible;
- Short-term events are not likely to be profitable for traffickers or sex workers;
- Large sporting events are not only attended by men; and
- Paid sexual services may not be affordable for most sports visitors.

Despite the lack of evidence, this idea continues to hold great appeal for prostitution abolitionist groups, anti-immigration groups, politicians and some journalists. The resilience of this inaccurate claim could be due to:

- Its usefulness as a fundraising strategy;
- Its effectiveness in grabbing the media and the public's attention;
- Being a quick, easy way to be seen 'doing something' about trafficking;
- Being a more socially acceptable guise for prostitution abolitionist agendas and anti-immigration agendas.

Even if numerous law enforcement and anti-trafficking campaigns have not detected the massive 'floods' predicted, the idea may still *sound* plausible because of:

- Ideas about 'better victims';
- Assumptions about sports and masculinity;
- Efforts by prostitution abolitionist groups; and
- Ideas about 'foreign threats'.

Anti-trafficking campaigns that are based on unsubstantiated claims can cause 'collateral damage' or negatively impact the groups they are purported to protect, including:

- Wasting needed resources;
- Misrepresenting people and issues, ultimately undermining anti-trafficking objectives;
- Resulting in increased criminal penalties and human rights violations against sex workers;
- Displacing sex workers and other marginalised groups in city 'clean-up' efforts; and
- Attempting to restrict or control women's travel.

ACTING EFFECTIVELY

More productive ways to deal with the issue of trafficking around international sporting events are:

- Addressing other forms of trafficking and/or exploitation connected to large sporting events, such as migrant workers' rights in the construction industry, workers' rights in sport clothing and equipment industries, and the recruitment of young athletes;
- Consulting and collaborating with groups directly affected by trafficking and/or anti-trafficking measures, including sex workers and migrants;
- Raising awareness about people's rights and options, instead of fuelling fear or pity;
- Encouraging more thoughtful analysis in public discussions around trafficking;
- Offering legal, non-exploitative labour options for migrants;
- Decriminalising sex work;
- Addressing sex workers' fears of police violence and exploitation; and
- Basing anti-trafficking efforts on evidence, not sensationalism.



LOOKING AT THE EVIDENCE

What is trafficking? What is *not* trafficking?

Trafficking in persons is a very serious human rights violation and is defined by three elements – the movement of a person; with deception or coercion; into a situation of forced labour, servitude or slavery-like practice.¹ Trafficking is not the same thing as sex work. While some persons are trafficked into prostitution, not all (or even most) sex workers are trafficked.

It is possible for sex workers to be trafficked. For example, women already doing sex work may plan to work abroad but find themselves in a situation where they are unable to move freely. Similarly, women who have not worked in the sex trade may know they will be doing sex work but find working conditions unacceptable (e.g. less choice about clients or services, lower rates).

Many women, whom we assisted, had agreed to work in the sex industry, and therefore do not complain about working in the sex industry, but do complain about their working conditions. Further one needs to keep in mind that some women, who were initially trafficked – decide to work in the sex industry later.² – Ban Ying, an anti-trafficking organisation based in Germany and GAATW member

Sexual exploitation is also not the same thing as sex work. While some sex workers may be sexually exploited (e.g. if a customer refuses to pay, if a club owner demands sexual favours from an employee), not all sex workers are sexually exploited (i.e. paid, consensual sex is not sexual exploitation).

Escaping trafficking to work independently with other sex workers

Bee (not her real name) was sold by her brother to one of his friends who owned a brothel in the Narathiwat province in Thailand. Bee was determined to help her brother and was not afraid of going away to work as she knew who her employer would be. However, after some time passed, she discovered she was bonded to her employer and 'in debt' as her brother had been regularly withdrawing her pay from the owner. She fled the brothel and started working independently in sex work with other sex workers: "Some of the girls who couldn't stand the pressure and exploitation, joined together to work. We rented a room together and worked without having anyone take a cut in our earnings or forcing us to do anything. We would look out for each other and find our own customers, like a self-reliant group. When some of the girls had saved enough money, they left the group to return home." About a year after earning money as a sex worker, Bee decided to return home.³ – Self Empowerment Programme for Migrant Women (SEPOM), a returnee migrant women's organisation in Thailand

Trafficking women into prostitution is different from (a) sex workers who migrate to other countries for work on their own, and (b) persons who help sex workers migrate to other countries for work (i.e. helping someone travel in itself does not fit the international definition for trafficking).

Despite several media reports to the contrary, foreign migrant sex workers are not automatically victims of trafficking....Research in Southern Africa has established that a number of migrant women choose to engage in sex work as a practical solution to periods of intense economic strain. Although some may make this choice reluctantly, they are not victims of trafficking. Therefore, they should not be treated as victims to be 'rescued' and returned to their countries of origin. The idea that migrant sex workers need to be 'rescued' and 'rehabilitated' is harmful rather than helpful, as it overlooks the agency and rights of those who engage in sex work.⁴ – Marlise Richter and Tamlyn

GAATW's membership has very diverse opinions on sex work, but what we agree on is that:

- Sex workers have the right to organize;
- Sex workers have the right to safe working conditions;
- Violence against women in sex work is a grave human rights violation;
- Trafficking is distinct from sex work; and
- Anti-trafficking policies must factor in sex workers' concerns and knowledge.

In addition to understanding the difference between trafficking and sex work, people should also be prepared to question trafficking statistics often repeated in the media. Measuring trafficking is notoriously difficult and estimates can vary widely due to methodological and ideological differences. In actuality, there still is not a sufficient body of research that accurately measures how many people are trafficked globally and how many of these are women, men, transgender and/or children.^{5 6} One significant limitation has been researchers' selective focus on a particular type of trafficking, specifically trafficking of women into prostitution.⁷ The consequences of what this selective focus has had on victims of other forms of trafficking are detailed in GAATW's 2011 Working Paper on Labour Exploitation (www.gatw.org).

When it comes to statistics, trafficking of girls and women is one of several highly emotive issues which seem to overwhelm critical faculties. Numbers take on a life of their own, gaining acceptance through repetition, often with little inquiry into their derivations. Journalists, bowing to the pressures of editors, demand numbers, any number. Organizations feel compelled to supply them, lending false precisions and spurious authority to many reports.⁸ – Trafficking Statistics Project, UNESCO Bangkok

Ann Jordan from the Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law (US) suggests the following strategies to assess the accuracy of anti-trafficking data:

- Examine the definitions used, e.g. how is trafficking defined, how is exploitation defined;
- Locate the source of the data;
- Examine the research methodology;
- Think about what information may be missing; and
- Ask whether the data actually supports the conclusion.⁹

What is the link being made between trafficking and large sporting events?

Somewhere along the way, testosterone-lined sports events like the Super Bowl began to have the reputation of rolling versions of Sodom and Gomorrah. Months before each event, the clarion calls warn of impending invasions by legions of those who belong to the world's oldest profession.¹⁰ – 'Super Bowl hyperbole and prostitution', The Star (Toronto, Canada)

The assumed link between large sporting events and trafficking for prostitution has been argued most forcefully by groups who believe that eradicating sex work will decrease trafficking (i.e. prostitution abolitionists). These groups have claimed that large groups of men results in an increased demand for paid sexual services, and that this demand will supposedly be met through the trafficking of women.

"Any time that you have a mega event... trafficking goes up because the demand goes up. Any time you have men traveling away from their social networks [to a place] where they enjoy a degree of safety and anonymity, they're more likely to pay for sex."¹¹ – Michelle Miller, Resist Exploitation, Embrace Dignity

This simplistic equation relies on problematic assumptions about masculinity, business practices within the sex industry, sex workers' capacity to take action, and the root causes of trafficking.

Within the demand-supply equation, the estimated number of migrant sex workers needed to fulfil the demand during the World Cup altered to the number of women who might be trafficked, by establishing at first potential and subsequently an explicit connection between sporting events and the increase in demand for commercial sex. Finally, the claim that some women among those expected to migrate might be trafficked, that is forced into the sex industry, or deceived about the conditions of work, evolved to the claim that the majority if not all women will be trafficked.¹² – Dr. Sanja Milivojević (University of New South Wales) and Dr. Sharon Pickering (Monash University), Australia

The hype around large sporting events and increases in trafficking for prostitution is often based on misinformation, poor data, and a tendency to sensationalise. Despite the lack of evidence, this idea continues to hold great appeal for prostitution abolitionist groups, anti-immigration groups, and a number of politicians, scholars and journalists.

What's troubling is that this idea has been taken for granted as fact, particularly by politicians. On various occasions, politicians have uncritically repeated this claim¹³, despite the fact that numerous researchers, anti-trafficking experts, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have stated that there is no evidence of a link between large sporting events and trafficking for prostitution.

This has perhaps been most visible with inter-governmental discussions prior to the 2006 World Cup in Germany. This issue first arose, not because NGOs or law enforcement detected any increases, but because it presented the Swedish government with a political opportunity to challenge Germany's policy towards sex work. The Swedish government argued that Germany's policy of legalised prostitution would increase the risk of trafficking for the 2006 World Cup.¹⁴ This was followed by a European Parliament resolution on 15 March 2006, falsely claiming that *"major sports events result in a temporary and spectacular increase in the demand for sexual services"*¹⁵ and repeated by the Council of Europe:

Taking into account the European Parliament's resolution of 15 March 2006 on forced prostitution in the context of world sports events¹⁶, the Presidency emphasises the fact that major international events, including sports events, have shown to pose the risk to contribute to a temporary increase in trafficking in human beings.¹⁷

Given the high numbers of tourists, visitors and temporary workers related to large sporting events, some have argued that there could be an increase in business for women in sex work. Sex workers have also remarked that these events could be an opportunity to gain more clients. However, based on available information (including anecdotal reports), many sex workers report being surprised and disappointed at the lack of business during large sporting events. In any case, any small increases in the demand for paid sexual services have not reached the extremely high levels predicted by prostitution abolitionist groups.

There's no doubt prostitution takes place during Super Bowl week, and that prostitutes do flock to big events, like conventions or festivals, but the hyperbole seems to more often than not to outstrip the event.¹⁸ – 'Super Bowl hyperbole and prostitution', The Star (Toronto, Canada)

What is the evidence on this link?

Despite massive media attention, law enforcement measures and efforts by prostitution abolitionist groups, there is no empirical evidence that trafficking for prostitution increases around large sporting events. This link has been de-bunked by other anti-trafficking organisations and researchers. There is also no empirical evidence that the demand for paid sex increases dramatically during international sporting events.^{19 20}

For all of the events detailed in this section (the events that had the most media coverage about trafficking), cases of trafficking for *prostitution* linked to the sporting event were absent or nowhere near the predicted levels.

The focus on 40,000 "forced prostitutes" [supposedly in Germany for the World Cup] is characteristic for a discourse which does not make exact distinctions between undocumented sex workers who work here without a visa and a work permit but on a voluntary basis; and sex workers who are trafficked.²¹ – Dr. Nivedita Prasad & Babette Rohner, Ban Ying, an anti-trafficking organisation (Germany) and GAATW member

No one is quite sure where the number originated. But in the past few years, whenever a place holds a great sporting event the rumor of a flood of prostitutes soon blossoms. And for some reason that number is 40,000. Laura Agustin, a sociologist who studies and blogs about migrant sex workers, calls it "a fantasy number." "It has no basis."²² – 'Debunking World Cup's biggest myth', Yahoo! Sports

2010 World Cup, South Africa

WHAT WAS PREDICTED?

40,000 extra prostitutes/foreign prostitutes/trafficked women/forced prostitutes were *predicted* to be 'imported' for the event

The South African Central Drug Authority's claim that 40,000 women would be imported for the 2010 World Cup was repeated by various media.²³

However, researchers, government representatives, sex workers rights groups and the International Organisation for Migration all argue that the 40,000 to 100,000 figures reported by the media and public officials are unfounded hype and recycled rumours from previous sporting events, such as the 2006 German World Cup.²⁴

Dr. Chandré Gould, Institute for Security Studies (South Africa) suggested that the figure originated with an agency official but was mistakenly interpreted as an official estimate: "I don't think at any stage it was really a serious answer."²⁵ Another article quoted a government representative saying: "We laughed at that [40,000] number," and "There was no evidence there would ever be 40,000 prostitutes."²⁶

One flaw with the number is obvious, says Patrick Belser, a senior economist with the International Labour Organization, a United Nations agency. Of the hundreds of thousands of people expected to visit South Africa for the World Cup, not all of them are men, and most men probably wouldn't seek to pay for sex. An additional 40,000 sex workers, says Dr. Belser, "would represent some kind of oversupply."²⁷ – 'Suspect estimates of sex trafficking at the World Cup', Wall Street Journal

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED?

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development did not find one case of trafficking during the World Cup.

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development reported at a Parliamentary meeting that no cases of trafficking were found during the World Cup.²⁸ This was mentioned in a report by the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) and the South African National AIDS Council's (SANAC) Women's Sector²⁹ but was not reported by the media, despite the intense media and political attention on trafficking leading up to the 2010 World Cup.

OVERALL, BUSINESS WAS DOWN

Both the purchase and sale of sex is illegal in South Africa. Related activities such as brothel keeping and living off the earnings from sex work, are also illegal.³⁰

Research commissioned by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) found that there was a small increase in the number of female workers who advertised online and in newspapers but that the percentage of non-South African sex workers declined rather than increased in relation to the World Cup. The *total number* of clients seen by sex workers did not increase significantly, although the percentage of foreign clients doubled during the event. This suggests that a percentage of the local clientele was temporarily replaced by foreign clients during the event.^{31 32}

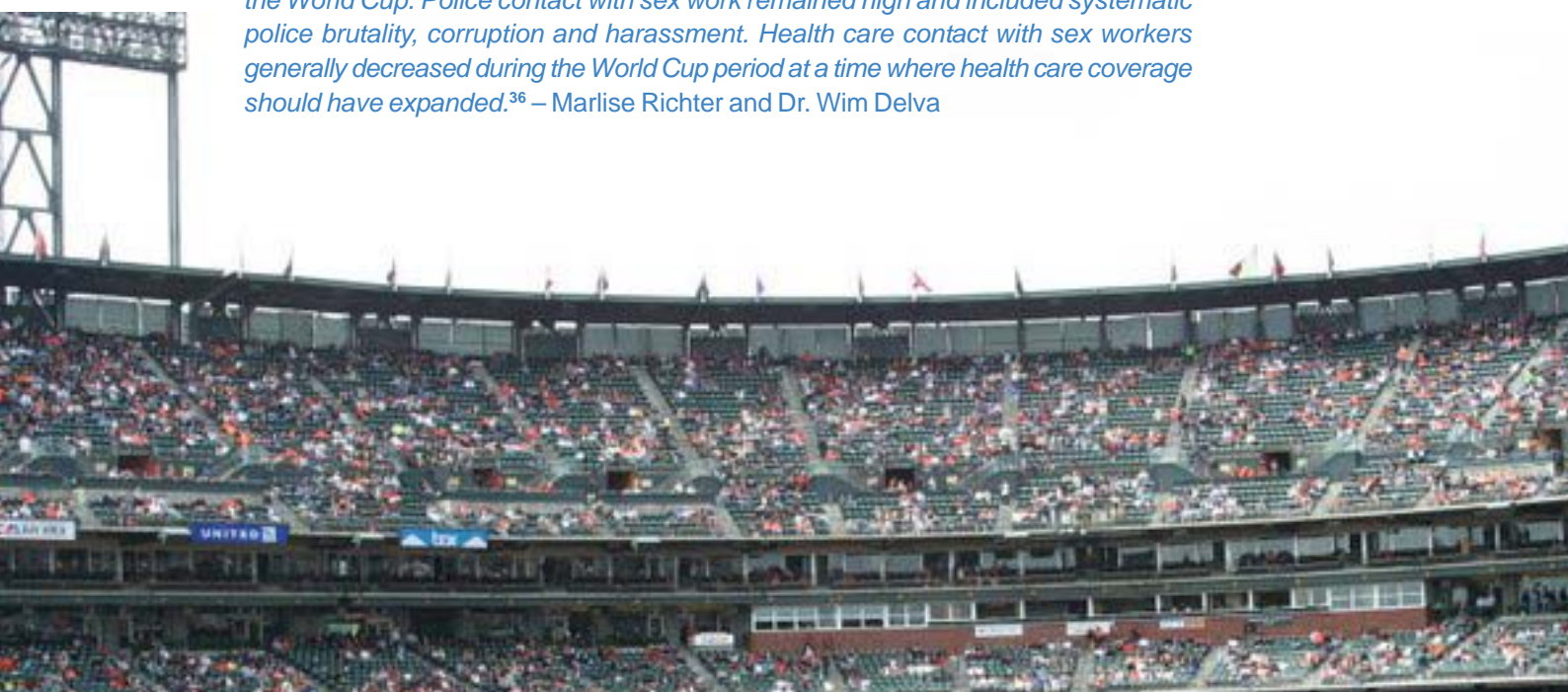
Before the World Cup, many sex workers expressed the hope that they would be able to make more money during the World Cup, that their working conditions might improve, that they would meet new clients, and that some might be able to leave the sex work industry....Despite high sex worker hopes, more than two thirds of sex female workers had seen no change in the sex industry during the World Cup period.³³ – Marlise Richter and Dr. Wim Delva

Anecdotal reports in the media from sex workers and business owners reported that business (or 'demand') fell during the World Cup:

- *No, I didn't make money, nothing. I only see my regular clients, my local regular clients. I never saw foreigner or nothing. I didn't make even money.³⁴ – 'World Cup avoids flood of sex workers', National Public Radio (US)*
- *Paula at Executive Shows, which provides exotic dancers for adult entertainment clubs, said business had been terrible. Since the World Cup began, the roughly 300 clubs across Gauteng for whom she books girls have cancelled shows. "Guys would rather watch soccer. I am counting down the days until the end."³⁵ – 'No 'boom boom' for Joburg's sex workers', IOL News (South Africa)*

Unfortunately, all the media hype around trafficking did nothing to reduce sex workers' vulnerabilities:

Much media attention was focused on South Africa's sex industry in the run-up to the World Cup, but few actors engaged sex workers on their needs and expectations of the World Cup. Police contact with sex work remained high and included systematic police brutality, corruption and harassment. Health care contact with sex workers generally decreased during the World Cup period at a time where health care coverage should have expanded.³⁶ – Marlise Richter and Dr. Wim Delva



2010 Olympics, Vancouver, Canada

WHAT WAS PREDICTED?

It was mainly the media, prostitution abolitionist groups, faith-based groups, and the Salvation Army that predicted trafficking would increase during the Vancouver Olympics, warning of “an explosion” in human trafficking.³⁷ The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) estimates that approximately 800 people are trafficked into Canada per year, with an estimated 600 trafficked into the sex trade.³⁸

While the government was relatively quiet, “secure in the knowledge of their border security budget of 6 billion dollars”, the period before the Olympics “then became the battle zone between sex workers’ rights organisations and abolitionist groups focused on curbing male sexual demand with graphic and sensationalist posters and media campaigns”. One law enforcement vice police officer said he did not even know what he was looking for, that he was “searching for ghosts”.³⁹ – Dr. Annalee Lepp, GAATW Canada

Law enforcement and sex workers rights groups in Vancouver tried to counter these claims that trafficking would increase by:

- Pointing to evidence from past events;
- Clarifying the distinction between trafficking and sex work; and
- Critiquing the messages in prostitution abolitionist campaigns. Vancouver Police Inspector John de Haas spoke out against the Salvation Army’s anti-trafficking campaign (*The Truth Isn’t Sexy*) and argued that information campaigns should be grounded in facts and “not cause hysteria”.⁴⁰

“There’s been an erosion between some of the distinctions between human trafficking and sex trade and victimization...While there may be an increase in prostitution, there hasn’t been any link between human trafficking and prostitution.” “As far as I know we haven’t had a spike in investigations in human trafficking or human smuggling that we can link to the 2010 Olympics in any way.”⁴¹ – Sgt. Duncan Pound, British Columbia Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Border Integrity Program

“It costs a lot of money to move people around. It’s a short-term event, so from a trafficker’s perspective, it wouldn’t make a lot of sense.”⁴² Vancouver Police Inspector John de Haas.

Prostitution abolitionist groups claimed that any efforts to empower sex workers to improve their working conditions would increase trafficking around the Olympics. In 2007, the British Columbia Coalition of Experiential Communities (BCCEC) proposed a sex worker-led, cooperative brothel, as a strategy to improve workers’ safety, reduce violence against street-based workers, and mitigate displacement by Olympic-related law enforcement measures.⁴³ Prostitution abolitionist groups and the Committee Against Human Trafficking launched a campaign to protest Vancouver’s mayor, who said he would consider the proposal.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED?

Researchers are still examining the data⁴⁴, but anecdotal reports suggest no trafficking cases were identified and business (or 'demand') was down for sex workers.

In Canada, it is not illegal to buy or sell sex, but many related activities are illegal. For instance, it is illegal to own or occupy a 'bawdy house' (i.e. location regularly used for sex work), live on the avails of sex work (e.g. earnings), talk with a client in a public place, or assist anyone to work in sex work (e.g. security, receptionists, accountants, etc.).⁴⁵

A study with 230 sex workers found that during the Olympics, sex workers reported significantly more police stopping sex workers without arrest, less clients, and more difficulty meeting clients due to construction.⁴⁶ The same study found no significant increases in new sex workers or trafficked sex workers. Other research on the impact of the 2010 Olympics on trafficking and sex work is still being finalised.⁴⁷ However, anecdotal reports from sex workers groups in Vancouver confirm that business (or 'demand') was slow for sex workers.⁴⁸

"Our members reported that business was slow," said Kerry Porth, the executive director of Prostitution Alternatives Counseling & Education Society (PACE), which offered free media training and nightly outreach sessions during the Games. "But the most important thing is that they were able to work safely." ...[U]nless they receive a complaint, the Vancouver Police Department usually gives sex workers a wide berth to conduct business. During the Games, they honored their commitment to continue the no-arrest routine. The city even donated extra money to PACE, so the organization could stay open overnight, and proffered tickets to Olympics events for sex workers who partook in PACE outreach.⁴⁹ – 'Vancouver sex workers had 'an amazing two weeks', AOL News

Anecdotally, there was no increase in levels of prostitution. "In fact, there was likely a reduction in work for both street level and inside workers," Shannon said, citing that added security and a decreased area, with more areas given to the Games, may have affected clientele.⁵⁰ – Esther Shannon, FIRST, a sex worker ally group (Canada) and GAATW member



2006 World Cup, Berlin, Germany

WHAT WAS PREDICTED?

40,000 extra prostitutes/foreign prostitutes/trafficked women/forced prostitutes were *predicted* to be 'imported' for the event

*Nobody knows, but the number is making a national career and has turned into a steady figure.*⁵¹ – Dr. Nivedita Prasad & Babette Rohner, Ban Ying, an anti-trafficking organisation (Germany) and GAATW member

Estimates that 40,000 women would be 'imported' for the 2006 World Cup was first claimed by the Association of German Cities who later disclaimed the figure; CARE for Europe; the Salvation Army; the German Women's Council or *Deutscher Frauenrat*; and the Nordic Council.^{52 53 54} The Council of Europe estimated that 30,000 to 60,000 women would be trafficked for the event.⁵⁵

Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs), experts, and law enforcement services later argued that the figure was unrealistic and unfounded, arguing that with 1,000 victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in Germany a year, an increase to 40,000 would be highly unlikely.^{56 57} However, media and politicians continued to circulate estimates and figures from prostitution abolitionist groups.

*[T]he moral panic around 'sex slaves' and the World Cup in Germany was fuelled by sensationalistic reporting, in which trafficking was reduced to sex work, and women trafficked for sex portrayed as innocent and naive girls forced into the sex industry.*⁵⁸
– Dr. Sanja Milivojević (University of New South Wales), Australia

Prostitution is a legally recognised profession in Germany. Germany (and the Netherlands) have "*the most liberal prostitution policies in Western Europe*": sex work is recognised as a legal profession, sex workers are recognised as employees and are entitled to social benefits and health insurance.⁵⁹

US and Swedish government representatives used the World Cup 'moral panic' to challenge Germany's policies on sex work⁶⁰ with the US lobbying for the German government to criminalise all sex work, despite "*no conclusive evidence [that] Germany's liberal approach to prostitution made it more attractive to human traffickers.*"⁶¹

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED?

*"All data, information and experts' statements that are available to date strongly indicate that an increase in human trafficking, during and after the World Cup did not occur."*⁶²
– Jana Hennig, Sarah Craggs, Frank Laczko and Fred Larsson

5 trafficking cases assumed to have a direct link to the 2006 World Cup⁶³

Researchers for the International Organisation for Migration (intergovernmental organisation) found that at the time of the 2006 World Cup, 33 investigation cases of human trafficking for the purposes of prostitution and/or promotion of human trafficking were reported to the Federal Criminal Police Office.⁶⁴ Of these, only 5 cases were thought to be linked to the 2006 World Cup. These 5 cases involved 4 female victims and 1 male victim, all between the ages of 18-21. The victims came from Bulgaria (2 women), Hungary (1 man), the Czech Republic (1 woman) and Germany (1 woman).

Police also targeted sex workers, aggressively raided brothels and intensified checks on brothels.

*Police raided 71 brothels in Berlin during the 2006 World Cup. Police found no evidence of trafficking but deported ten women.*⁶⁵ – Ban Ying, an anti-trafficking organisation (Germany) and GAATW member

Obviously, even one victim of trafficking deserves serious attention and care. However, these numbers are far below the predicted estimates that have typically been promoted by anti-prostitution organisations. These findings were echoed by other anti-trafficking stakeholders:

*Four different national hotlines have been set up by NGOs. For Berlin, Ban Ying had agreed to assist trafficked women, if any would have called. The 1st hotline started on the 1st of May. Till today we have received one (!) phone call – but even this one case was not a case of trafficking. We do not know how many calls were directed to NGO'S in other cities – but had there been an increase we would have realised it in Berlin...Besides these hotlines, we had business as usual – no more phone calls from (potentially) trafficked women or clients.*⁶⁶ – Ban Ying, a German anti-trafficking organisation and GAATW member organisation

*None of the La Strada member organisations received information on referrals on trafficking cases explicitly related to the World Cup event.*⁶⁷ – La Strada International, a European network of anti-trafficking organisations and GAATW member organisation

*The mass of prostitutes simply never arrived and people involved in the sex industry were hardly surprised... Those who work in the sex industry and its associated services in Germany saw the whole thing as 'hysterical media hype' and the claims of the predicted forced prostitution as 'exaggerations'.*⁶⁸ – Samuel Loewenberg

The German Government reported to the Council of the European Union that the number of sex workers only increased in the city of Munich⁶⁹ (from 500 sex workers to 800 sex workers) as a result of the World Cup, but trafficking did not. There were also no significant increases in “*illegal stays in connection with the practice of prostitution*”.⁷⁰

2004 Olympics Athens, Greece

INACCURATE REPORTING AND INTERNATIONAL CONTROVERSY

The 2004 Athens Olympics appears to be the first event where trafficking was misleadingly linked with an international sporting event.⁷¹ In the lead-up to the Olympics, Athens officials attempted to enforce city regulations regarding brothels, e.g. brothels are only allowed to employ a maximum of three people, must not be located near schools, and should have a permit to operate legally.^{72 73} This was inaccurately reported in the media as an attempt to increase the number of brothels (when in fact, city officials had tried to shut down 15 brothels). Inaccurate media reports were then used by Scandinavian and a few Eastern European government ministers to accuse Athens officials of encouraging sex tourism.

In other words, when 230 permits were issued to already existing brothels in the year before the 2004 Olympics, this was interpreted by abolitionists as Greece sanctioning a major expansion of the sex industry and, by extension, sex trafficking.⁷⁴ – ‘Sexual enslavement at the Ryder Cup?’

KAGE, a Greek sex workers union, charged that the city was encouraging *illegal* prostitution by cracking down on *legal* brothels that would drive legal sex workers out of business (prostitution is regulated in Greece, sex workers are required to undergo health checks and pay social insurance).⁷⁵

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED?

No instances of trafficking for prostitution were linked to the 2004 Olympics

Some have repeated a misleading argument by the Future Group that there was a 95% increase in trafficking in Athens.⁷⁶ To be precise, 181 trafficked persons were reported in *all* of 2004, which is an increase from 93 trafficked persons that were reported in *all* of 2003.⁷⁷ However, none of these cases were linked to the 2004 Olympics, according to Greece’s Annual Report on Organised Crime and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Athens.⁷⁸ NGOs also did not report increases in trafficking which suggests that the higher number of reported victims was due to increased efforts to identify victims, and better detection and reporting methods.⁷⁹

Anti-trafficking efforts also included prevention measures by children’s rights NGOs (although these focused more on outreach than awareness raising). They reported that child trafficking for prostitution did not increase during the Olympics, and that the number of street children decreased during this period.^{80 81} Street assessments by NGOs identified and repatriated 6 trafficked children.⁸²

A local sex worker activist noted that business didn’t improve during the Olympics, contrary to their expectations: “No, we haven’t seen the slightest increase in demand”.⁸³

US Super Bowls, e.g. Dallas (2011), Tampa (2009), Phoenix (2008)

WHAT WAS PREDICTED?

Anywhere from 10,000 to 100,000 sex workers will 'invade', 'flood', be magnetically drawn towards, or be trafficked for the Super Bowl

There has been great interest among US media around an unsubstantiated link between trafficking and the Super Bowl. Hyperbolic claims about floods or invasions of 10,000 to 100,000 sex workers to the Super Bowl has been widely repeated by American media, as has Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott's unfounded claim that "*the Super Bowl is one of the biggest human trafficking events in the United States*".⁸⁴

Despite the widespread repetition of these claims, only a few journalists have questioned the plausibility of these claims. A few journalists have pointed out that the total number of visitors to the Super Bowl is estimated between 150,000 to 200,000⁸⁵ and that at these figures, "*it meant that every man, woman and child holding a ticket would have their own personal hooker, from the vice presidential wing of FedEx to Little Timmy from Green Bay*".⁸⁶

WHAT HAS ACTUALLY HAPPENED?

Within the US, prostitution laws are specific to each state. In most states, both the sale and purchase of sex is illegal, with a disproportionate emphasis on punishing persons who sell sex.⁸⁷ The confusion between eliminating sex work and tackling trafficking was institutionalised by the US government under the Bush administration.⁸⁸

Given the amount of media attention paid to estimates of what *might* happen in the lead up to the Super Bowl, there is surprisingly little media information about what *actually* happened or any post-event analysis. Below are excerpts from the only two articles we could locate that included post-event assessments.

*Phoenix hosted the big game three years ago [2008]. Police there told News 8 they received similar warnings about an increase in prostitution and prepared for it, but never uncovered any evidence of a spike in illegal sexual activity. "I think one of the things people automatically assume is that while you've got influential people in town, people with significant amounts of money and therefore a whole lot of prostitution is going to follow with that," said Phoenix police spokesman Sgt. Tommy Thompson. "We did not notice an increase or anything out of the ordinary." Tampa hosted the Super Bowl in 2009. A police spokeswoman there said officers there made 11 prostitution arrests during the entire week leading up to the game. And last year [2010], Miami police told News 8 they arrested 14 for prostitution. Those figures are not uncommon for large cities during a seven-day period, experts said.*⁸⁹
– 'Super Bowl prostitution forecast has no proof', WFAA

*"We may have had certain precincts that were going gangbusters looking for prostitutes, but they were picking up your everyday street prostitutes." "They didn't notice any sort of glitch in the number of prostitution arrests leading up to the Super Bowl."*⁹⁰ – Sergeant Tommy Thompson, Phoenix, Arizona (2008 Super Bowl).

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DE-CONSTRUCTING A RUMOUR

If there isn't any evidence, why is the connection still made? Doesn't all this attention mean *something's* going on?

Despite the lack of evidence, it's striking to see how much interest this issue still holds for some media, politicians and prostitution abolitionist groups. The resilience of this claim is partly due to:

- its usefulness as a fundraising strategy,
- as a way to grab the media or the public's attention,
- being a quick, easy way to 'do something' about trafficking, and
- its usefulness in justifying social control measures (e.g. anti-migration measures, crackdowns on sex workers) and cultivating 'moral panics'.⁹¹

*The media has jumped onto a rumour and unfortunately some NGOs are using it for publicity.*⁹² – Ban Ying (Germany), an anti-trafficking organisation and GAATW member

*Of course, we in the media are equally culpable. We dutifully relay the fraud via our Patented Brand of Unquestioning Stenography, rarely bothering to check if it's remotely plausible. And by this time, there's no going back. The fraud must be upheld. Charities have raised money to help the innocents. Politicians have brayed and task forces have been appointed. Editors and news directors have ordered five-part series. No one wants to look like a moron.*⁹³ - 'The Super Bowl prostitute myth: 100,000 hookers won't be showing up in Dallas', Dallas Observer (US)

Internationally, human trafficking is a highly visible issue and national governments are frequently called upon to improve their efforts to fight human trafficking. At the same time, some governments have been critiqued for not doing enough to address the root causes of trafficking, such as poverty. Large sporting events can provide a chance for governments to visibly affirm their commitment to fighting trafficking while leaving more politically charged issues untouched (such as the link between restrictive migration policies and human trafficking⁹⁴).

The supposed link between sporting events and trafficking for prostitution first gained international attention in the lead up to the 2004 Athens Olympics. The attention didn't come from organisations working directly with trafficked persons but rather came from Northern European governments who criticised the Greek government's policies on regulating prostitution.⁹⁵

But why is this idea so appealing? Even if numerous law enforcement and anti-trafficking campaigns have not detected the massive 'floods' predicted, why does it still *sound* plausible? Like other unsubstantiated 'moral panics' (e.g. 'white slavery'), it could be due to a combination of ideas about women's sexuality, foreign or racial threats, 'evil perpetrators' and 'suitable victims'.⁹⁶

*Profoundly this scare speaks to an elite fear of unpredictable movements across borders, of working-class male behaviour, and of Third World women being easily tricked into a life of sexual bondage.*⁹⁷ – 'Stop this illicit trade in bullshit stories', spiked

'Better victims'

For some, the simplistic cause and effect argument is an easier fit (e.g. for some media, politicians) than the complexities and ambiguities that trafficking actually involves. In other words, it offers audiences an easy way of *"feeling good about feeling bad"*.⁹⁸ GAATW members and anti-trafficking practitioners have remarked on how useful the powerless female trafficking victim identity is in generating public interest and attracting funds, sometimes to the detriment of other issues.⁹⁹ By comparison, encouraging more thoughtful discussion on migrants' rights and strategies for survival can result in xenophobic or racist backlash and less public, media and donor interest.

So how do these myths get started? Through good intentions, of course. But it's hard to kindle interest in the world's oldest profession. So they latch onto the occasional news story or CNN special. After all, children in distress sell. "Underage girls make better victims, better poster children," says [Maggie] McNeill [The Honest Courtesan], a former librarian with a master's from LSU. "I'm 44. What kind of believable victim would I make?"¹⁰⁰ – 'The Super Bowl prostitute myth: 100,000 hookers won't be showing up in Dallas', Dallas Observer (US)

"This is an issue as I've suggested that appeals to people's emotions - they are afraid of what is happening, it is obviously not a good thing; and it appeals I think to the savior mentality of a lot of western countries, and a lot of westerners about trying to fix the problems of the third world."¹⁰¹ – Dr. Loren Landau, University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa)

Assumptions about sports and masculinity

The hype around sporting events and trafficking for prostitution relies on hetero-normative or heterosexist notions about masculinity and femininity. Crowds are assumed to be predominantly male crowds demanding commercial sex, and women are only visible as targets for men's 'demand'.

"There are large volumes of people coming and they are men. They are away from home and alcohol is flowing and they want sex."¹⁰² – Christine MacMillan, Salvation Army

However, reports found that many of the visitors and spectators at the 2006 World Cup (Germany) and the 2010 World Cup (South Africa) comprised families, women, couples, and mixed groups.¹⁰³ In South Africa, fears of trafficking partially stemmed from the idea of "rowdy male fans" being the only visitors that would be willing to visit a country with high crime rates, which turned out to be false.¹⁰⁴

Two South African publications challenged the focus on sex workers as the only representation of women around the World Cup. *Agenda* magazine¹⁰⁵ and the *Gender Media Diversity Journal*¹⁰⁶ both devoted an issue to exploring some of the other gendered issues around the World Cup, such as issues impacting women construction workers, women entrepreneurs (e.g. street vendors), women spectators, women athletes and other women involved in sports (e.g. referees).

"[T]he only gendered conversations I have heard surrounding 2010 are those of sex work. I am not sure if the Department of Tourism has thought about linking the various women owned hospitality companies to various tourism activities they have lined up for 2010."¹⁰⁷ – Dr. Elaine Salo, Gender Institute at the University of Pretoria, South Africa

The response to women at the 2006 World Cup is telling...Even the media preoccupation with forced prostitution contributed to the larger fantasy engendered by the World Cup. The connection between sex, football and men is so taken for granted that no one seems to have questioned its presumption. On the other hand,

women as fans – both in the flesh and from a distance – were not considered during this ‘male World Cup’, despite constituting 40 to 50 percent of the fan base.¹⁰⁸ – Margot Rubin

Prostitution abolitionist agendas

The groups that have argued the loudest about this link have typically been groups calling for an end to sex work. They have argued that an increase in sex work results in an increase in trafficking, and that sex work should be eradicated because trafficking can occur in the sex trade.¹⁰⁹ These groups also see male customers ultimately as the cause for commercial sex.¹¹⁰

Members of the Canadian public and those visiting Canada during the 2010 Olympics need to be advised of laws against sexual exploitation and human trafficking. This is particularly necessary because some visitors will come from countries where prostitution is legal, and it is critical that the demand for sexually exploitative activities not be permitted to spike.¹¹¹ – The Future Group, a prostitution abolitionist/anti-trafficking organisation (Canada)

This argument has been criticized by anti-trafficking organisations (including GAATW) for confusing trafficking with prostitution and muddying efforts to genuinely address trafficking (in various sectors). Getting rid of a sector because it can include trafficked labour is not a strategy that is supported by many anti-trafficking advocates. For example, although domestic violence has been identified as a serious issue in marriages, few have publicly argued that the institution of marriage should be abolished to eradicate domestic violence. Likewise, human rights violations against people working in the agriculture sector have been documented in numerous countries. Yet no organisations are calling for the abolition of agricultural work, but rather for greater protection of workers’ rights and enforcement of labour standards. Sex workers rights organisations and sex worker allies (including GAATW), have also protested abolitionist approaches towards sex work, who logically argue that these efforts often end up criminalising, stigmatising or threatening sex workers’ health, safety, and income. On the other hand, sex workers rights and their allies argue that decriminalising sex work can increase sex workers’ power over their working conditions, foster cooperation with police, and allow sex workers to contribute to anti-trafficking efforts (also see ‘Decriminalise sex work’ on page 62).

The prostitution abolitionist movement *claims* not to victimise women by instead stigmatising men who seek commercial sexual services.¹¹² However, sex workers rights organisations have protested efforts to criminalise sex workers clients, arguing that it jeopardises sex workers’ safety and income.

As stated, World Cup fears concerning the number of women and girls who might be trafficked into Germany for the purpose of sexual exploitation also presented for some a tangible opportunity to lobby against the legalization of prostitution in Germany.¹¹³ – Jana Hennig, Sarah Craggs, Frank Laczko and Fred Larsson

One of the main divisions between the prostitution abolitionist movement and the sex workers rights movement is that the abolitionist don’t accept that women can choose to engage in sex work. Or, if women choose to engage in sex work, they argue that their choice does not count as ‘real choice’ or that their consent does not need to be respected.¹¹⁴ Sex workers rights organisations argue that ignoring women who choose to engage in sex work is a violation of women’s rights and perpetuates gender inequality by disregarding women’s consent.¹¹⁵

“One of the most ardently advocated feminist principles is that ‘no means no’. Ironically, according to some feminists, for sex workers, yes does not mean yes. Until our consent is treated with the same respect as that of any other woman, violence against sex workers will not be stopped.” – International Union of Sex Workers

In the lead up to the 2006 World Cup (Germany), the US government used fears of trafficking to promote its abolitionist stance and to criticise Germany’s policy of legalising prostitution.

*[S]ince the matches are being held in Germany, which legalized pimping and prostitution in 2001, the World Cup fans would be legally free to rape women in brothels... Of the approximately 400.000 prostitutes in Germany, it is estimated that 75 percent of those who are abused in these houses of prostitution are foreigners, many from Central and Eastern Europe.*¹¹⁶ – Christopher H. Smith, US House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations, 2006

*The argument that trafficking in humans and prostitution are inexorably linked is in part due to policy decisions made by the United States. Although much international dialogue surrounding both trafficking and prostitution claims prostitution and trafficking are often linked, the extent of this link is debated.*¹¹⁷ – New Zealand Government, Ministry of Justice

'Foreign threats'

Discussions on the supposed link between trafficking and international sporting events have also included suspicious sentiments about those entering the country. In articles about the 2010 South Africa World Cup, news articles referred to the country's 'porous borders' as a factor that could increase the likelihood of trafficking.^{118 119} The Future Group argued that allowing people to enter the country legally would result in trafficking victims disguised as legal tourists and visitors.^{120 121}

*Coordinators must protect the host country's citizenry, foreign athletes, and tourists from all over the world... they must prevent clandestine activities from thriving in the presence of large groups of foreigners.*¹²² – Samantha McRoskey

*I support the increased efforts, announced by the Government, to detect and rescue victims of trafficking by allowing border officials to conduct separate interviews at all airports for women and children travelling with an adult who is not a parent, guardian or husband.*¹²³ – Lord Sheikh (UK), Lords Debate on human trafficking, 14 October 2010

Contrary to the fears detailed above, restricting travel requirements can increase the risk of trafficking.¹²⁴ When people are able to travel freely on their own (e.g. eligible to apply for travel visas), they are less likely to require the services of traffickers and brokers to enter another country.

*Years of implementing a restrictive approach to migration and immigration policies by the EU have not resulted in a decreased migration, but rather have left migrants more vulnerable to irregular forms of migration, including smuggling and trafficking for labour and other forms of exploitation.*¹²⁵ – Excerpt from joint statement by GAATW and La Strada International

*This bias also thrives on race- and class stereotyping of women, as evidenced by the South African Serious and Violent Crimes Unit submission to the earlier Issue Paper on Trafficking in Persons. The unit claimed it knew trafficking had increased in South Africa because 'border control have noticed suspicious foreigners entering the country accompanied by young Asian women' (South African Law Reform Commission, 2004). These types of xenophobic comments led the SALRC to suggest that certain countries be designated as countries of origin or destination for human trafficking and that citizens of these countries be subjected to rigorous procedures at South African border posts. Clearly, this would amount to a human rights infringement.*¹²⁶ – Anna Weekes, Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT), South Africa

Is it possible that the media and political hype actually helped prevent trafficking from occurring?

Some prostitution abolitionist organisations and media have argued that the absence of trafficking increases during large sporting events proves that the media and political hype helped prevent trafficking from occurring.¹²⁷

It's too easy to construct an issue (when there is no evidence), call for large resources to 'attack' the issue, then claim success when nothing happens.

For example, some media repeated a misleading argument by the Future Group that there was a 95% increase in trafficking in Athens because prevention efforts hadn't been as extensive as measures during the 2006 World Cup in Berlin.^{128 129} To be precise, 181 trafficked persons were reported in *all* of 2004, which is an increase from 93 trafficked persons that were reported in *all* of 2003.¹³⁰ However, none of these cases were linked to the 2004 Olympics, according to Greece's Annual Report on Organised Crime and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Athens.¹³¹ In addition, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded free legal aid for trafficking victims, training for judges and prosecutors, a national victims' hotline, an information campaign on disease prevention, increased enforcement efforts, 3 government shelters, and 3 million Euros to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide assistance services.^{132 133}

There may a number of reasons why trafficking has not occurred around large sporting events, why business slows down for sex workers, and why traffickers may not be interested large sporting events (see page 43). It's also important to remember that the first media interest on this issue (around the 2004 Athens Olympics) was due to governments criticising Greece's regulation policies around sex work, not because of any increases observed by NGOs or service providers.¹³⁴

[T]here is no conclusive evidence indicating that an increase in trafficking would have occurred without these campaigns.¹³⁵ – Victoria Hayes

It's also hard to believe that media hype prevented trafficking from occurring when we take a closer look at the content of various anti-trafficking campaigns by prostitution abolitionist groups. For example, the abolitionist-driven anti-trafficking campaigns around the 2010 Vancouver Olympics confused trafficking with sex work and relied on extremely negative imagery about women.¹³⁶ In South Africa, Dr. Chandré Gould remarked that many of the anti-trafficking campaigns around the 2010 World Cup “bear the characteristics of what is described as ‘moral panic’.”¹³⁷

In contrast, a number of the anti-trafficking campaigns prior to the 2006 Berlin World Cup explicitly stated they were not campaigning against prostitution itself (prostitution is legal in Germany), but rather targeting *trafficking for* prostitution.¹³⁸ Two campaigns, “*Stop Forced Prostitution*” and “*Action Against Forced Prostitution*” focused on their messages that sex workers' clients could act responsibly and contribute to anti-trafficking efforts.¹³⁹ Although these campaigns may not have affected actual incidences of trafficking, they may have more accurately helped the public (particularly clients) to identify trafficking.

One information campaign, “*Final Whistle – Stop Forced Prostitution*” explicitly stated that rights, respect and working conditions for sex workers need to be strengthened in order to address *trafficking* for prostitution.

*Existing rights for prostitutes need to be expanded in order to improve working conditions, to ensure that services are voluntary and independent, and to combat social stigma. We have to make sure that the human rights of prostitutes are upheld and that prostitutes themselves are treated with respect by society at large and by their clients in particular. Respectful treatment of prostitutes, however, must be combined with resolute measures taken against forced prostitution.*¹⁴⁰

All this is not to deny the importance of awareness-raising campaigns and other prevention efforts. We do want anti-trafficking campaigns to be successful and to have a genuine impact in decreasing trafficking. However, it’s crucial to be honest about the strategies we use, considering the huge amount of resources channelled into anti-trafficking efforts. It’s too easy to construct an issue (when there is no evidence), call for large resources to ‘attack’ the issue, then claim success when nothing happens. Justifying resource-intensive campaigns on unsubstantiated links becomes more of a concern when resources are genuinely needed to address trafficking elsewhere.

Even if there isn't any evidence, is there any harm in publicising this issue? What are the "consequences of an unscreened rumour"?¹⁴¹

It is crucial for any anti-trafficking activities to be grounded in evidence and the concerns of directly affected groups.

Trafficking is a very serious human rights violation that needs to be tackled effectively. However, GAATW's *Collateral Damage: The Impact of Anti-Trafficking Measures on Human Rights Around the World* (2007) found that uncritical and uninformed anti-trafficking efforts can too often result in human rights violations against the very groups they are intended to protect.¹⁴² In the 8 countries studied, trafficked women were denied assistance unless they agreed to cooperate with law enforcement. Women were locked up in shelters or detention centres, in the name of 'protecting' them. Trafficked persons were deported back to their place of origin without consideration of the risks. And men who had been trafficked received little assistance.

Anti-trafficking can also very easily be used as a more socially acceptable guise for prostitution abolitionist, anti-migrant and anti-women's rights rhetoric. The anti-trafficking rhetoric that has been used most frequently around international sporting events has too often focused on criminalising groups affected by trafficking (e.g. by justifying crackdowns against sex workers) and victimising them (e.g. media representations of migrant women as helpless victims).

The Experts Group would like to underline that all activities in connection with this [2006 World Cup] or other similar events should not be misinterpreted or instrumentalised to discriminate against prostitutes or to further marginalise or stigmatise them, thus increasing their vulnerability to trafficking and other forms of violence and abuse.¹⁴³ – Expert Group on Trafficking in Human Beings of the European Commission

I am concerned with how the World Cup is arguably another illustration of merging punitive border protection, the criminalization of women, and the undermining of women's human rights, under the cover of protection of women.¹⁴⁴ – Dr. Sanja Milivojević, University of New South Wales (Australia)

WASTING NEEDED RESOURCES

The amount of resources (e.g. charities, task forces, media) given to a sensationalised issue is diverting resources and attention from other priorities that are genuinely affecting trafficked victims, sex workers, migrants and women.^{145 146 147 148}

Anti-trafficking organisations have argued that most of the resources for anti-trafficking activities around large sporting events have gone into highly publicised, and misleading, media campaigns, rather into services for trafficked persons:

[L]arge sums are being spent on national campaigns without a joint concept which are meant to reach both the women affected as well as clients of sex workers. While these hectic activities took place, which ensure big media interest for the big associations, the question where all those additional trafficked women could turn to, was neglected. This leads to the suspicion that the goal is mainly to increase one's own reputation by using the issue of trafficking in human beings.¹⁴⁹ – Dr. Nivedita Prasad & Babette Rohner, Ban Ying, an anti-trafficking organisation (Germany) and GAATW member

Another NGO reported a case of two African victims of THB [trafficking in human beings], who spoke a rare African language and where the only locally available interpreter had requested a fee somewhat above the usual rate. The NGO had not been able to receive the needed 400 Euro additional funding from the relevant authorities for the interpreter to accompany the women to first medical examinations and appointments with the social authorities.¹⁵⁰ – Jana Hennig, Sarah Craggs, Frank Laczko and Fred Larsson

There is also concern that providing resources for an unsubstantiated issue may result in funding organisations who are not adequately informed to provide anti-trafficking services, and who could potentially harm people who are referred to them.

The focus on a supposed link between large sporting events and trafficking for prostitution also results in “blind spots”, ignoring or distracting the public from more urgent and long-term issues, such as:

- **Other forms of trafficking:**
Emphasis on trafficking for sexual exploitation diverts attention from less sensational aspects of labour exploitation, such as the exploitation of undocumented migrants and of vulnerable workers in largely unregulated or unmonitored sectors such as domestic work, farm labour and forms of casualised construction work.¹⁵¹ – Marlise Richter & Tamlyn Monson, Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
- **Violence against women and migrants, including sex workers:**
Other human rights abuses, which are well documented as being highly prevalent in South and Southern Africa, receive less attention and resources by welfare and advocacy organisations, the media, and government, due to the attention and resources dedicated to human trafficking prevention. Such abuses include rape and other forms of gender-based violence, and various forms of violence perpetrated by human smugglers and gangs upon undocumented migrants crossing South Africa's land borders.¹⁵² – Marlise Richter & Tamlyn Monson, Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
- **Sex workers' rights:**
In response to this media frenzy and public fears, a number of national and international organisations invested in the distribution of condoms, generalised HIV and AIDS information campaigns for South Africans and visitors, and rolled out anti-trafficking campaigns. Yet, very little support concentrated on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of most at risk populations such as sex workers. Few actors engaged with sex workers on their needs and expectations of the World Cup.¹⁵³ – Mark Bryan Schreiner, UN Population Fund
- Urban issues such as the lack of affordable housing, rising house rates and urban displacement related to Olympic-related urban development; homelessness, poverty, addiction, HIV and mental illness. In Vancouver, sex workers groups protested the short-term focus of Olympics-related anti-trafficking campaigns and called for more attention towards long-term violence and housing issues.¹⁵⁴

MISREPRESENTING PEOPLE AND ISSUES ULTIMATELY UNDERMINES ANTI-TRAFFICKING OBJECTIVES

Trivialising trafficking

Some anti-trafficking stakeholders are concerned that sensationalising a false link between large sporting events and trafficking ultimately undermines serious efforts to fight trafficking and assist victims.

All experts (NGOs and police) had experienced an increased interest from the media and tried their best to respond. Many were disappointed by journalists who were just after “sex-n’-crime” stories and further support of the 40,000 figure, without much interest in other accounts. Some NGOs felt they had first been ignored by the media with their assessment of a moderate increase in trafficking or even none at all; after the World Cup some press articles blamed the NGOs across-the board for putting up a wrong and unfounded figure.¹⁵⁵ – Jana Hennig, Sarah Craggs, Frank Laczko and Fred Larsson

Perpetuating sexual and racial stereotypes

“The more stereotyped you are, the more dehumanized you are.”¹⁵⁶ – Pye Jacobson, Swedish sex worker and activist

For sex workers, however, these false claims became a form of symbolic violence.... The abolitionist anti-trafficking rhetoric was so painful that one sex worker was moved to investigate whether she could charge some of the abolitionist groups with hate crimes.¹⁵⁷ – Esther Shannon, FIRST, a sex worker ally group (Canada) and GAATW member

Public awareness campaigns and media depictions of trafficking have been key in promoting particular ideas about what victims of trafficking look like, where they come from, and what they’re capable (or incapable) of. It is important to think carefully about the underlying messages anti-trafficking campaigns are communicating about women.

Some anti-trafficking campaigns have tried to capture the public’s attention by displaying graphic images of violence against women and the weakness of women.¹⁵⁸ Media articles on trafficked victims routinely describe victims as frightened, powerless, weak, gullible, and unable to make decisions for themselves.

Trafficking for prostitution has been described by prostitution abolitionist as meeting a demand.¹⁵⁹ Yet the use of eroticised and violent imagery in anti-trafficking campaigns is rationalised as the need to meet media and public ‘demand’, i.e. to make trafficking sexy enough for media and public consumption. Stories of victimhood typically generate a great deal of interest and can be used strategically by media and NGOs to, respectively, gain readers and increase charitable donations. While trafficking is obvious exploitation, the focus on one-on-one violence maintains the status quo by excluding discussion on the broader social and economic contexts that contribute to trafficking (e.g. lack of legal migration opportunities for working-class women). The use of racialised women in Western anti-trafficking public awareness campaigns also often end up



Source: The Union of Finnish Feminists, Finland

defining certain groups of women in need of assistance from women in wealthier countries, e.g. female victims from the Global South needing rescue.

Relying on explicit and sexualised images of violence can end up perpetuating negative stereotypes of sex workers and migrant women as weak, passive, helpless, gullible and in need of rescue.^{160 161} These representations can also end up justifying measures to control women's behaviour, determine women's morality, and rationalise women's resistance as the behaviour of women who are incapable of making their own decisions.

Anti-trafficking measures affected not only German sex workers, but also women from the supposed countries of origin who, for whatever reason, wanted to visit Germany during the World Cup. As women in danger of being trafficked for sex during the World Cup were constructed as young, naive women from Eastern and Central Europe (Ekklesia 2006, Haape 2006, Tzortzis 2006), who seek "a life free of poverty or abuse" (Neuwirth 2006) but instead end up being severely victimized, their bodies have been yet again constructed as weak and vulnerable.¹⁶² - Dr. Sanja Milivojević (University of New South Wales), Australia

The moralistic approach, which assumes that women do not know their own minds (Agustin, 2005) has to be dismissed: western governments, international and religious organizations, and western feminist scholarship need to abandon their 'colonial gaze' (Mohanty, 1998) and broad generalizations.¹⁶³ – Dr. Sanja Milivojević (University of New South Wales) and Dr. Sharon Pickering (Monash University)

Media and public pressure around trafficking for prostitution could result in tighter entrance restrictions or the profiling of particular racial or ethnic groups as 'potential' trafficked persons. In the name of preventing trafficking, some governments have developed restrictive entry policies denying women of certain ages or certain appearance from entering a country. For instance, research at the San Paulo airport found that Brazilian women were being refused entry and repatriated from European airports because they were suspected of being in the sex industry.¹⁶⁴ Swedish law, through the Alien Act, allows the government to refuse women entry into the country "if it can be assumed that the person will commit a crime or that he or she will not support themselves 'by honest means' ".¹⁶⁵

CRIMINAL PENALTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST SEX WORKERS

Anti-trafficking public awareness campaigns often rely on ideas and images of women as victims, yet the solutions proposed often penalise both women who have been trafficked and sex workers. Sex workers rights groups have argued that police violence and police brutality (sanctioned by criminalising laws) is an urgent danger.¹⁶⁶ This may worsen during international sporting events if law enforcement feel pressured to prove they are 'doing something' or target specific ethnic groups (based on stereotypical assumptions of trafficked women). For example, in South Africa, Western Cape Premier Helen Zille appeared to rationalise crackdowns against sex workers as an anti-trafficking measure.¹⁶⁷

[S]ex workers experienced ongoing harassment before and during the World Cup period and, at times, could not access the few services that were available to them. Some examples include:

- *Police extortion of sex workers and extraction of bribes;*
 - *Police arrests of sex workers without being formally charged; and*
 - *Client intimidation and extortion by police (which affected sex workers ability to earn)¹⁶⁸*
- Eric Harper and Diane Massawe, Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) and Marlise Richter, South African National AIDS Council



Sex workers have the same right to travel and migrate as anyone else, but when they are wrongly labeled as trafficking victims, it leads to extreme human rights violations. In many countries—including Canada—this means violent raids of brothels, and the harassment, criminalization, detention, and deportation of sex workers, most of whom are voluntary workers.¹⁶⁹ – Joyce Arthur, FIRST, a sex worker ally group (Canada) and GAATW member

This also applies to law enforcement's use of "rescue raids", or raiding premises where sex work is taking place. This is ostensibly to identify and 'rescue' trafficked victims but has often led to arrests, harassment, and deportation of migrant sex workers in many countries.^{170 171 172}

While prostitution is legal in Germany, "police in Berlin raided 71 brothels in the city during the 2006 World Cup; they found no evidence of trafficking – but did deport ten women."¹⁷³

As a consequence of conflating trafficking and sex work the crackdown on illegal prostitution and sex trafficking resulted in large-scale raids throughout Germany, with nearly one hundred people, seventy four of them sex workers, arrested by the German police. The interior minister of the Hesse province directly linked these raids with "concerns expressed by human rights organizations and other groups that thousands of women, mostly from Eastern Europe, could be smuggled into Germany and forced to work as prostitutes during the World Cup".¹⁷⁴

In preparation for the 2012 London Olympics: *Figures recently released to parliament by the Home Office show SCD9 carried out 80 brothel raids between January to August 2010 in the five boroughs....But the probation union, Napo, claimed the crackdown would have unintended consequences.... "The strategy will drive the trade underground and prohibition merely distorts the laws of supply and demand. As a consequence, the trade will be more dangerous for women. Policy initiatives should address real problems, such as housing, health and safety, and not be based on flawed ideology which distorts the market and endangers the women."¹⁷⁵ – 'London 2012 Olympics: Crackdown on brothels 'puts sex workers at risk', The Observer (UK)*



Special Thanks to Laura Agustin

“CLEANING UP THE STREETS” BY DISPLACING SEX WORKERS AND OTHER MARGINALISED GROUPS

Intense media and law enforcement scrutiny to find trafficked victims has often occurred alongside efforts to hurriedly move ‘undesirables’ away from public view. Although not specifically linked to anti-trafficking policy, displacement of sex workers and other marginalised groups was a strong concern expressed by community advocates and other stakeholders in Vancouver prior to the 2010 Winter Olympics and in Johannesburg prior to the 2010 World Cup.¹⁷⁶ Community groups and allies were concerned that efforts to “clean up the streets” would impact any groups that didn’t fit the city’s image (e.g. sex workers, the homeless, poor people, jaywalkers). There were fears that displacing sex workers and other marginalised groups would increase the risk of violence by forcing sex workers to work in more isolated areas.

*[T]he police were already arresting the ladies saying they are making South Africa dirty so those people who come from the other countries, they wouldn’t like South Africa because it would be dirty from the sex workers.*¹⁷⁷ – female sex worker, Cape Town

*“We especially urge you to resist the temptation to clear the streets and parks of the Downtown Eastside of their longtime residents to address the imagined perceptions of the international community in 2010.”*¹⁷⁸ – Letter addressed Vancouver’s Chief of Police and Mayor, February 2009

In South Africa, sex workers reported great fears about being arrested and detained during the 2010 World Cup.¹⁷⁹

*[H]otels have begun clamping down on sex workers. On the streets this week, the winter chill and increased police visibility meant fewer sex workers on the strip. Visits during peak cruising hours, around 9pm, to the traditional red-light areas of Oxford Street, Illovo and Sandton found fewer than 10 sex workers roaming around in skimpy skirts. Those who had braved the low temperatures to lure clients dived into bushes whenever the police patrolled.”*The securities have been making our lives hard. They say they don’t want girls in their hotels.¹⁸⁰ – ‘No ‘boom boom’ for Joburg’s sex workers’

Sex workers rights groups are already concerned about City “clean-up” efforts in London (for the 2012 Olympics) and Rio (for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics).¹⁸¹

Scotland Yard has been accused of endangering sex workers after it emerged that officers were targeting brothels in London’s Olympic boroughs as part of a coordinated clean-up operation ahead of the 2012 games....Figures from the Open Door agency, a health clinic based in East London, appear to partially confirm Napo’s claim. The agency reported that there has already been a significant displacement of sex workers throughout Newham, with a decline of 25% in referrals to health clinics since the previous year. Napo said it appeared the women had not stopped working, but were moving to other areas where they could be more at risk of rape, robbery and assault.¹⁸² – ‘London 2012 Olympics: Crackdown on brothels ‘puts sex workers at risk’, The Observer (UK)

CONTROLLING WOMEN’S TRAVEL

Making migration and travel restrictions tougher for certain groups of women has been argued as a strategy to stop trafficking and to ‘protect’ women from being trafficked.¹⁸³ However, making migration and travel more difficult can (1) increase the risk of trafficking and (2) restrict women’s rights. If women are not allowed to travel on their own, traffickers or brokers become the only option to access work opportunities abroad.¹⁸⁴

Several organisations have indicated that efforts to prevent human trafficking have, in some countries, resulted in the restriction of the movement of young women, which is a violation of their rights. La Strada is sceptical about prevention campaigns that stigmatise or are only intended to prevent persons (in particular women) from coming to South Africa.¹⁸⁵ – La Strada International, a European anti-trafficking network and GAATW member, speaking about the 2010 World Cup (South Africa)

Calling for increased border security measures around international sporting events allows governments to justify restricting migrants’ rights in the name of fighting trafficking. For the 2006 World Cup, the German government tried to demonstrate its commitment to anti-trafficking by “restricting visas from East European countries such as Ukraine and Belarus for the duration of the tournament and stepping up police raids on German brothels, looking for illegal immigrants and evidence of coercion”.¹⁸⁶

[M]oral enforcement agents not only perform a gendered securitization of the border but also a social and racial patrol of particular groups. Consequently the moral panic surrounding the World Cup evidenced a peak in the subjection of some racial and social groups to differential border, immigration and labour regimes.¹⁸⁷ – Dr. Sanja Milivojević, University of New South Wales, Australia

Based on these measures, women sports fans from poorer countries “will have to run away from their ‘rescuers’”¹⁸⁸ or be seen as trafficking victims who are only ‘pretending’ to be visitors¹⁸⁹:

Mr Frattini said that each and every application for a visa from women in the suspected countries of origin for forced prostitution should be checked, as a lot of the times “the women lie and say they will attend for instance cultural events” in the application.¹⁹⁰ – ‘EU wants tighter visa rules to stymie World Cup sex trade’, EU Observer

Even if there isn't evidence, is it still possible that trafficking for prostitution *could* increase during large sporting events?

There are a number of reasons why an increase in trafficking for prostitution during international sporting events is unlikely.

*Trafficking results from poverty, powerlessness and limited economic options. The supply of trafficking victims is driven far more by these factors than by temporary fluctuations in demand for sex workers arising from sporting events. There is no instantaneous, market-clearing process that responds to short-term shifts in demand.*¹⁹¹

– Christina Arnold, Project Hope International

Statistically not feasible, i.e. “think it through”

The same inflated numbers of trafficked persons are often predicted for different large sporting events, typically anywhere from 40,000 to 100,000. The implausibility of these figures are clearer when put into perspective, such as by comparing these estimates to a country's actual trafficking incidence rates, the number of expected visitors for a particular event, and even the seating capacity of a sports venue (see page 15).

*Considering that the trafficked women will be joined by thousands of legal and voluntary sex workers registered with the German government, there are simply not enough men to seek the services of an additional 40,000 trafficking victims. Petra Burcikova, the national coordinator for La Strada, a pan-European anti-trafficking organization, sums up the implausibility of this figure. She says, “I think the guys who are coming to watch the championship would not have time to watch any games because they would have to be engaged in having sex with all of those prostitutes all of the time.”*¹⁹²

– Christina Arnold, Project Hope International

*FIFA estimates that 450 000 international spectators will visit South Africa - that is 6 times fewer visitors than to the 2006 Germany World Cup. It is therefore highly unlikely that 100,000 people would be trafficked into South Africa. Indeed, were that to be the case there would be just less than one trafficked victim for every four spectators.*¹⁹³

– Marlise Richter & Dr. Chandré Gould, Institute for Security Studies, South Africa

Short-term events are likely not profitable for traffickers or sex workers

The idea of traffickers being magnetically drawn to large sporting events ignores the cost-benefit analysis for a short-term event, especially given the fact that sex workers have often been displaced or removed during street “clean-up” activities (see page 41). Short-term sports events are not only insufficiently profitable for traffickers, sex workers and business owners they have more often than not, reported a drop in business (or ‘demand’) during large sporting events.

While it is far too soon for any research results on the impact of the Games on sex work in Vancouver, to date, all anecdotal reports we have received testify to a significant

*drop in business during the Games. According to both street-level and inside workers we have spoken to, customers stayed away because of concerns about street closures, the overall security presence and the massive crowds that daily gathered in the city.*¹⁹⁴ -Esther Shannon, FIRST, a sex worker ally group and GAATW member

*Trafficking in human beings is a business; traffickers want to make profits. It is costly to bring a woman without valid residence papers to Germany. Women who would be “forcibly carried off” to Germany just for the World Cup would not make enough money for the perpetrators within the four weeks of the tournament. In general, the women who are being supported by Ban Ying have had to work much longer for the perpetrators than “just” four weeks.*¹⁹⁵ – Dr. Nivedita Prasad & Babette Rohner, Ban Ying, an anti-trafficking organisation (Germany) and GAATW member

The high number of sex workers in Germany was also given as a reason that would decrease the profitability for traffickers:

*“It is no surprise for us that the numbers are not so high”, says Heike Rudat, a spokeswoman for the German Union of Criminal Investigators. Germany already has so many prostitutes, say experts, estimated at nearly 400,000, that there was simply no need to increase the population, especially for such a short period.*¹⁹⁶ – Samuel Loewenberg

Not just male fans

The hype around sporting events and trafficked women is largely based on assumptions about male sports fans.¹⁹⁷ In reality, sports fans and visitors often include large numbers of women, families, and mixed groups.^{198 199 200} Events such as the Olympic Games are also typically marketed as a family-friendly event to showcase the best the host city has to offer. This contradicts the assumptions made about the fan base of large sporting events as being predominantly male and demanding sex.

*“These are family events, and the idea that thousands of testosterone-fuelled blokes turn up looking for sex just doesn’t reflect reality.”*²⁰¹ – Catherine Stephens, International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW)

Sexual services may not be affordable for most sports visitors

Considering the costs involved in attending an international sporting event, paying for sexual services may not be affordable for many sports visitors. This may be the case especially for sports events in very expensive cities (such as London, Vancouver, Berlin) or relatively long-distance locations (such as South Africa).

*Sporting events suck for the sex trade. The younger fans have already spent thousands on jacked-up hotel rates, airfare and scalped tickets, she says [Maggie McNeill, ‘The Honest Courtesan’]. They only have enough left to nurse Bud Lights and Jäger bombs. The executive caste may have money to burn, but most bring their families along. “What do they say to their wives?” McNeill asks. “Hey honey, I’m going to see a hooker now?”*²⁰² – ‘The Super Bowl prostitute myth: 100,000 hookers won’t be showing up in Dallas.’

*In general, interest in football and partying seemed to have prevailed. Further, it was pointed out that there were many low-budget tourists among the fans, who had just enough money for tickets and transport.*²⁰³ – International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

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**ACTING
EFFECTIVELY**

Are there any connections between *other forms* of trafficking and large sporting events?

There are other forms of trafficking that *may* be related to international sporting events. However, stakeholders should weigh the evidence and assess ramifications of media portrayals. Examinations into other forms of trafficking around large sporting events should focus on the rights of migrants and trafficked persons, rather than used to fuel anti-immigration sentiments.

For instance, the number of migrant workers on Olympics construction projects in London has already been noted in the UK media. Unfortunately, the media has so far been less interested in migrant workers' working conditions than on the idea of migrant workers fuelling 'demand' for commercial sex.²⁰⁴

Elsewhere, other organisations have examined labour exploitation and human rights abuses of migrant workers on sports-related construction projects. A sudden need for specific sports venues and housing for athletes within a limited time period may lead to extended working hours and increased risk for workers.

*The working conditions of the migrant workers that have contributed to the building of the stadiums are known to be very poor. In fact, the only figures we have on the 2004 Olympics in Greece are the 13 Greek and at least 25 (undocumented) migrant workers that have died due to unsafe working conditions.*²⁰⁵ – La Strada International, a European anti-trafficking network and GAATW member

*[I]n the years prior to the 2010 Olympic Games with British Columbia experiencing severe labour shortages, the reliance on temporary migrant workers from Latin America and the Philippines to construct the massive transportation and sports infrastructure in Vancouver and surrounding areas was less than a footnote to this unfolding story. Nor was there any extensive investigation of or concern about the working conditions under which Third World and predominantly Chinese workers produced the dizzying array of consumer goods available at Olympic venues and on-line.*²⁰⁶ – Dr. Annalee Lepp, GAATW Canada

In 2008, the Chinese government admitted that six workers had been killed in workplace accidents at Olympic venues.²⁰⁷ In *Hidden Faces of the Gulf Miracle*²⁰⁸, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) examined human rights violations against migrant construction workers in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Human rights violations included contract substitutions, non-payment, exploitative working conditions, physical abuse, excessive recruitment fees, and restrictions on worker organising efforts.

There is widespread concern that migrants will fall victim to agencies seeking to make quick money from the [2022] World Cup recruitment boom or face exploitation from companies eager to cut costs and deadlines in the rush to complete projects in time for the tournament. – International Trade Union Confederation

Migrant workers win case over discriminatory practices on Olympics construction project

Under Canada's Temporary Foreign Workers visa program, the construction companies leading Olympic-related construction projects hired 38 workers from Latin American countries to build an underground tunnel as part of the metro line linking Vancouver with the Vancouver International Airport (the Canada Line project). Compared to Canadian and European construction workers on the same project, the Latin American construction workers were discriminated against in terms of "salaries, accommodations, meals, and expenses".²⁰⁹

The Construction and Specialised Workers Union launched a complaint on their behalf in 2006:

*"Temporary foreign workers should not have to rely on extensive litigation or suffer lengthy delays to win their basic human rights in Canada. ... I hope this historic decision will make it much easier for other workers to demand fair treatment and encourage governments to adequately protect those rights."*²¹⁰

The British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal ordered the companies to pay each worker the difference between the amount paid to them and the amount paid to others plus \$10,000 (CDN) each for "injury to dignity, feelings and self-respect". The award for all workers totaled more than \$2.4 million (CDN).

Calling for ethical working conditions in the sports manufacturing sector

Research has highlighted the labour rights violations in the production of soccer balls and sportswear factories in Asia.^{211 212} Labour rights issues include the use of child labour, precarious labour, low wages, occupational health and safety violations, and limited rights to organise and collectively bargain.

The international PlayFair campaign was launched prior to the 2004 Athens Olympics and aimed "to pressure sportswear and athletic footwear companies, the International Olympics Committee ... as well as national governments, into taking identifiable and concrete measures to eliminate the exploitation and abuse of the mostly women workers in the global sporting goods industry."²¹³ This campaign continued prior to and during the 2008 Beijing Olympics²¹⁴. A 2012 campaign (www.playfair2012.org.uk) has been launched to address workers' rights and ethical consumption issues around the 2012 London Olympics. In Brazil, Building Workers' International has launched a campaign around the 2014 World Cup and PlayFair has launched a campaign for the 2016 Olympics.²¹⁵

Recruitment of young athletes

There have been a number of media articles examining the recruitment and exploitation of young African athletes in the sports sector generally (i.e. not limited to large sporting events).²¹⁶ Issues include the practices of unlicensed football 'academies', false contract offers, large rates paid to agents and brokers to facilitate travel for young athletes, and the abandonment of young athletes in destination countries.

There have been some troubling reports in print and electronic media of young and adult Kenyan athletes being recruited by foreign countries, mostly the Gulf States of Qatar and Bahrain, only to find themselves in conditions they had not consented to. As Kenya does not recognise dual citizenship, both young and adult athletes who revoke their nationality so as to move to foreign countries face the danger of being rendered stateless, as was the case with Gregory Konchellah (Yusuf Saad Kamel) who fell out with his adopted country – Bahrain - over claims of unpaid dues. Bahrain refused to grant his request to revert to his Kenyan citizenship and also denied him the right to use his Bahraini passport. Besides allegations of unpaid salaries, there have been complaints that young migrant athletes who are not good enough to make the cut are required to join their adopted countries' military. Such practices have been disturbing enough for Athletics Kenya, the country's official athletes governing body, to accuse Bahrain and Qatar of 'modern day slavery'.²¹⁷ – Nkirote Laiboni

What's the best way to deal with the issue of trafficking around international sporting events?

*We must involve affected stakeholders and apply an evidence-based approach to prevent trafficking, rather than misrepresent the issues with scare-mongering, sexist rhetoric. Most importantly, our focus must be on ensuring the safety and full human rights of sex workers before, during, and after the 2010 Games.*²¹⁸ – Joyce Arthur, FIRST, a sex worker ally group (Canada) and GAATW member

While there is no evidence linking sporting events with trafficking for prostitution, we recognise that some stakeholders might feel compelled or face political pressure to 'do *something*' about trafficking. Some of the rights-based groups in our network have tried to channel the increased attention in a more productive direction, such as by raising awareness of broader trafficking issues or highlighting sex workers' rights.²¹⁹ Below are some recommended guidelines for stakeholders, based on recommendations from sex workers rights groups, GAATW members and allies. Some of the recommendations below also focus on preventing any 'collateral damage' or negative impacts that can occur from misguided or misinformed anti-trafficking efforts.

The recommendations below mainly apply to anti-trafficking efforts specifically related to international sporting events. These recommendations don't cover other general anti-trafficking issues that have already been detailed elsewhere, such as training for the proper identification of trafficked persons, ensuring access to justice for trafficked persons, and the need for strong victim protection and support services. For the handling of actual trafficking cases, we encourage stakeholders to refer to the *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*²²⁰ and its *Commentary*²²¹ by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other resources developed by the GAATW International Secretariat and our member organisations (available at www.gaatw.org).²²²

Any anti-trafficking efforts must be proportionate, sustainable, evidence-based, cognizant of other sectors in which trafficking occurs, and done in consultation with groups affected by trafficking and/or anti-trafficking measures, such as sex workers.

*Organizations should further avoid using valuable resources for counter-trafficking measures solely within the context of major events.*²²³ – Jana Hennig, Sarah Craggs, Frank Laczko and Fred Larsson

In preparation for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, the Brazilian Observatory of Human Trafficking (an anti-trafficking coalition with several GAATW members) has already started to reach out to stakeholders with their recommendations:²²⁴

- *Do not suppress the practice of prostitution in the name of fighting trafficking of persons.*
- *Prevention efforts are recommended in fans' or visitors' countries of origin, and the cities of the World Cup against the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.*
- *Sex workers, women and men, need support services such as information, condom distribution, ways to report violence, without fear of being arrested or punished.*
- *Campaigns and interventions that weaken the position of sex workers should be avoided, and do not implement 'crackdowns' to evict sex workers from the streets, squares, clubs, etc. More visibility means more safety.*
- *Develop policy on this issue in consultation with prostitutes' and sex workers' organisations.*
- *The World Cup events are opportunities for traffickers to entice local players, mostly young, to take a chance at opportunities abroad. Information campaigns with football academies are essential.*

CONSULT AND COLLABORATE WITH GROUPS AFFECTED BY TRAFFICKING AND/OR ANTI-TRAFFICKING MEASURES

Groups directly affected by trafficking and/or anti-trafficking measures must be consulted to ensure that anti-trafficking measures are effective, reflect community priorities, and don't result in further harm.²²⁵

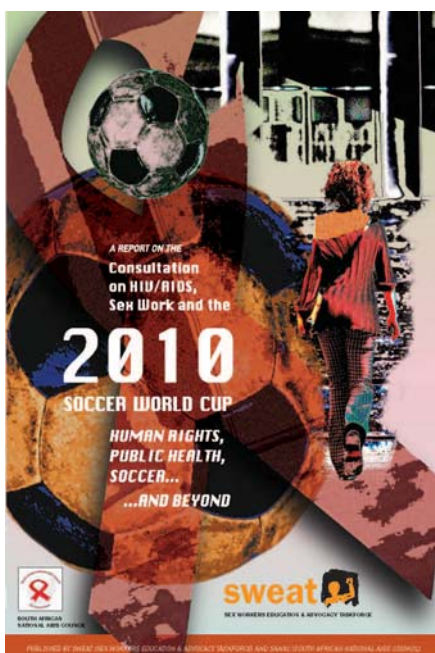
"It is inappropriate to think that sex workers want to be saved by the Salvation Army... If they really want to know what sex workers need, they should have asked them."
Katrina Pacey, PIVOT Legal, a legal aid organisation (Canada), in response to an anti-trafficking campaign by the Salvation Army²²⁶

Given that the issues at play - homelessness, poverty, sex work, migration and trafficking - can encourage notions about what is 'best' for people, local stakeholders expressed concern that identified solutions may not respect their realities. Such solutions would have negative effects on the health and safety of sex industry workers and trafficking victims and also reduce their willingness to access services.²²⁷ – Raven Bowen and Esther Shannon, Frontline Consulting

Directly affected groups such as sex workers have valuable knowledge and information that can assist anti-trafficking efforts. Increased attention on trafficking presents an opportunity to develop alternatives that work productively *with* sex workers rather than punishing them (such as the 'raid and rescue' method currently used). If there is increased funding allocated to anti-trafficking initiatives around large international events, sex workers rights groups and other peer-led or self-organised groups should be prioritised for support.

Vancouver should fund organizations that are made up of sex workers and not sex worker "helpers." – sex worker²²⁸

A sex worker hotline pilot project was launched during the World Cup. Cape Town sex workers were trained as helpline counsellors and provide telephonic assistance to sex workers. The helpline calls over this period confirmed an increase in intimidation from the police and in particular the "Vice Squad" in Cape Town.²²⁹ – Eric Harper and Diane Massawe, Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) and Marlise Richter, South African National AIDS Council



The South African National AIDS Council's "Intersectoral Working Group on Sex Work" is an example of a collaborative effort between sex workers, researchers, healthcare providers, lawyers and advocates. The Working Group was formed in 2009 to address human rights and public health issues around the 2010 World Cup; and to see if World Cup-related activities could catalyse productive debate about the decriminalisation of sex work. The Working Group was supported by an e-group of researchers, healthcare providers, lawyers, sex workers and advocates.

In November 2009, the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) and the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) organised a 2-day consultation to discuss strategies and coordinate action amongst allies.²³⁰

The consultation called for:

- Right to sex worker safety and protection
- Right to sexual health for everyone

- Accessibility to sexual health services for everyone
- Lawful, responsible and respectful police behaviour towards sex workers
- Freedom of movement in one's living environment
- Dignity for sex workers

After the World Cup, members of SWEAT and SANAC published their *Report on the 2010 Soccer World Cup and Sex Work: Documenting Successes and Failures*²³¹. This report assessed the actions that had been successful in their work, such as: the delivery of human rights training and public health messaging, research into sex work around sporting events, the creation of a sex worker hotline staffed by sex workers, delivery of media training for sex workers and advocates, and a workshop on sex worker arrest. Authors also reflected on the failed actions, noting that authorities failed to implement a moratorium on sex work related arrests (as recommended by the Working Group), SANAC's failure to adopt the recommendations from the November consultation, and SANAC's resistance to adopt the recommendation to decriminalise sex work.

RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT RIGHTS AND OPTIONS, NOT FEAR OR PITY

Any media, fundraising, and public awareness activities bear a responsibility towards accuracy and ethical representation of trafficked persons, sex workers, migrants and other groups affected by anti-trafficking efforts.

Raise informed awareness, not fear and pity

Some anti-trafficking awareness raising campaigns have been limited to promoting a certain ideology (e.g. demonising clients' of sex workers), or promoting emotions such as fear (e.g. dangers of migrating) or paternalism (e.g. helping those 'who cannot help themselves'). Considering the amount of resources channelled into awareness raising campaigns, it's surprising how few provide concrete information on the practical options that would be helpful to trafficking victims, exploited migrants, or to those that might assist them.

Awareness raising campaigns that clearly state the rights and resources available to trafficked persons would allow victims to assess whether they should seek assistance and whether they can trust authorities.

*LSI recommends that such campaigns do not only warn against human trafficking but also provide adequate information to migrants who want to work in the country during the World Cup with accurate information about working in South Africa in the different industries and the rights that they do or do not have.*²³² – La Strada International, a European anti-trafficking network and GAATW member

Raise awareness about the rights, not just the vulnerabilities, of sex workers and other marginalised groups

Sex workers and other groups likely to be targeted by misguided or punitive anti-trafficking efforts (e.g. migrants, racial/ethnic minority women) should be informed about their rights and their options should they encounter intimidation, harassment or abuse from law enforcement, the media or others.

For community groups in Vancouver and Johannesburg, this included providing media training for sex workers, to meet the increased media demand before the 2010 Olympics and 2010 World Cup, respectively.²³³

“We just want our members to feel safe in the neighbourhood in which they live and safe to work in the neighbourhood in which they live... We find sometimes that media attention to the area can be a little less than compassionate, and we don't want them to feel like animals in a zoo during that time... We just want [the sex trade workers] to be aware of what their rights are around media, including the fact that it is legal for [media] to take a picture of them on a public street... And if they do consent to an interview, they can get the questions ahead of time. Things like that.”²³⁴ – Kerry Porth, Providing Alternatives Counselling and Education (PACE), Canada

Stigma around sex work contributes to sex workers' vulnerability and entrenches the belief that violence against sex workers will not be taken seriously. Raising awareness of sex workers' rights has the potential to address violence by reinforcing messages that violent perpetrators will not be able to get away with harming sex workers.²³⁵

A South African coalition of sex workers rights groups, researchers, and public health allies agreed to base any 2010 World Cup-related materials around these messages^{236 237}:

- Sex workers have the right to work for the period of the World Cup.
- Sex workers have the right to personal safety and not to be harassed by police.
- Sex workers have the right to have access to free, quality and respectful health care. This includes foreign migrant sex workers.



Encouraging clients and the public to act responsibly

For the 2008 Euro Cup, a few European GAATW members participated in a coalition campaign, “Euro 08 Campaign Against Trafficking in Women”^{238 239} GAATW members were very wary about the sensationalist reporting trends around sporting events, but wanted to see whether there was a way to channel that attention in a more productive direction. The campaign attempted to do this by incorporating warnings against misguided policy into campaign messages, clarifying the distinction between trafficking and sex work, and by focusing on protection mechanisms rather than punitive measures against immigration and sex work. Part of the campaign materials included guidelines for sex workers' clients²⁴⁰, including information on:

- How to recognise trafficked prostitution
- How to help
- What not to do
- Rules for punters
- Contact information

In Vancouver, the British Columbia Coalition of Experiential Communities (BCCEC) distributed *For Our Clients*²⁴¹ during the 2010 Olympics, which included guides to ethical transactions with sex workers and sexual health information.

Public awareness campaigns during the 2006 World Cup in Germany also included condom distribution and informing potential clients about sex workers rights.²⁴² Two campaigns around the 2006 World Cup in Germany, “*Stop Forced Prostitution*” and “*Action Against Forced Prostitution*”²⁴³ sought to help sex workers’ clients identify and report trafficking cases. The *Stoppt Zwangsprostitution* or “*Stop Forced Prostitution*” campaign²⁴⁴ stated that it was not judging clients in general, but raising their awareness and encouraging them to report suspected cases of trafficking.

*Existing rights for prostitutes need to be expanded in order to improve working conditions, to ensure that services are voluntary and independent, and to combat social stigma. We have to make sure that the human rights of prostitutes are upheld and that prostitutes themselves are treated with respect by society at large and by their clients in particular. Respectful treatment of prostitutes, however, must be combined with resolute measures taken against forced prostitution.*²⁴⁵

The “FairPlay” campaign created “10 rules” in 8 languages for sex workers’ clients, and told clients “to make sex with a sex worker more enjoyable and fun, keep the following guidelines in mind”²⁴⁶:

1. Politeness, respect and a pleasant appearance will open many doors – and more.
2. Alcohol may help you overcome your fears, but it also affects your ability to keep it up. In other words: The less you drink the more fun you’ll have.
3. A man keeps his word. Be clear from the start about what you want and what it will cost. It prevents disappointment in the long run.
4. *No means no. For example, tongue play while kissing is usually out of bounds. Every business has its limits.*
5. With a condom, or with a condom – the choice is yours. Black, green, blue, ribbed or with pleasure bumps – take your pick. Not using a condom, however, is a major foul.
6. If you suspect violence or force is being used, what should you do? Don’t try to be a hero. Find out where the nearest hotline is for sex workers, for example at www.freiersein.de.
7. Business is business – and not love, even if your time together was wonderful. That means: Stay cool and keep your feet on the ground.
8. Pressure doesn’t help performance. Sometimes it just doesn’t work. That’s ok. Just relax and, when the time’s right, give it another go.
9. When it comes to sex, there’s no money-back guarantee. If you’re not satisfied, talk about it. If you’re smart, you won’t lose your head. Whatever happens, don’t demand your money back.
10. The neighbors want to get some sleep and are not interested in your sex life. Really.

Challenge misleading and harmful campaigns

For some sex workers rights groups and their allies, raising awareness has meant correcting the exploitative imagery in anti-trafficking campaigns. The period leading up to the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics saw an increase in abolitionist rhetoric framed as anti-trafficking efforts. Rhetoric by these groups included the use of unsubstantiated numbers, extremely polarising language, and victimising imagery of women. In Vancouver, a coalition of sex workers rights allies protested the Salvation Army’s plans to hold ‘group prayers’ outside of sex work sites and their ads depicting women in dangerous and violent situations.^{247 248}

“What they are trying to do is create real hysteria about this issue, as opposed to coming up with productive solutions.”²⁴⁹ – Katrina Pacey, PIVOT Legal, legal aid organisation, Canada

Increase understanding about the complexities of trafficking and its root causes, rather reducing trafficking to a simplistic ‘supply and demand’ equation

Ban Ying, a German anti-trafficking organisation, suggested that media focus on other trafficking-related issues, particularly the lack of rights for trafficked women who have been “rescued”:

Women who have managed to escape such a situation and turn to the police are being assessed according to their “value” as a witness.... Trafficked women are thereby forced into idleness and cannot earn any money during that period of time. However, they are under intense financial pressure – also in this situation. Due to the long waiting period for a trial to start they are losing important time which they desperately need in order to establish a perspective for their future. The women have no right to psychological assistance during that period of time.... The women are not allowed to see their children or other relatives during that period of time. They are also not allowed to start an education. It can take up to three years from the first statements as a witness until the start of a trial against the perpetrators. It is a heavy burden to live without family contacts during such a long period of time..... There has been virtually no media coverage of this scandal.²⁵⁰

Sex workers rights groups and allies in South Africa argued that the increased media and political attention around the World Cup could have been more productively channelled into public health efforts to address South Africa’s high HIV/AIDS rates, such as by encouraging the public to practise safe sex.²⁵¹

The Experts Group sees the World Football Cup as a specific moment in time with an increased international attention towards trafficking in human beings, which in its complexity and structural causes will not be solved by one-off activities around this or other similar events. – Expert Group on Trafficking in Human Beings of the European Commission²⁵²

ENCOURAGE MORE THOUGHTFUL ANALYSIS IN PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS AROUND TRAFFICKING

A great deal of global attention in terms of campaigns, funding, anti-trafficking laws, and a myriad of anti-trafficking programming has certainly made anti-trafficking ‘popular’. Yet, awareness raising campaigns run the risk of negatively impacting marginalised groups, if these campaigns are not based on trafficked persons’ needs, strengths and aspirations.

Audiences for anti-trafficking public awareness campaigns should be encouraged to assess media messages more thoughtfully. For example, by asking:

- What sources are they basing their information on? Who are the main ‘voices’ in the article?
- How are they defining trafficking? Are they distinguishing between trafficking and sex work?
- What do these images or messages say about women? What do these images or messages say about people who come from other countries?
- Is the woman speaking for herself or are others speaking for her?
- How am I being encouraged to see her?
- What action is being asked of me?

- Who is portrayed as the victim? Who is portrayed as the criminal?
- Is this about increasing women's power and women's rights, or is it about 'saving' women?
- If they're asking for money, where is the money going to?

OFFER LEGAL, NON-EXPLOITATIVE LABOUR OPTIONS FOR MIGRANTS

Establishing legal channels for working-class migrants to work in countries where their labour is needed can help prevent trafficking and exploitation. Further tightening borders and restricting immigration can increase the likelihood of trafficking. By necessity, people are much more likely to require the services of traffickers, brokers and smugglers if they are not allowed to travel legally on their own.

*We believe that the best prevention against trafficking in persons is to create regular labour options for migrants. The option for regular labour and employment opportunities for migrants should also entail the option to work in prostitution. If an increased demand in sexual services during the world soccer tournament really exists, then prostitutes willing to migrate should be enabled to a legal and temporary entry. The World Cup would be a good opportunity to test such a measure.*²⁵³ – Dr. Nivedita Prasad & Babette Rohner, Ban Ying, an anti-trafficking organisation (Germany) and GAATW member

*[E]stablished legal channels would substantially decrease the risk for potential labour migrants to be trafficked and end up in slavery like conditions. They would have real opportunities to enter the EU legally and participate in the labour market.*²⁵⁴ – Expert Group on Trafficking in Human Beings of the European Commission

*Lack of documentation also exposes migrants to a greater risk of labour exploitation during their stay in South Africa, because employers know that undocumented employees are unlikely to report abuses. The establishment of a broad range of simple, inexpensive and well-publicised legal channels for immigration into South Africa would narrow the opportunities for traffickers to mislead potential migrants and to profit from exploitation, and would encourage migrants to use formal immigration channels where their rights and safety would be better protected.*²⁵⁵ – Marlise Richter and Tamlyn Monson, Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

ADDRESS SEX WORKERS' FEARS OF POLICE VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

The harassment, exploitation and abuse of sex workers by police has been documented by sex workers rights groups in various countries.²⁵⁶ In many countries, laws criminalising sex work leave sex workers vulnerable to arrest and/or exploitation by police in exchange for not being arrested.

*"I bumped into the police and they asked me if I know that prostitution is illegal, just when I wanted to respond one of the cops, who was a female hit me with a fist on my face and I bled lots of blood; I spent about three days not being able to talk, I was afraid of laying charges."*²⁵⁷ – Female sex worker, Johannesburg, South Africa

At a South African consultation, sex worker peer educators presented sex workers' reflections, aspirations, and fears around the 2010 World Cup.²⁵⁸ Some of their fears about police included:

- *Police are going to be more strict.*
- *Sex worker abuse and crime rate increase.*

- *Being arrested for the World Cup period and being kept in jail.*
- *Worry about more gangsters on the streets and being mugged and increased violence.*
- *More police raids – migrant sex workers cannot open bank accounts and have to keep money in their rooms. Police know this and do raids on their rooms and take the money.*
- *Worry about cleaning the streets – clean-up of the cities. Many government people see sex workers as “dirty” and take them off the streets.*

After the South African World Cup, researchers found that many of these fears had occurred.²⁵⁹

Amnesty or moratorium on sex work-related arrests

Decriminalising sex work remains the long-term goal for many sex workers rights groups. For international sporting events, short-term measures could also include at the minimum, a moratorium on sex work-related arrests.

South Africa’s HIV & AIDS and STI Strategic Plan (2007-2011) recognises that several higher-risk groups, such as sex workers and drug users, face barriers to accessing HIV prevention and treatment services, and explicitly recommends the decriminalisation of sex work...It would have been prudent for these processes to have been concluded before the 2010 World Cup...South Africa has missed an important opportunity: Germany, by contrast, proactively reformed its laws on sex work in 2002 – four years before hosting the FIFA World Cup.²⁶⁰ – Marlise Richter, Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Given the heightened security and surveillance around international sporting events, sex workers rights allies in Vancouver (2010 Winter Olympics), Johannesburg (2010 World Cup) and London (2012 Summer Olympics) have all proposed a moratorium for “*laws that persecute and victimise sex workers*” or an amnesty period for sex workers in preparation and during the event.^{261 262 263} This was proposed as a strategy to prevent violence and harassment (by police, but also by clients) and increase sex workers’ access to services. Calls for a moratorium were not accepted by governments or city officials in Vancouver and Johannesburg. However, the Vancouver City Police Department agreed to continue their usual practice of not arresting women for working as sex workers:

[U]nless they receive a complaint, the Vancouver Police Department usually gives sex workers a wide berth to conduct business. During the [2010 Olympic] Games, they honored their commitment to continue the no-arrest routine.²⁶⁴ – ‘Vancouver sex workers had ‘an amazing two weeks’, AOL News

Respectful partnerships between sex workers and law enforcement to assist anti-trafficking efforts

At a 2009 South African consultation, sex workers had ‘dreams for 2010’ that included respectful relationships with the police²⁶⁵:

- *Co-operation from community, police, etc.*
- *Safety, police alert and visible – aim to protect everyone.*
- *The police won’t arrest us because of 2010.*
- *To work with the police because we are not criminals.*
- *To be able to do business perfect and professional without being disturbed by criminals, violent clients and police.*

The Sex Industry Worker Safety Action Group (SIWSAG) established by the Vancouver Police Department in 2007 is one example of police collaborating with sex workers rights groups and other community stakeholders. The SIWSAG mandate is to create, “*informed strategies to reduce violence and increase health and safety for sex industry workers, inclusive of gender identity, and sexual orientation*”²⁶⁶. Law enforcement in Vancouver also valued the information provided by sex workers rights groups: “*Monthly bulletins provided by a sex worker run organization support our investigations against those who are violent toward sex workers.*”

*Adult sex workers are best placed to become aware of cases of forced prostitution or child prostitution that may occur as a result of trafficking. However, since they are also likely to experience (or have experienced) harassment, judgement or abuse at the hands of police and other government officials, it makes it very difficult for sex workers to report cases of abuse.*²⁶⁷ – Dr. Chandré Gould, Institute for Security Studies, South Africa

*“Sex industry workers deserve to live as safely as anyone else in Vancouver... The VPD [Vancouver Police Department] is committed to working with industry and community organizations to keep everyone safe.”*²⁶⁸ – Inspector John de Haas

Sex workers rights groups in Vancouver and Johannesburg also recommended sensitivity training for law enforcement as a “mechanism to build trust around violent date reporting for all workers within the on-street and off-street sex industry” and to train police to “respond specifically to calls from sex industry workers and who will pursue perpetrators of violence against workers”.²⁶⁹

DECRIMINALISE SEX WORK

Since its inception, GAATW has supported sex workers’ rights and valued the role sex workers rights groups have in the anti-trafficking movement. Given the diverse contexts in which our members operate, GAATW has not promoted any specific legislative approaches to sex work, but GAATW’s membership does agree that:

- Sex workers have the right to organize;
- Sex workers have the right to safe working conditions;
- Violence against women in sex work is a grave human rights violation;
- Trafficking is distinct from sex work; and
- Anti-trafficking policies must factor in sex workers’ concerns and knowledge.

Decriminalisation of sex work is the removal of criminal penalties around *consensual adult* sex work only; criminal penalties for forced prostitution, trafficking and underage prostitution would remain. Decriminalising sex work has been recognised as a practical strategy that can aid anti-trafficking efforts, boost HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, reduce violence against sex workers, and strengthen the rights of sex workers.^{270 271 272 273} (for more information, see GAATW’s *Beyond ‘Supply and Demand’ Catchphrases: Assessing the uses and limitations of demand-based approaches in anti-trafficking.*)

*Arguing for decriminalisation of sex work does not have to mean endorsement of sex work – it shows awareness of the dangers of the criminal law – criminalising won’t eradicate the industry, nor alter the set of power relations that may be associated with it. It recognises that the laws that criminalise sex work punish women and particularly women living in poverty, and women of colour most severely and create a dangerous environment for working and living.*²⁷⁴ – World AIDS Campaign

For example, in Canada, it is not illegal to buy or sell sex, but it is illegal to¹:

- Own or occupy a ‘bawdy house’ (a place regularly used for sex work)
- Living on the avails of prostitution (e.g. earnings)
- Talk in a public place to arrange a commercial sex transaction
- Assist anyone to work in sex work (e.g. security, receptionists, accountants, etc.)

Therefore, decriminalising prostitution in Canada would mean that a sex worker could:

- Work in the same workplace as other sex workers;
- Negotiate freely with clients;
- Call the police if she was abused without fear that she would be arrested for being in sex work; and
- Not have to worry about the police seizing her savings and assets.

Stakeholders working on anti-trafficking and related issues should be clear about their country's laws on prostitution and trafficking. This is particularly important when dealing with the media and public perceptions. A country's prostitution laws, for example, could indicate how sex workers would be vulnerable to exploitation or harassment. The countries listed in the first section of this guide (see 'Looking at the Evidence', page 11) have different legal approaches to sex work:

- South Africa: totally criminalised, including the purchase and sale of sex as well as related activities, e.g. brothel keeping.
- Canada: it is not illegal to buy or pay for sex but many related activities are illegal, e.g. living off the earnings from sex work, negotiating with a client in a public place.
- Germany: sex work is legalised and is subject to regulations. Sex workers are considered workers and are entitled to social benefits.
- Greece: sex work is legalised and subject to regulations, e.g. brothels must be located a certain distance from schools, limit to number of employees in one workplace.
- US: laws are specific to each state, with most states criminalising both the sale and purchase of sex.

*Decriminalise sex work....Police action does not seem to alter demand and supply for sex work, only puts an already vulnerable group of women at greater risk. The current criminal legal framework increases sex worker risk to violence and exploitation and should be reformed.*²⁷⁶ – Marlise Richter and Wim Delva, South Africa

Decriminalisation may also help prevent misuse of anti-trafficking laws. A study of migrant sex workers in London found that anti-trafficking laws were sometimes used to punish women who helped other women travel to the UK for sex work.²⁷⁷ When sex work is criminalised, victims of violence in the sex industry can end up being treated as criminals. For instance, Sheila Farmer is a sex worker in the UK who has been charged with brothel-keeping after working with other sex workers for safety:

*In 1994 I was viciously raped and attacked by a punter. I never worked alone again. I started working with other women. We kept our own money and all paid towards the rent and advertising. The flat was in my name because I had good credit. In 2005, we were robbed by a gang which had been terrorizing women for months. My friend had a gun held to her head. It took the police nine months to catch these violent criminals because most women couldn't report due to fear of being prosecuted themselves...In 2010 I was raided by police. Since the Proceeds of Crime Act I know of many more women who have been raided, arrested, prosecuted and convicted because under that Act the police and prosecutors can seize women's money and goods and then they get to keep a percentage of that money. Talk about pimping.*²⁷⁸

Decriminalising sex work has the potential to assist anti-trafficking efforts by fostering cooperation between police and sex workers.²⁷⁹ Sex workers would be more empowered to practice their rights and be free to report concerns to police without fear of arrest or harassment.

*Police are no longer required to go undercover to entrap sex workers and brothel managers; police can no longer intrude into the personal and working lives of sex workers; and they are no longer required to diligently record the names of sex workers on a register and monitor them as criminals.*²⁸⁰ – New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, on the impact of the Prostitution Reform Act (2003)

*The most common reasons for not reporting violence were that women fear not being taken seriously by the police or did not want to bring attention upon themselves. Anecdotal evidence suggests that women are often concerned their experience will be trivialised by the police and assailants are unlikely to be convicted.*²⁸¹ - Charlotte Woodward (Queensland University of Technology) and Jane Fischer (University of Queensland), Australia

BASE ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS ON EVIDENCE, NOT SENSATIONALISM

Use an evidence-based approach when adopting anti-trafficking measures and ensure that measures taken are appropriate and proportionate to the patterns of abuse that are occurring. – Recommendation from GAATW's Collateral Damage: The Impact of Anti-Trafficking Measures on Human Rights Around the World (2007)²⁸²

Given its covert and politically ideological nature, trafficking statistics may be unsubstantiated and should be analysed cautiously. While even one trafficking victim is too many, it is crucial to analyse information carefully and use sound evidence in order to respond with appropriate *proportionality* to the problem.

Many of the media articles on the supposed link between sporting events and trafficking for prostitution appeared to only report on NGO campaigns (rather than actual trafficking issues) or repeat misleading claims by prostitution abolitionist groups. For example, the unfounded predictions of 40,000 prostitutes/trafficked persons were repeated in various articles without any examination into the plausibility or source of those figures. In addition, particular quotes by politicians were also repeated uncritically (see page 70, to the 'What's the evidence' section).

While finding reliable data on trafficking remains a challenge, there is an increasing number of 'lessons learned' from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and stakeholders that have engaged in anti-trafficking efforts around previous sporting events (see page 70, 'useful contacts' sections). We encourage stakeholders to reach out to these groups, in order to learn from their successes and challenges in previous host cities. During previous sporting events, sex workers rights groups have been one of the groups that have tried to insert an evidence-based approach and rights-based approach into anti-trafficking discussions.

The Experts Group would like to highlight the need for facts-based and differentiated information as the basis for effective policies, avoiding to feed the myths – specifically on the numbers of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in connection with this event - circulating in the public.²⁸³ - Expert Group on Trafficking in Human Beings of the European Commission

A Canadian report also suggested using the unique opportunity presented by international sporting events to inform anti-trafficking discourses, through community-based research led by sex workers and their communities.²⁸⁴ This could include documenting the impact of anti-trafficking measures, monitoring human rights abuses, and tracking complaints about police and/or security.²⁸⁵ In South Africa, the UN Population Fund commissioned research from the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) which trained sex workers as fieldworkers on a project assessing the impact of the 2010 World Cup on sex work.²⁸⁶

²⁰⁴ E.g. Abrams, L. (2009, July 16). *MPA Women and 2012 Olympics*. Available online at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/cep/2009/090716/09/>

Goldsmith, J.E. (2010, June 14). Olympics 2012: Visitors or victims? *Open Democracy*. Available online at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/jane-esuantsiwa-goldsmith/olympics-2012-visitors-or-victims>

Magnay, J. (2010, March 27). London 2012 Olympics: vice girls hope to strike gold. *The Telegraph*. Available online at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/olympics/news/7529528/London-2012-Olympics-vice-girls-hope-to-strike-gold.html>

Tendler, S. (2007, March 24). Sex trafficking and illegal workers threaten Olympics. *The Times*. Available online at: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/crime/article1560555.ece>

²⁰⁵ La Strada International. (2010). *Questions and answers on La Strada International's Opinion on the FIFA World Cup 2010 and Human trafficking*. Available online at: <http://lastradainternational.org/lsidocs/Q%20&%20A%20human%20trafficking%20and%20FIFA%20WORLD%20CUP%202010.pdf>

²⁰⁶ Lepp, A. (2010). Gender, racialisation and mobility: Human trafficking and the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games. *Alliance News*, 33, 47-51. Available online at: http://www.gaatw.org/publications/Alliance%20News/Alliance_News_July_2010.pdf

²⁰⁷ Richardson, S. (ed.). *“One Year of My Blood”: Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers in Beijing*. Human Rights Watch, 20 (3). Retrieved April 23, 2010 from <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/03/11/one-year-my-blood-0>

²⁰⁸ Available online at: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/VS_QatarEN_final.pdf

²⁰⁹ Canada Line foreign workers treated unfairly, tribunal rules. (2008, December 3). *CBC News*. Available online at: <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/british-columbia/story/2008/12/03/bc-canada-line-workers.html>

²¹⁰ The British Columbia and Yukon Territory Building and Construction Trades Council. (2008, December 3). *Human rights tribunal favours Latin American Canada Line workers [media advisory]*. Available online at: <http://www.bcbuildingtrades.org/pages/pressreleases.asp?Action=View&ID=120>

²¹¹ International Labour Rights Forum. (2010). *Missed the Goal for Workers: The Reality of Soccer Ball Stitchers in Pakistan, India, China and Thailand*. Washington, D.C.: ILRF. Available online at: <http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/foulball-campaign/resources/12331>

²¹² International Textile, Garment, Leather Workers' Federation. (2011). *An Overview of Working Conditions in Sportswear Factories in Indonesia, Sri Lanka & the Philippines*. Available online at: <http://www.itglwf.org/lang/en/documents/ITGLWFSportswearReport2011.pdf>

²¹³ PlayFair. (2008). *No medal for the Olympics on labour rights*. Available online at: http://www.playfair2008.org/docs/playfair_2008-report.pdf

²¹⁴ <http://www.playfair2008.org/>

²¹⁵ Debroux, M. (2011, March 31). *A Sporting Chance for Workers: Launch of the Play Fair Campaign in Brazil*. Available online at: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/a-sporting-chance-for-workers.html>

²¹⁶ E.g. Brown, C. (2008, July 5). Football chiefs to tackle hidden trade in Africa's children. *The Independent*. Available online at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/news-and-comment/football-chiefs-to-tackle-hidden-trade-in-africas-children-860504.html>

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(2011, August 18). FIFA cites progress in curbing youth 'trafficking'. *Associated Press*. Available online at: <http://sports.yahoo.com/soccer/news?slug=ap-fifa-teenagetransfers>

²¹⁷ Laiboni, N. (2010, March 8). Safe Migration for Kenyan Athletes and Other Migrants. *KenyaImagine*. Available online at: http://www.kenyaimagine.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=3431

²¹⁸ Arthur, J. (2009, June 15). Facts and fictions about sex trafficking and Vancouver's 2010 Olympics. *Georgia Straight*. Available at: <http://www.straight.com/article-232537/joyce-arthur-facts-and-fictions-about-sex-trafficking-and-vancouver-2010-olympics>

²¹⁹ GAATW. (2008). *Report of the GAATW European Regional Consultation - Centring the Rights of Trafficked Persons in a Changing Environment: Addressing the Challenges Together*, Vienna, Austria, 24-26 October 2008.

²²⁰ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2002). *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*. Available online at: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Traffickingen.pdf>

²²¹ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2010). *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking: Commentary*. Geneva: OHCHR. Available online at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Commentary_Human_Trafficking_en.pdf

²²² Also see GAATW (Ed.). (2007). *Collateral Damage: The Impact of Anti-Trafficking Measures on Human Rights Around the World*. Bangkok: GAATW. Available online at: http://www.gaatw.org/Collateral%20Damage_Final/singlefile_CollateralDamagefinal.pdf

²²³ Hennig, J., Craggs, S., Laczko, F., & Larsson, F. (2007). Trafficking in human beings and the 2006 World Cup in Germany. *IOM Migration Research Series, No. 29*. Available online at: http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/serial_publications/mrs29.pdf

²²⁴ Brazilian Observatory of Human Trafficking. (2011, August). *texto copa 2014 observatorio*

²²⁵ GAATW (Ed.). (2007). *Collateral Damage: The Impact of Anti-Trafficking Measures on Human Rights Around the World*. Bangkok: GAATW. Available online at: http://www.gaatw.org/Collateral%20Damage_Final/singlefile_CollateralDamagefinal.pdf

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²²⁷ Bowen & Shannon Frontline Consulting. (2009). *Human Trafficking, Sex Work Safety and the 2010 Games: Assessments and recommendations*. Vancouver: Sex Industry Worker Safety Action Group (SIWSAG). Available online at: <http://www.straight.com/files/pdf/sextraffick2010games.pdf>

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To sum up

As a global anti-trafficking organisation, GAATW is concerned that international sporting events are being linked with increases in trafficking for prostitution, without evidence. This has been promoted most heavily by prostitution abolitionist groups, who argue that large numbers of men automatically results in a greater demand for commercial sex which can only be met through trafficking women into prostitution.

As a result, massive amounts of resources, law enforcement, media publicity and government attention have been channelled to address this supposed risk, yet all the attention and resources have failed to turn up any compelling evidence that large sporting events increase trafficking for prostitution. Yet the idea still captures governments' and media attention, for several reasons, including its utility to frame prostitution abolitionist and/or anti-migrant sentiments in a more humanitarian guise.

Human trafficking is a very serious human rights violation that demands a sustained and holistic response based on real evidence. One of our concerns has been that valuable resources and public momentum are being channelled towards a falsely constructed issue, resources that are otherwise very needed to genuinely tackle trafficking.

Another concern is that linking trafficking and sex work in this way has resulted in 'collateral damage'²⁸⁷, that is negatively impacting some of the groups who are affected by anti-trafficking policies, particularly sex workers. For instance, law enforcement and government officials who propose crackdowns and further restrictions on migrants and women in sex work, in an effort to protect....migrants and women in sex work.

Fortunately, more stakeholders are increasingly becoming aware that there is no evidence to support the claim that large sporting events and trafficking for prostitution are linked. During previous sporting events, sex workers rights organisations in particular have worked hard to insert an evidence-based approach and rights-based approach into anti-trafficking discussions.

We hope the information in this guide has helped readers to critically evaluate the messages and information they receive about trafficking and sporting events. It's unlikely that short-term hype can fuel long-term efforts, but there are ways for people to effectively engage in anti-trafficking – not as 'saviours', but as allies.

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Useful contacts and suggested resources

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL (2014 WORLD CUP AND 2016 OLYMPICS)

Brazilian Observatory of Human Trafficking, a coalition of:

- Associação de Defesa da Mulher, da Infância e da Juventude or the Brazilian Association for the Defense of Women, Children and Youth (ASBRAD)
- Centro Humanitário de Apoio à Mulher or the Humanitarian Center to Support Women (CHAME)
- Cedeca-Emmaus / Projeto Jepiara
- Colectivo Leila Diniz (CLD)
- Sociedade de Defesa dos Direitos Sexuais na Amazônia or the Society for the Defense of Sexual Rights in the Amazon (Sodireitos)
- Instituto Brasileiro de Inovações pro Sociedade Saudável or the Brazilian Institute of Innovations for a Healthy Society (IBISS-CO)
- Centro de Apoio ao Migrante (CAMI)
- Projeto TRAMA

Email: observatoriobr@yahoo.com.br

Facebook: Observatorio Brasileiro do Trafico de Pessoas

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM (2012 OLYMPICS)

CONTACTS

Georgina Perry, Open Doors

Email: Georgina.Perry@chpct.nhs.uk

UK Network of Sex Work Projects

Email: admin@uknswp.org.uk

Website: <http://www.uknswp.org>

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SOUTH AFRICA (2010 WORLD CUP)

CONTACTS

- Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT), Website: www.sweat.org.za
- Marlise Richter, International Centre for Reproductive Health, Ghent University, Email: marlise.richter@gmail.com
- Dr. Chandré Gould, Institute for Security Studies, South Africa, Email: cgould@issafrica.org
- Dr. Loren Landau, African Centre for Migration and Society, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, Email: loren@migration.org.za
- Dr. Wim Delva, University of Ghent, Belgium, Email: wim.delva@ugent.be
- Sex work, health & human rights (e-group moderated by Marlise Richter): <http://groups.google.com/group/sex-work-2010-reference-group>

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VANCOUVER, CANADA (2010 OLYMPICS)

CONTACTS

FIRST, sex worker ally group, Vancouver, Canada

- Contact: Joyce Arthur, jharthur@shaw.ca
- Website: www.firstadvocates.org

GAATW Canada

- Contact: Dr. Annalee Lepp, alepp@uvica.ca

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CONTACTS

Ban Ying, anti-trafficking organisation, Berlin, Germany

- Contact: Dr. Nivedita Prasad, info@ban-ying.de
- Website: www.ban-ying.de

La Strada International, anti-trafficking network,

- Contact: Suzanne Hoff, info@lastradainternational.org
- Website: www.lastradainternational.org

Dr. Sanja Milivojević, University of New South Wales

- Email: s.milivojevic@unsw.edu.au
- Resources:

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HUMAN RIGHTS

at home, abroad and on the way



Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

P.O. Box 35 Bangkok Noi Post Office Bangkok10700 Thailand

Tel: +66-2-8641427/28 Fax: +66-2-864-1637

E-mail: gaatw@gaatw.org Website: www.gaatw.org