

Libertas International is a non-profit organization dedicated to aiding survivors of human trafficking, particularly in Colombia. Through comprehensive support programs, they offer rehabilitation, legal assistance, and vocational training to survivors, empowering them to rebuild their lives. Additionally, Libertas works diligently to hold American abusers accountable by collaborating with legal authorities and advocating for justice. Currently, they provide ongoing support to 125 survivors across Latin America, offering a lifeline of resources and care to help them recover and thrive beyond their traumatic experiences.

1) Webcam Studies and Lack of Regulation:

Webcam modeling, while seemingly consensual, can sometimes be a form of hidden prostitution. It involves individuals performing sexual acts or explicit behavior for payment via online platforms. However, due to the digital nature of these transactions and the varying legalities across different regions, regulating and identifying exploitation or coercion within webcam studies becomes challenging. The line between consensual adult work and coerced involvement can blur, making it difficult to address exploitation effectively.

Age of Consent Laws in Colombia:

Colombia's legal age of consent being 14 can be exploited by traffickers to engage in prostitution with minors under the guise of legality. This legal loophole creates an environment where traffickers can manipulate and coerce young individuals into the sex trade, exploiting the law to evade repercussions. The exploitation of this legal gap contributes significantly to the trafficking of minors for prostitution.

Complicity of Airbnb and Hotels in Abuse:

The hospitality industry, including Airbnb and hotels, can inadvertently enable prostitution and trafficking by turning a blind eye to suspicious activities or not having robust mechanisms to identify and report potential cases. Traffickers often use these platforms to facilitate transactions for sex work, exploiting their lack of stringent oversight or failure to recognize signs of coercion or exploitation.

These forms of hidden prostitution often exist within legal gray areas or exploit loopholes, making it challenging to recognize and address them effectively. Legislation and regulation are crucial, but the complexities of these issues demand collaborative efforts between law enforcement, digital platforms, and society as a whole to identify and combat these exploitative practices. Governments and organizations need to work towards more comprehensive laws and enforcement mechanisms to address these hidden forms of prostitution and protect vulnerable individuals.

2) In Colombia, girls as young as 14 are tragically impacted by prostitution. Shockingly, a significant number face abuse from American men, with much of this exploitation filmed and shared on pornographic sites. This dissemination perpetuates their trauma, highlighting the transnational nature of this issue and the urgent need for cross-border efforts to protect them and hold perpetrators accountable.

3) American men, arriving from various U.S. states, exploit women and children in Colombia. Regulating these relations faces hurdles due to cross-border complexities, differing laws, and lax enforcement. This lack of oversight enables these perpetrators to evade accountability, necessitating comprehensive international strategies to prevent such exploitation in Colombia by U.S. individuals.

4) In Colombia, women and girls caught in prostitution face a spectrum of violence, encompassing various forms of exploitation. This includes sex trafficking, where individuals are coerced or forced into commercial sex acts against their will. Additionally, the distressing practice of filming their abuse perpetuates their victimization, subjecting them to ongoing trauma as their exploitation is recorded and often disseminated on pornographic platforms. Beyond sex trafficking, victims in Colombia might also endure labor trafficking, where they are coerced or deceived into various labor sectors, such as domestic work, agriculture, or service industries. Additionally, some are subjected to forced begging, compelled to beg on the streets under exploitative conditions.

The violence inflicted on these women and girls spans physical, psychological, sexual, and economic realms. They endure physical harm from abusive clients or traffickers, psychological trauma from constant manipulation and threats, sexual violence through forced acts, and economic exploitation where their labor is undervalued or unpaid. These multiple forms of violence exacerbate the suffering of those trapped in prostitution, necessitating comprehensive efforts to address their diverse needs and protect their rights within the context of Colombia's specific challenges.

5) In Colombia, the exploitation of women and girls in prostitution involves a complex network. American men contribute significantly to funding abuse, while Colombian pimps orchestrate exploitation. Various industries inadvertently enable this violence, including webcam services, pornography, transportation like taxis, and hospitality platforms. Addressing this requires holding both direct perpetrators and complicit industries accountable and implementing systemic changes to dismantle these structures.

6) Prostitution in Colombia links deeply to systemic violations of women's and girls' human rights. It's often a last resort forced upon vulnerable individuals due to economic hardships and exploitation. This exploitative system allows financially powerful men to control women's bodies, perpetuating historical cycles of oppression. To combat this, addressing prostitution means recognizing and dismantling systemic inequalities, advocating for fundamental human rights, and ensuring viable alternatives for women and girls to escape exploitation.

7) The connection between pornography and sexual exploitation, including prostitution, is deeply intertwined, especially concerning the online dissemination of abuse. In our cases, a staggering 85% of victims were subjected to filming of their exploitation, with their abuse subsequently uploaded to platforms like Pornhub, Telegram, or Twitter. These pornographic platforms often host content that depicts the actual abuse and exploitation of individuals involved in prostitution or sex trafficking. The lack of stringent accountability

measures within these companies allows such content to proliferate, perpetuating the cycle of exploitation. Despite efforts to address this issue, there remains a concerning lack of accountability, enabling the continued dissemination of exploitative content.

The overlap between pornography and sexual exploitation underscores the urgent need for robust measures to hold these online platforms accountable. It's crucial to address the role of these companies in perpetuating the abuse and exploitation of vulnerable individuals, ensuring stronger regulations and mechanisms to prevent the dissemination of content depicting such heinous acts.

8) In Colombia, discussing meaningful consent for prostituted women and girls is fraught with complexities due to the legal age of consent being 14. This legal framework creates significant challenges in addressing the issue of consent, especially when it comes to minors involved in prostitution. The law, while permitting sexual activity at a relatively young age, often becomes a loophole exploited by perpetrators, allowing for cases of abuse and exploitation.

American men, in particular, attempt to justify their actions by citing this law, using it to rationalize their exploitation of vulnerable individuals. However, this legal age does not adequately address the complexities of consent, especially in contexts where individuals are coerced, manipulated, or forced into prostitution.

Meaningful consent becomes elusive in such circumstances, as the power dynamics, coercion, and vulnerabilities faced by women and girls in prostitution undermine their ability to provide genuine consent. Addressing this issue necessitates a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding consent within the context of exploitation and the need for more comprehensive legal frameworks that prioritize the protection and rights of vulnerable individuals rather than creating loopholes for exploitation.

9) Effective legislative frameworks in combating violence against women and girls in prostitution rely heavily on enforcement. Robust enforcement ensures the practical impact of laws. To protect vulnerable individuals, especially those in prostitution, stringent implementation is vital. This requires increased funding and resources for law enforcement agencies. Adequate funding allows for expanded personnel, improved training, and specialized units dedicated to addressing these specific forms of violence. Empowering law enforcement is crucial to translating legislative intent into tangible actions that protect and respond to the violence faced by women and girls in prostitution. Additionally, creating a supportive environment for victims to report instances of violence without fear of reprisal is imperative to ensure effective implementation of protective legal frameworks.

10) In Colombia, NGOs like ICBF and CPS play a vital role in collecting and analyzing data to understand prostitution's impact on women and girls' rights. These entities conduct thorough research, surveys, and fieldwork to assess prostitution's prevalence and its effects on vulnerable individuals. NGOs collaborate with communities to gather firsthand experiences of those affected. Governmental agencies like ICBF and CPS focus on child welfare and social services, collecting data on exploitation, trafficking, and abuse, including aspects related to prostitution's impact on women and girls' rights. While existing initiatives provide insights, there's room for improvement in data collection methods, inter-agency coordination, and resource

allocation to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this complex issue and better address the challenges faced by affected individuals.

11) In Colombia, nonprofits like Libertas International in Medellin offer vital assistance to women and girls seeking to leave prostitution. They provide tailored support including counseling, skills training, safe housing, legal aid, healthcare, and community integration. This comprehensive aid helps individuals transition out of exploitative situations and build new lives beyond prostitution. Libertas International and other similar organizations play a pivotal role in offering a holistic approach to empower women and girls to rebuild their lives beyond prostitution. By providing these multifaceted support services, they aim to break the cycle of exploitation, empower individuals with new opportunities, and reintegrate them into society with dignity and independence.

12) Organizations aiding prostitution survivors face significant hurdles hindering their mission:

- Funding Constraints: Limited resources restrict comprehensive services, affecting victims' access to crucial support and rehabilitation.
- Legal Impediments: Inadequate consequences for traffickers, especially exploiting minors, due to statutes of limitations, can inhibit justice.
- Rehabilitation Gaps: Scarce access to specialized rehabilitation programs tailored to survivors' needs hampers their successful reintegration into society.

Social Challenges: Overcoming societal stigma and facilitating survivors' reintegration face obstacles, affecting their recovery and livelihoods.

- Addressing these obstacles requires increased funding, legislative reforms extending limitations for trafficking cases involving minors, and expanded rehabilitation programs. Community education can reduce stigma, aiding survivors' successful reintegration.

13) What Works: Utilizing media to expose and share the identities and stories of perpetrators proves effective in temporarily dissuading individuals from engaging in exploitative behavior. This approach, by shedding light on the offenders and their actions, creates a sense of accountability and even fear, deterring potential perpetrators.

What Doesn't Work: Approaches that don't prioritize a person-centered approach often prove ineffective. Programs or interventions that fail to address the individual needs, experiences, and vulnerabilities of those affected by prostitution are less successful. Any initiatives not rooted in understanding and responding to the unique circumstances and challenges faced by survivors may fall short in providing meaningful support and preventing re-exploitation.

Emphasizing a person-centered approach—one that recognizes the diverse needs and experiences of survivors—and leveraging media to expose and hold perpetrators accountable can significantly contribute to mitigating the negative human rights consequences stemming from the prostitution of women and girls. These strategies, alongside comprehensive support and tailored interventions, are crucial in safeguarding the rights and well-being of those affected by exploitation.

14) The inclusion of frontline organizations and survivors' organizations in policymaking at the national and international levels often falls short. Unless these organizations have some form of government connection or influence, their participation in shaping policies remains inadequate.

In many instances, policymaking processes primarily involve government bodies, larger institutions, or entities with established political connections. Frontline organizations and survivors' groups, despite their invaluable expertise and firsthand understanding of the challenges faced by those affected by prostitution, might not have equal access or representation in these decision-making forums.

This lack of inclusion hampers the policymaking process, as the insights, experiences, and recommendations from these grassroots organizations and survivors' groups are crucial in formulating effective and inclusive policies. To create comprehensive and responsive policies that address the realities on the ground, it's imperative to ensure the meaningful inclusion and representation of these frontline organizations and survivors' voices in the policymaking arena.

15) To prevent violence linked to prostitution for women and girls, key recommendations can be enacted:

- **Increase Age of Consent:** Elevate the age of consent to 18 for stronger protection against exploitation of minors in prostitution.
- **Hold Businesses Accountable:** Enforce financial accountability for companies like Airbnb and webcam platforms to prevent inadvertent facilitation of abuse.
- **Boost Funding:** Allocate more funds to NGOs and law enforcement to enhance victim support and improve capabilities to combat prostitution-related violence.
- **Publicly Share Sentences:** Publicly disclose penalties for American perpetrators exploiting minors to deter such crimes and raise awareness.

Stricter Pornography Regulations: Enforce tighter rules on platforms like Telegram and Twitter to curb dissemination of exploitative content depicting abuse.

- Additionally, criminalize the purchase of sex by foreign men to reduce demand for prostitution during international travel or tourism, targeting the core issue and diminishing exploitation and associated violence.