

**North Carolina's Developing,
Statewide Anti-Human Trafficking
Capacity: A Qualitative Evaluation of
a NCCASA-Led Project**

Raleigh, North Carolina
April 2, 2015



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Research Evaluation Team/Duo

- **Rebecca J. Macy, PhD, ACSW, LCSW**
 - *L. Richardson Preyer Distinguished Professor*
- **Jennifer O'Brien, MSW, LCSW**
 - *Doctoral Student*



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Human Trafficking (HT) is ...

- *“the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery”*

(US Department of State, 2008)

- Substantiated in all 50 states (Polaris Project., 2013)
- An increasing concern in the state of North Carolina (Burke, 2013)
 - Labor trafficking
 - Sex trafficking
 - Rural & urban areas



Critical Gaps in North Carolina's Capacity to Address Human Trafficking

- 2010: The North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA) determined North Carolina (NC) lacked the infrastructure to:
 - Adequately meet the needs of identified victims
 - Conduct training for those service providers & professionals most likely to encounter trafficking victims in their work
 - Increase public awareness about the problem of human trafficking in NC



Developing North Carolina's Capacity to Address Human Trafficking

- 2010: NCCASA obtains Office on Victims of Crime (OVC) grant to develop a better state-wide infrastructure
 - Multiyear effort
 - State-wide, multidisciplinary task force including:
 - Legal Aid of NC
 - NC Coalition Against Human Trafficking (NCCAHT)
 - Pitt County's Sheriff's office
 - The Salvation Army of Wake County



Developing Statewide Capacity: Project Goals

- Provide training to increase awareness & identification of victims of trafficking (foreign-born)
- Develop & expand victim service programs for victims of trafficking
- Strengthen the collaboration & cooperation between existing agencies & organizations
- Legal remedies & assistance to assist victims of trafficking



Evaluating the HT Capacity-Development Project

- We aimed to investigate & document changes in North Carolina's trafficking-response infrastructure stemming from NCCASA's collaborative efforts to develop a comprehensive & more responsive statewide infrastructure
 - *Dynamic operations of the collaborative project: Both the Challenges & Successes*
 - *Lessons learned from this project?*



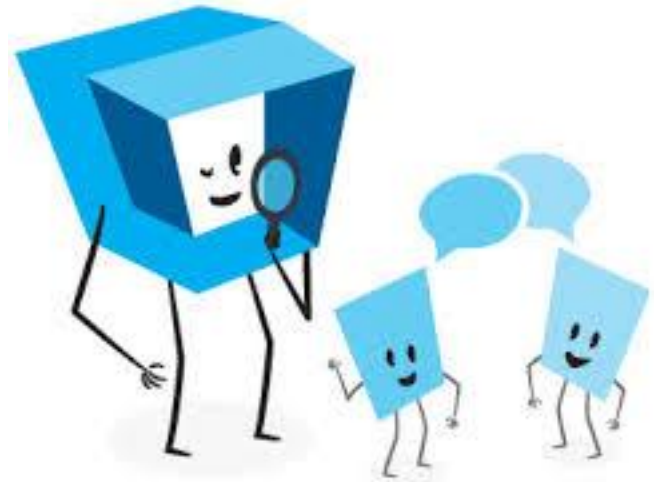
Evaluation Design

- Evaluation used a mid- & post-test qualitative research design
 - In-depth focus group & interview discussions
 - First data collection occurred at the project's mid-point (12 months after project began) initial assessments of challenges, successes & lessons-learned
 - Second data collection about 12 months after the first data collection, near the end of project



Data Collection Instruments

- Our team used a standardized protocol for open-ended focus groups, a standardized protocol for interviews & a demographic survey that was developed for this study
 - Supplementary quantitative information was sought to provide descriptive data on participant demographics



Project & Evaluation Timeline

NC HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROJECT: 2010-2011

- Project goals established
- Key staff hired
- Project partners form working relationships and interagency collaborations

NC HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROJECT: 2011-2012

- Collaborative project work is ongoing
- ***Mid-point evaluation data collection is carried out***

NC HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROJECT: 2012-2013

- Collaborative project continues & finishes at end of year
- ***Final evaluation data collection is carried out***



Participants

- 14 anti-trafficking advocates, service providers & professionals provided qualitative & quantitative data during focus group meetings or individual interviews
- 12 participants were involved in the first round of data collection (*project midpoint*)
- 11 participants took part in a second round of data collection (*project end*)
- Most, but not all, participants took part in both rounds of data collection
 - 3 participants completed only the first round data collection & 2 participants participated in only second round data collection



Qualitative Data Collection & Analysis

- Discussions' focus: state system's strengths, challenges & change over time & possible solutions in moving forward
- Digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, & checked for accuracy
- Atlas.ti & an open-coding approach:
 - Coding scheme: research question, interview guide & literature
 - Iterative coding process
 - Negative case analysis
 - Data triangulation



Awareness & Infrastructure

Funding

Communication
& Collaboration

Aftercare
Services

Criminal Justice & Legal
Services



Awareness & Infrastructure (*Midpoint*)

- *I've called places and talked about human trafficking, and people don't know what it is, they think traffic ticket or...and I have to explain and then it's like "Oh no, that doesn't happen in my community!" And as we talked more, they can say, "Oh, I've seen that before" and [then] they realize...*
- *We're not Chicago... where people are on board and sort of know off the bat what this [i.e., trafficking] looks like, we don't necessarily have that awareness or those resources already in place.*
- *I feel like the [state] capacity is there, it just has to be organized- you know, it's very disorganized right now...there's just not a lot of collaboration between all of the agencies across the state.*



Awareness & Infrastructure (*Final*)

- *We've seen an uptake, uptake in reporting, so I think there is a greater awareness that is going on. I think there's more people coming to the table that we were hoping would...the past year I've really felt some growth...in a lot of positive ways.*
- *We've seen people who want to provide direct services to victims raise money and get things together to begin providing services. But they don't necessarily have the licensure or insurance or all of the things that they would need to provide those services lawfully. And also, there's such a clamor for legislation. And some of the legislators or people working with the legislators are really plugged into the gaps in the law and the state. And then other folks really just want to create legislation around, or preventing human trafficking, but aren't very well connected to people who have been working on trafficking for a while. So we've seen a bit of a disconnect there. Some folks are super plugged in... and there's some other folks that are very disconnected from what I think are the people who are serving victims.*



Funding (*Midpoint*)

- *You have folks that are fantastic and do great work and build connections because so much of this work is networking and face-to-face connection and trust. And you establish those best practices and then that grant runs out because it was only an eighteen-month position or something.*
- *One thing that has thwarted some of our progress in the state are the more extreme expansions and retractions of different funding streams specifically for anti-human trafficking work... It appears like those grant cycles are two years, three years, and we get really great self-starters in positions, and then funding will change. And because so much of our progress in these smaller coalitions is personality driven, it's very much based on networking. Maybe that funding gets replaced a year later or two years later, but we're starting from scratch in those parts of the state again.*



Funding (*Final*)

- *I guess the main concern is just seeing more funding come in so that everything we're doing right now continues and doesn't stop when the grant ends. That's the main concern.*
- *If we could get consistent funding: funding for trainings, funding for case managers, funding for services, and coordination...then we could really attract good people- [they would know] it's not just a job for a year or two, but a job for the long-haul.*



Communication & Collaboration

(Midpoint)

- *I mean, face it. There's a lot [of agencies] and there are a lot of people doing things, but there's not a lot of collaboration.*
- *So many times you've got [agency named removed to protect confidentiality] versus [agency named removed to protect confidentiality], and one doesn't understand the other and it can be very adversarial when it doesn't need to be because we really need to be staying focused on, on the end result...because, you know, this is supposed to be a partnership*



Communication & Collaboration

(Final)

- *We all had to kind of shift our relationship and understand that if it's adversarial, we'll never win... We just need to remember we are all on the same team...*
- *They [agency name omitted to protect confidentiality] call us now for help with some of their victims, even if they're not human trafficking related. That partnership's just there; they know they can reach out, and we feel the same way.*



Availability & Delivery of Aftercare Services (Midpoint)

- Bilingual mental health services
 - Education & job skills training for victims
 - Transportation for victims to access services
 - Shelter options for victims, including crisis shelter & transitional housing
 - Service for both female & male victims
- *The trauma levels tend to be high with trafficking victims; and there's more defensiveness, more paranoia, less trust... And so we have seen people [trafficking victims] just kind of disappear. I don't know if they've gone back to their traffickers, or they just go off on their own. But we have had — not many but a few — clients, potential clients, disappear before we could really get very far [in the helping process with the trafficking victim]. So I think it's critical to try to meet them [the victims] in person and get a rapport started as soon as possible. Of course, having resources in place does help with that too... to make referrals right away and get a case manager right away makes a difference... Being able to hit the ground running so to speak and get things started right away makes a difference.*



Availability & Delivery of Aftercare Services (Final)

- *I think about the cases we've closed, and it's been very moving to sit there and talk with them [clients], and speak of all the things that they have accomplished...it's been incredible. So even with all the road bumps and all the things we've had to learn, our clients, for the most part, are in so much better of places and that's great, you know? I think we have made a lot of good headway just with the program and...not only focusing just on our program, but also, statewide... with the different coalitions, the different rapid response teams...helping make...North Carolina a better place for serving clients and helping with human trafficking...*



Victim-Centered Justice & Legal Services (Midpoint)

- *The law enforcement officers, you know, they're the first on the scene and they can be intimidating...not very victim-centered...*
- *Some district attorneys are hesitant to prosecute under the new laws because they've never done it before, and so they're afraid to go there. So, we're doing a disservice to the victims in that aspect because we're not charging them [perpetrators] with trafficking... So, I think there needs to be more education for our district attorneys.*



Victim-Centered Justice & Legal Services (Final)

- *We have seen more law enforcement agents recognizing potential cases and showing interest and kind of coming to the table, and I think that has something to do with the increased training available to law enforcement and the general outreach that we've had in the last few years.*
- *We've also seen more prosecutors show interest in the last few years, and that's kind of a change from a few years ago. There was just nothing happening with prosecution, and there was no interest or awareness as far as I could tell. And that's starting to change. It's kind of a trickle; I don't think it's a big shift yet. But we're seeing more prosecutors at the table and...showing interest.*



Key & Ongoing Challenges

- Sharing resources & information between agencies?
 - Territorialism, lack of cooperation
 - Improved but ongoing issue, especially as new programs are developed
- How best to harness grassroots interest in positive ways?
- Sustained funding to promote stability in systems & personnel?
 - For full-time positions & services?
 - For trainings?
- Legal system and prosecution practices?



Key Successes

- Development & implementation of high-quality case management services
- Implementation of initial, awareness trainings for various service sectors
 - Multiple service providers across the state & law enforcement in particular
- Improved law enforcement response to human trafficking
- Improved communication & collaboration among agencies (*notably- both a challenge & success*)



Key Lessons Learned

- Plan for collaboration & cooperation; also expect there to be challenges
- Plan for funding gaps & advocate for sustained funding streams
- Find meaningful ways to engage grassroots advocates
- Greater public awareness leads to opportunities to build infrastructure & infrastructure leads to opportunities to promote awareness: Need work on both fronts



Evaluation Limitations

- Small sample (N=14)
- We collected & reported limited participant demographic data to reduce the possibility of deductive disclosure & increase participants' comfort to speak frankly
- Given the qualitative study design, conclusions cannot be drawn about whether the NCCASA-led project specifically enabled changes in statewide human trafficking response capacity



Evaluation Strengths

- Among 5 partner organizations, representatives from all five participated in both data collection points
- Study findings represents shared viewpoints & collective wisdom of key actors & organizations in NC's efforts to address & respond to human trafficking
- Study makes contribution to limited research on anti-human trafficking efforts
- Project focused on foreign-born victims, but recommendations provide helpful insights to all forms of human trafficking



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Full Report Available on Web

http://ssw.unc.edu/files/web/Macy_NCCASA_HT_Evaluation_Report_FINAL_2014.pdf



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Questions? Discussion?

*Rebecca J. Macy, PhD, ACSW, LCSW
L. Richardson Preyer Distinguished Chair
School of Social Work*

325 Pittsboro Street CB #3550 Chapel Hill, NC 27599

919-843-2435

rjmacy@email.unc.edu

@rebeccajmacy

