

DOMESTIC MINOR SEX TRAFFICKING

THE UNITED STATES



the ASSESSMENT

Shared Hope International (SHI), with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (DOJ/BJA), is implementing assessments in 10 U.S. locations where the DOJ has funded task forces to combat human trafficking. The findings of these field assessments are provided to the task forces and may serve as a springboard for the development of an action plan to address the commercial sexual exploitation of America's youth.

the PROBLEM

- 30% of shelter youth and 70% of street youth are victims of commercial sexual exploitation.¹
- The average age of entry into prostitution is 12-14 years old.²
- 100,000-300,000 children in the United States are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation at anytime.³
- 75% of minors exploited through prostitution are controlled by a pimp.⁴ Minors who are engaged in prostitution are often misidentified- and mislabeled "child prostitutes" and punished for the crime that is being committed against them rather than identified as victims of sex trafficking as defined by federal law in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.
- Field research observed that underage girls are the bulk of the victims in the commercial sex markets in the United States – this includes pornography, stripping, escort service, prostitution, etc.⁵

the STRATEGY

- Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking victims require **PROTECTION** including secured safe homes and tailored services that rescue and restore while removing the child from the control of the trafficker/pimp.
- Strong legislation that criminalizes traffickers and buyers while protecting victims, together with **PROSECUTION** resulting in convictions with appropriate sentences is critical.
- **PREVENTION** includes proper victim identification enhanced by public awareness and training of those who interact with the vulnerable population of domestic minor sex trafficking victims.

For more information visit www.sharedhope.org

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A/V clips available at <http://www.sharedhope.org/press/pressroom.asp>

¹ Estes, R. & Weiner, N. "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico." University of Pennsylvania, 2001

² U.S. Department of Justice – Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section. <http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/prostitution.html> (Accessed 3/11/08)

³ United States. Cong. Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005. PUBLIC LAW 109-164 – January 4, 2005 <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/61106.htm>

⁴ U.S. Department of Justice – Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section. <http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/prostitution.html> (Accessed 3/11/08)

⁵ DEMAND.: A Comparative Examination of Sex Tourism and Trafficking in Jamaica, Japan, The Netherlands, and the United States. Shared Hope International. July 2007.