

“YOU TALKING `BOUT EVERYDAY STORY”:

An Exploratory Study on Trafficking in Persons in Guyana

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Summary of Aims, Methods and Main Findings

1. Assess the key factors that may contribute to trafficking in persons within the 7 target countries. Such an assessment may include the links between sex tourism, drug trafficking, and particular historical and cultural norms that may contribute to trafficking in persons.
2. The extent and trends of trafficking **in** and **within** the 7 target countries. In addition, on a secondary level, flows through and from the 7 target countries will also be addressed.
3. Identify and assess the general trends and typologies that are indicative of the trafficking phenomenon within each target country. In as much as is possible, contribute to the overall understanding in trafficking in persons within the following elements:
 1. Characteristics of the phenomenon in each country: method of recruitment, the routes taken, destinations, and types of exploitation.
 2. Profile of victims: places of origin, age, social and academic background, the duration of stay in countries of transit and destination, type of exploitation.
 3. General profile of the traffickers.
 4. Basic living conditions of victims including food, clothing and shelter, health risks, and security concerns in countries of transit and destination.
 5. Victims' visa status, career experiences, working conditions including duties, wages, holidays, etc. in their home country.
 6. Human rights conditions for victims during the trafficking stages (recruitment, movement, exploitation) including whether there has been any assault and physical abuse, a delay or denial in payment of wages, forced prostitution, forced labour, etc.
 7. Public health impact of trafficking in persons.
4. Conduct a media review of any recent coverage on the subject of trafficking in persons. Assess any trends in the coverage of the issue.

This report represents an exploratory study of trafficking in persons in Guyana. The report does not aim to quantify trafficking in persons in Guyana but to build up a picture of the extensiveness and different forms of trafficking in the country.

Red Thread already had information about cases of trafficking in persons in Guyana from previous work done around Guyana, including a needs assessment we conducted with female commercial sex workers in Georgetown, Bartica, Mahdia (and environs), Kwakwani, and on the Corentyne in 2001. Based on this information and on leads from other organizations, we made our preliminary list of key informants, including traffickers and victims. Unfortunately, the fact that the survey started simultaneously with the government's campaign to combat trafficking, drove these potential informants underground, and even officials (for example, in the police force) who gave us interviews expressed apprehension about whether they would be "on the record". These problems obviously limited what the study could achieve.

Nonetheless, between July and August 2004, we collected data from a number of primary and secondary sources.

- Our most useful source of data, and the one we relied on most heavily, was a purposive (i.e., non-random) sample of 34 participants selected by Red Thread, using a questionnaire/interview guide. Interviews were conducted in July and August 2004 in three different locations in offices, bars, homes, markets, and police stations by two women from Red Thread;
- In addition we used a short questionnaire completed by 24 participants at the International Organization on Migration (IOM) seminar on June 16, 2004 (this questionnaire was identical to the final section of the questionnaire mentioned above). Thus, we had a total of 58 respondents answering some questions ;
- Analysis of newspaper coverage of trafficking in persons in Guyana from April 23, 2004, when the GoG announced a campaign to combat TIPs in Guyana, to August 30, 2004.
- Data from various reports on implementation of Conventions to which Guyana is signatory, and data from NGOs and international agencies.

The main findings from these data were as follows:

Knowledge of what TIPs is: The vast majority (83%) of participants (n=58) knew what trafficking was: while there is no general agreement among respondents on what activities constitute TIPs (some respondents for example, do not place young girl being taken to the coast to work in bars in the same category as women being forced to work as drug mules or women being sent overseas to work in the sex trade) the vast majority of respondents phrased their definition of trafficking in terms of movement for the purpose of exploitation.

View of whether TIPs is a problem in Guyana: 76% of the respondents considered TIPs a problem in Guyana (44 out of 58).

We caution that these answers may have been inflated by the recent government campaign against trafficking as well as the press coverage given to the US State Department Level Three report.

Whether for Guyana TIPs is external or external: Although the majority of respondents knew of trafficking within Guyana far fewer were aware of people being trafficked out of the country. Moreover, participants' responses did not define trafficking in terms of people going overseas although 8 people did know of specific cases of women who were taken to the neighbouring countries of Barbados, Trinidad, Venezuela, Suriname, Holland, and French Guiana.

Linkages to sex tourism, the drug trade and cheap domestic labour: 20 out of 34 participants (59%) said they didn't know or weren't sure if TIPs in Guyana is linked to sex tourism, although the vast majority knew it was linked to the sex trade. We believe this is due to the fact that sex tourism is virtually non-existent in Guyana. One half (n=16) said they didn't know or were not sure about a link to the drug trade. We attribute this low level of knowledge to people's reluctance to talk about dangerous and illegal activities. However, on a link to the demand for cheap domestic labour, 23 (68%) said yes.

Awareness of forced prostitution, forced labour and domestic servitude: Asked about their awareness of forced prostitution, forced labour or domestic servitude in Guyana, the responses (multiple answers) from the 34 participants in the purposive sample were: forced prostitution (n=24); forced labour (n=13); domestic servitude (n=7); and none of these (n=6).

Re. trafficking for forced prostitution: Of the 24 people who knew of specific cases only 2 reported cases involving transporting young women and (in one case) young men overseas (to Barbados and Trinidad). All other cases related to women engaged in sex work in Guyana.

Re. trafficking for forced labour: Answers were less full and fewer respondents answered (n=12 knew of specific cases). All cases related to trafficking within Guyana.

Re. trafficking for domestic servitude: There were 8 answers overall and all related to trafficking in Guyana. (We believe this low number is explained by the fact that most respondents classify migration that is supposedly for domestic work, but tends up as sex work, as trafficking for forced prostitution).

Who are the victims: Responses from participants indicate that their perception is that trafficking takes place primarily in response to the demand from the sex trade. Cases mostly involve young girls and women (from early teens to early twenties) who live in riverain or interior areas who are deceived into leaving their communities to work as waitresses in small establishments on the coast. After a period of often only a few days they are told they have to engage in sex work and through various forms of control they are prevented from leaving. Although most of these cases appear to involve Amerindian women, Red Thread is aware that trafficking also takes place of young women of all races overseas to neighbouring countries to engage in sex work. Another common form of trafficking is that of men (but also of women and children) to work on grants in the interior who are kept in debt bondage.

Methods of recruitment: The method most commonly used by recruiters was to make friends with people in a community and then get them to recruit girls. Women on the coast are reportedly approached in night clubs with offers of employment overseas or in mining and logging camps.

Methods of control: Methods of control involved debt bondage, restricted movement (including being locked up); withholding of pay or insufficient pay; and threats (including death threats) and physical violence from the employer and clients.

Living conditions: These are very basic regardless of the purpose of the trafficking. There were several cases of women living in a room attached to the bar in which they worked (sleeping on mattresses, make shift beds, or a single bed for which they paid), or of living

in a room in the owner's house or of sleeping in a former pig pen. In the interior workers lived in makeshift tents or very basic accommodation.

Beneficiaries of TIPs in Guyana: The respondents were all in agreement that it was business people working with go-betweens in communities who were benefiting by exploiting poor people. Either business people - both women and men - would directly go into communities and recruit young girls (and in fewer cases young boys) or they would have an intermediary in the village who would tell them who to contact.

Data from various other sources only served to reiterate the findings from the research participants. There was no media coverage of TIPs prior to the GoG campaign which began in April 2004, although articles appearing since the campaign began make it clear that some elements of the media had knowledge that it existed. Among 5 newspaper reports of alleged cases of trafficking between April 23 and August 30, 2004, 3 were cases of actual trafficking.

Factors that contribute to TIPs in Guyana: TIPs in Guyana is most strongly linked with the sex trade and domestic servitude, although there are examples of trafficking involving forced labour. Doubtless, the small but visible number of women being brought into Guyana to work in sex clubs and some of the forced movement of women out of Guyana to work as prostitutes in the Caribbean is linked to the growth of the drugs trade in Guyana. The high number of people living in poverty has an impact on the opportunities available and the sense of opportunities available to people. The paucity or non existence of economic opportunities in the places where people live has led to the equation of betterment with movement away. Given the entrenchment of migration into Guyanese ways of living, both for employment and for family betterment (for example, child shifting), and its acceptance as a norm there has been very little questioning of movement associated with trafficking. This situation is even more prevalent in areas that are geographically isolated from the coast. In addition the prevalence of child labour and its general acceptance further contributes to TIPs. Moreover, the ambivalence towards prostitution works against any attempts to help women who want to leave this occupation. Finally, lack of awareness of the problem (until recently) by both the government and within civil society has allowed TIPs to proliferate. This latter point is

further exacerbated by a lack of an institutional and legal framework to combat TIPs and by peoples' lack of knowledge as to what exists.

The government and TIPs: In April 2004 TIPs was not on the government's agenda. Since then a National Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons in Guyana has been developed by the MLHSSS. The assessment of the MLHSSS is that the campaign is working well because of the responses they have been receiving. It is certainly true that the campaign has put TIPs in Guyana on the map, given the level of media coverage it has garnered. Unfortunately, the intensity of the campaign has fuelled skepticism that it is externally-driven. As among the general public, amongst MLHSSS officials there is a strong feeling that many people enter voluntarily into situations that are now being defined as TIPs.

A steering committee has been established including representatives of the MLHSSS, NGOs, the GGMC, the police and the media. In an interview held on August 25 interview Ministry officials reported that in addition to public awareness programmes, the MLHSSS has begun work towards training people to recognise cases of trafficking and exploitation. Also, a building has reportedly been identified in Mahaica and negotiations are in train. However, there is serious concern about the readiness of institutions to deal with trafficking. Other organizations we are aware of which have shown public awareness of trafficking in persons in Guyana or taken any action against trafficking are Amerindian organizations, the human rights organization GHRA and Red Thread. Since the general understanding in Guyana is that TIPs is an Amerindian problem, other ethnic organizations have never seen it as an issue to take up until recently.

A. INTRODUCTION

The Introduction to the Report is designed not as a general situational analysis of Guyana; such an analysis would have to include, among other factors for example, a discussion of HIV/AIDS, since after Haiti, Guyana has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean, which has the second highest incidence in the world after sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, it is an analysis of the political, economic, social and physical aspects of Guyana to show what circumstances of this country could be facilitating the development of trafficking in persons.

1. GUYANA'S EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL BORDERS

While Guyana's main economic, social, cultural and political ties mark it as part of the Caribbean and specifically of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM¹), geographically it is within South America: it shares a north-western border with Venezuela; a south and south-western border with Brazil; and an eastern border with Suriname. Accurate figures on the size of the permanent and temporary migration across these borders are not available but there is unquestionably a high level of both kinds. "Informal" access across these borders is routine: from Guyana to Venezuela, it is from the Pomeroon River in Essequibo via the Atlantic Ocean using outboard engine boats; from Guyana to Brazil, overland by road from several border settlements; and from Guyana to Suriname, by ferry or speedboat across the Corentyne River. The following map shows the countries bordering Guyana as well as the 10 administrative regions into which the country is divided.

Map 1 Guyana's Administrative Borders

Internally, the geography and population distribution of Guyana, allied to the high cost of travel between coast and interior, combine to create a *de facto* border between the two areas of the country. With an area of 215,000 square kilometers divided into 10 administrative regions, 86% of the resident population of only 749,000 (Guyana Population and Housing Census 2003) live on the narrow coastal plain which occupies about 5% of the country's land mass. The majority of coastal residents are from the three

¹ CARICOM is a grouping including all the English-speaking countries of the region plus Suriname and Haiti; it is now moving towards the formation of a Common Single Market and Economy.

largest race/ethnic groups - Indo-Guyanese, Afro-Guyanese and Mixed, in that order, while the majority of the fourth largest group - Amerindians - live in the interior in Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9, bordering Venezuela and Brazil, often in scattered communities.² There are also areas within the coastal plain where there is a relatively high degree of race/ethnic homogeneity in communities and clusters of communities. This may be of some significance in terms of race/ethnic directions of migration.

2. THE LIMITATIONS OF PREVAILING ECONOMIC MODELS AND THE GROWTH OF INFORMAL AND UNDERGROUND ECONOMIES, 1980S TO THE PRESENT

In the 1980s, a number of political and economic developments in the domestic and global arenas led to a serious decline in the Guyana economy. This was the context in which, in 1982, the Government of Guyana (GoG) banned the commercial importation of staple foods like wheat flour to encourage increased consumption of local products and to save foreign exchange - a decision which precipitated the large-scale informalization of the economy (with the burgeoning informal sector operating side by side with a massive state sector), a significant increase in the movement of people across the country and the region, and the criminalization of the economic activity of large sectors of the population at both the lower and upper ends of the economic scale who engaged in the buying, selling and/or transporting of banned items. For that period in Guyana, the word “trading” came to mean “an occupation which originated in the early 1980s in the resistance by thousands of Guyanese, the majority of them ‘ordinary housewives’, to the banning of a number of staples and the criminalization of the acts of buying, selling (and even possessing) food” (Andaiye, undated).

A further radical shift in the economy took place after the 1989 introduction of an Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) based on the IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), focusing among other elements on privatization of state enterprises, the miniaturization of the public sector, and the identification of the private sector as “the engine of growth”. Given the level of decline of the economy, it was argued that there was no alternative to this policy and that the positive effects of the ERP

² On the coast, only in Region 2 is there a substantial Amerindian population scattered in 9 villages. Regions 4 and 5 also have small villages in relatively inaccessible areas.

included the restoration of the old private sector with some new actors and the opening up of the interior to foreign and local private investment. But there were clear negatives. One criticism has been that the terms under which foreign investment into forestry and mining was initiated have increased the under-development of the interior regions. The 2003 Report on Progress towards the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGR) warns that "...Guyana's environmental vulnerability is increased by the fact that ...it has only been able to attract investment for the extraction of natural resources. To compound this, international agreements dictate how natural resources should be extracted without providing compensation which recognizes the opportunity costs of not utilizing the resources" (10).

The document also describes some of the other fallout from the ERP:

In the early stages, the severity of the SAP measures had a negative effect on employment and incomes. In particular, the downsizing of the public sector and the concomitant loss of jobs, the privatization of State enterprises, coupled with the virtually jobless growth in the private sector, reduced opportunities for young people, especially school leavers and university graduates seeking white-collar jobs. (29)

These particular effects of the ERP had both a race and a gender component. In terms of race, actions to hold down wages in and to reduce the size of the public sector were especially hard for Afro-Guyanese, who predominated in this sector. In terms of gender, the ERP made no effort to strengthen the economic position of the petty traders who had virtually kept the country, including the formal private sector, alive. These traders were poor, of all races, and as mentioned earlier, mostly women - for some of whom trading was their first paid economic activity, for all of whom it had provided a measure of economic autonomy. All of this was ignored and undermined as the restrictions of the banning years were reversed under the new ERP measures that heralded the end of state ownership and ensured the re-privatization of state assets and the re-establishment of the local private sector.

Following a change in administration in 1992, considerable debt relief and new donor programmes were granted. The economy grew an average of 7% per annum between 1991 and 1997. In 1997, under a Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative (HIPC) programme agreed by the IMF and the International Development Agency (IDA), Guyana was granted further debt relief to reduce its external debt by 25 % in net present value terms, on condition that it continued its adjustment and reform efforts according to

a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) agreed with the boards of the Fund and Bank. The ultimate goal was “to put the country in a sounder fiscal position while simultaneously increasing expenditure on social sector objectives - mainly health, education and social safety nets” (MDGR, 9); it should be noted that the GoG has met its HIPC target objectives for all the main social spending categories since 2000.³

In spite of all this, since 1997 growth has averaged less than 1 %. By the end of the 1990s, although production had improved, markets had declined. Guyana's terms of trade deteriorated by 2% over the second half of the 1990s. After a period in which bauxite, gold and forestry attracted foreign investment, investment declined. There has been limited success so far in developing eco-tourism, identified as a major growth sector. Reduced preferential access to EU markets is expected to have a very negative impact on the economy (MDGR 8). A return to a growth rate of 6 % is estimated to be necessary if Guyana is to meet its MDG target on poverty, but this is unlikely due to “the limited private investment in diversifying the economy, reduced donor assistance, the slow incorporation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and the pending loss of lucrative historical markets...” (MDGR 9-10). In addition, there is the continued migration of skilled labour which creates an increasing human resource and capacity constraint in most sectors, but particularly in education and health, and is an obstacle to implementation of the PRSP, and the absorption of external aid.

Throughout the decades from the 1980s to the present the informalization of the Guyana economy appears to have continued its increase: rough estimates by the World Bank and others, during the 1990s put its size at approximately 20 % of GDP^{source}. There is strong evidence of continued growth in the underground layers of the sector, especially those related to the narco-industry, with Guyana emerging as a major transshipment point for illegal drugs, and to the movement of undocumented people (called back-tracking locally) - developments which have fed a rise in corruption and violence. This violence is further fed by an alarming increase in the number of criminals with a history of involvement in armed violence deported back from other jurisdictions, especially the US.

3. FORMS AND DISTRIBUTION OF POVERTY

³ Discussion with businesswoman Jocelyn Dow on August 26, 2004

Poverty is expressed not only in income poverty but in inadequate access to other resources which shape opportunity, including literacy, good nutrition and protection from child labour.

(a) Income and non-income poverty

Income poverty: While the most recent figures available showed a decline in poverty it remains high: absolute poverty was 36 % in 1999, down from 43% in 1992/93, while critical poverty was 19% in 1999, down from 28% in 1992. Overall, the poverty gap declined from 16% in 1992/93 to 12% in 1999 (MDGR, 12).

Access to literacy: According to the Guyana EFA-FTI Proposal/ Credible Plan 2002, "... an estimated 33% of children are graduating from primary school without acquiring basic literacy skills." The report continues: "a functional literacy survey of out-of-school youths ages 14 - 25 found that 89 % of the sample surveyed was operating at below or well below acceptable levels of functional literacy and that an estimated 20% were absolutely illiterate." (page). These findings are related to the high rate of dropout, particularly from primary tops⁴ and Community Highs which serve students from poorer households: in 1999-2000, among students aged 13 to 18, for the first group, the dropout rate was 25 % for boys and 29 % for girls and for the second, 12 % for boys and 15 % for girls. Corresponding figures for the more prestigious General Secondary Schools were 11 % for boys and 9 % for girls (MOE (1998) and MOE (2000)). The statistics are less clear for children in the interior but there are obvious disparities between the access of children on the coast and in the interior to educational opportunity.

Access to adequate nutrition: Overall levels of malnutrition among children under 5 are high in Guyana compared to other English-speaking Caribbean countries (State of the World's Children 2003). There are significant race/ethnic differences in types of malnutrition: Ministry of Health figures for 2003 show that stunting is highest for Amerindian children and lowest for Afro-Guyanese children; wasting is highest for Indo-Guyanese children and lowest for Amerindians; and anemia is most prevalent among Afro-Guyanese children, followed by Mixed children. However, all types of malnutrition are linked with poverty and low levels of education. This is clearest in the figures for

⁴ These are secondary level classes located in primary schools.

Amerindian children, among whom wasting is lowest because of the length of exclusive breastfeeding and other infant feeding practices in Amerindian communities, and where stunting is extremely high at 23.5 % as a result of deficiencies in calcium and zinc, among other micronutrients. (UNICEF, 11)

Protection from child labour: A 2002 ILO analysis prepared by Dr. George K. Danns has described child labour in Guyana as “pervasive, ubiquitous but largely unrecognised”, involving children from all race/ethnic groups who are “driven by culture, parental neglect, family breakdown and economic necessity to work for their own upkeep or that of their family and relatives” (Danns,.1). The report continued: “The problem with child labour in Guyana is that there is considerable cultural support sustaining it. Among the Amerindians and rural East Indians and Blacks, child labour is viewed as the socialization of children in preparation for adult role responsibilities. In such communities like Black Bush Polder (a rural Indo-Guyanese community) and Amerindian settlements in the Pomeroon, real education is acquired not in schools but in the farms where families eke out a living” (Danns, 1).

MICS 2001 figures show 27% of children 0-14 as “currently working” (i.e, performing paid or unpaid work for a non-household member, 4 or more hours of household chores, or other family work). The 2002 ILO report on child labour in Guyana estimated that the incidence of children under 18 performing child labour in Guyana may be more than twice the number provided in the MICS survey, and it provides the link between child labour and poverty when it describes the worst forms of child labour as being among street children, child victims of prostitution and children from remote Amerindian villages.

(b) Old and new sites of poverty.

Along with the persistence of old sites of poverty, new sites of poverty have emerged as a result of global economic developments. The interior is an old site of poverty: in a period where for the country as a whole, the head count index for absolute poverty and the numbers in critical poverty declined between 1992 to 1999, poverty among rural coastal people declined more slowly than in the towns, where it was halved, and declined not at all in the forests and savannahs of the interior.

On the coast, in addition to the longstanding and persistent pockets of poverty reflected in the figures, new sites of poverty are developing. While there are no new data on

household income, anecdotal evidence shows that the low level of growth in the macro economy and the particular problems being experienced in some sectors are having a negative impact at the levels of communities and households: the MDGR points out that “[E]xternal factors originating from global commercial centers have led to serious instability and even threaten the existence of communities such as Linden and Kwakwani (townships established around the bauxite industry which is in critical decline) and some rural agricultural villages bordering sugar estates”(9). The impact of the removal of preferential access to EU markets is likely to be soon and to be devastating, given the size of sugar's contribution to the national economy.

The percentage of single-parent families in Guyana, historically smaller than in most other Caribbean countries, has been rising as a result of the phenomenon of de facto single parent households resulting from the migration of male household heads (Red Thread 1999). In addition, surges of migration during periods of heightened political/racial conflict further fragment families and communities; for example, during the violence of the last 2 years.

(c) Women and poverty.

Especially but not only for women at the bottom end of the economic scale, paid work is low-waged work. Women at the lower end of the economic scale are super-exploited in terms of wages and other conditions of work for the jobs available to them. This situation was compounded when the National Minimum Wage policy was quietly eliminated, giving employers carte blanche to use the low participation rate to bid down wages.

As in other parts of the Caribbean, in Guyana “the burden of women's unwaged work is so heavy that it negates the impact of those favourable changes that have been achieved....in women's access to education and in their legal status” (Andaiye 1994, 4). Thus, in both education and jobs, women continue to cluster in the low-waged caring professions which mirror the unwaged caring work they perform in the home and community. As Table 1 demonstrates, at the University of Guyana where women outnumber men, “there is a distinctly gendered pattern to the programmes of study that men and women undertake”(WAB 7).

Table 1

University of Guyana Graduates by Course and Sex for 2000

Faculty	Percent Female	Total
Social Sciences	65%	226
Technology	11%	36
Agriculture	16%	19
Education	85%	65
Natural Science	47%	30
Arts	76%	34
Health Science	62%	79
Total	65%	453

Source: Ministry of Education

Tables 2 and 3 show that women earn less than men in both lower level and professional occupations.

Table 2

Persons with Gross Income below G\$30,000 per month in lower level occupations

Major Occupation	Females	Males
Clerks	90%	69%
Services/Sales	95%	87%
Elementary Workers	94%	73%
Agricultural Workers	97%	87%

Source: Bureau of Statistics

Table 3

Persons with Gross Income below G\$30,000 per month in professional occupations

Major Occupation	Females	Males
Managers	60%	47%
Professional	77%	42%
Technician	91%	65%

Source: Bureau of Statistics

B. METHODOLOGY

1. DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected from a number of primary and secondary sources.

(a) Purposive sample.

We compiled a purposive (i.e., non-random) sample of 34 participants selected by Red Thread. Interviews were conducted in July and August 2004 in offices, bars, homes, markets, and police stations by two women from Red Thread. We were aiming to interview people who knew directly about TIPs and other people who may not be involved directly but would have some knowledge of the activities involved in TIPs. People in three areas were chosen because they encompass all three counties (the primary administrative units in the country), they were all easily accessible, and they are typical of what Red Thread considers to be the major (albeit mostly restricted to coastal) centres of source, destination and recruitment communities in TIPs. These locations were Georgetown; the Essequibo coast and lake communities; and coastal communities in Berbice and the Corentyne (see Map 2).

In each place we contacted people using a snowballing technique (i.e., asking people to recommend other people who they thought would fit our profile of people who we wanted to interview). We started with a number of key individuals and from them got names of other people to interview. For the sake of anonymity these cannot be identified. We interviewed a woman suspected of being trafficked, as well as taxi drivers, sex workers, social workers, teachers, librarians, police officers, market vendors, sales clerks, hotel and bar owners and others such as hinterland coordinators from the Ministry of Agriculture, officers in the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, members of NGOs and administrators from various field offices whom we thought might have come into contact with victims in various interior locations. Each of the 34 people in this sample was interviewed using the questionnaire designed by IOM.

Because of the difficulties in getting interviews (see below), we decided to select people who we encountered in various public places to participate in the research, keeping in mind the status of persons and their geographical location that might have helped them to come into contact with incidents of TIPs.

Map 2 Location of respondents and locations associated with trafficking mentioned by respondents and other sources

(b) IOM National Seminar.

This seminar, took place on June 16, 2004. The participants included senior and junior government officials, community representatives, media and NGO representatives who are likely to have some information about TIPs and who may be involved in the national response and they were invited to the seminar by the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security. As part of this day long session participants were asked to fill out a short questionnaire (which was identical to the final section of the questionnaire mentioned above) and 24 participants did so. Given this fact, much less use of this material was made in the analysis.

(c) Secondary data taken from newspapers

We analysed newspaper coverage of trafficking in persons in Guyana from April 23, 2004, when the GoG announced a campaign to combat TIPs in Guyana, to August 30, 2004. During this period, 49 (to check doc centre; we have 42) separate pieces of newspaper coverage were found, almost all of them articles. Prior to the launch of the campaign this issue was not covered by the Guyana media: only one article pre-dating April 2004 was discovered during a spot check of newspapers for the previous year. No newspaper coverage was found between January 2004 and the start of the campaign. The four newspapers in which articles or other coverage of TIPS were identified for the period April 23 to August 30, 2004 were the Kaitum News, Guyana Chronicle, Stabroek News, and Catholic Standard.

The electronic media were not similarly monitored; a video of one programme covering a visit by the Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security (MLHSS) to two interior communities (Moruka and Port Kaituma) was examined but yielded nothing useful.

(d) Sources of other secondary data

Three other sources of secondary data identified were reports on implementation of Conventions to which Guyana is signatory, and data from NGOs and international agencies. Among NGOs clearly Red Thread was the most easily identified: in 2001 we had uncovered some information about TIPs in the course of conducting a participatory

needs assessment with female Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) in Guyana.⁵ From experience and observation, we knew that the main NGOs to which problems that might be associated with TIPs would be taken were the GHRA and the Amerindian organizations. Finally, we knew that if there was any prior knowledge of TIPs in Guyana other than in these NGOs, it would most likely be revealed in reports to and of international bodies

2. COMMENTS ON DATA COLLECTION

A number of difficulties were experienced in the interviewing process. As research proceeded and we gathered information on TIPs involving Indo-Guyanese and Afro-Guyanese we became increasingly concerned at the degree to which the focus of all parties was on the exploitation of Amerindian women and girls, with only a few even mentioning Amerindian men and boys, and almost none mentioning those of other race/ethnic groups of any age or sex. We felt that while it is important to recognize the particular ways in which power is abused against Amerindians (coastal/interior power relations; and race/ethnic power relations) it is also essential (a) not to be paternalistic and (b) not to ignore areas of exploitation of people of other race/ethnic groups that may be/are similar to those experienced by Amerindians. It was at this point that we stopped identifying more interviewees whose experience would be in the interior (Amerindian or non-Amerindian) and focused on following or trying to follow leads in relation to other groups.

Another difficulty was that the campaign by the Ministry of Labour and Human Services and Social Security (MLHSS) had highlighted issues of TIPs and we were having great

⁵ The needs assessment was conducted in several communities in each of five regions - Regions 4, 5, 7, 8: the communities were: Region 4 - Georgetown; Region 5 - Albion, Crabwood Creek and Skeldon; Region 7 - Bartica, Arimou, Mazaruni River; Region 8 - Cambelltown, Mahdia, El Paso, Tumatumari, Amatuk and Micobie; and Region 10 - Kwakwani. The group's sources were girls and women in bars, hotels and mining camps in the interior and on street corners, proprietors of the establishments and a public official in the Corentyne.

difficulties in getting interviews. Some potential interviewees said that what we were doing was dangerous and they did not want to endanger their lives the way we were endangering ours. Some expressed fear of being penalised by the law for what they know or by the perpetrators of TIPs for what they might have said to us. Many people promised to give interviews but changed their minds after they read about the Ministry's campaign or saw it reported on television. Possible interviews with victims were also lost due to the campaign.

For example, contact was made with a caretaker in xxx who agreed to be interviewed. She was reluctant to be interviewed for fear that information would be leaked to the media but we assured her that it was confidential. She said that she was afraid of being attacked by people who are involved in trafficking which is prevalent in the area. On the day of the interview she went in to hiding from us, she told others in the area to say that she wasn't there. When we finally met her, she said that she changed her mind about doing the interview. She was afraid because she lived alone and did not want any harm to come to her and she claimed she did not know anything as it related to the interview. Other interviewees also promised that they would do the interview but every time we approached them, they claimed that they were not ready. We also planned to go into the area known for trafficking mentioned by her but decided against it after we received a phone call from a taxi driver telling us that it wasn't wise for us to do so. He said that the proprietor of the hotel in xxx had learned that we were in the area and she was waiting for us. His exact words were “ You all better don't worry with that thing about going around the xxx area to do no interview because the woman who owns the xxx, hear you all coming and she is setting for you all. You all might get a good licking because she is a upstart and she is gon set up she people fuh beat you “.

We also had a hard time trying to convince people that their interviews are confidential. Even police officers decided that they did not want anything they said to be taped and in some instances they asked us not to write certain things they said. For example if they wanted to tell us of a particular incident, they would say “ this is off the record”. Some of the interviewees asked us how could they be sure that what they said would be confidential and that we wouldn't use the tapes on the radio or put their names in the newspapers. We told them that they would just have to trust us. There was no problem with privacy however because even in the public places there was some degree of privacy since the conversation could not be overheard. The interviews conducted in the markets

were difficult though since the interviews had to stop so that vendors could attend to customers, and some public officials had to break interviews because of their duties, and reschedule continuations. Some interviews required several visits and persuasion before people actually agreed to do the interviews.

Some of the participants did not want to be interviewed using the questionnaire so in these cases we had more of a conversation in which we occasionally asked questions around the issues to ensure that all the information asked for on the questionnaire was covered.

3. DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE PURPOSIVE SAMPLE

Given that the major source of data came from the purposive sample we detail their characteristics below. Of the 34 respondents two-thirds were female and a third male and all were born in Guyana. The respondents came from three locations: the capital, Georgetown (n=7), in county Demerara; 15 came from the coastal area of county Essequibo; and 12 came from the Corentyne in county Berbice.

Table 4 below shows the characteristics of the sample in terms of union status, age, education and type of employment. The majority of both women and men were married or in a live-in relationship but a significant proportion of women also claimed single status which we assume to represent women who head households as well as single women who were not yet in a relationship. Given that most (Afro-Guyanese) women do not marry until a later age i.e., around 40 years of age, this finding substantiates those of age with half of the women falling in one of the youngest age groups of 26-40 years old. Nearly all the men and the remainder of the women fell into the 41-55 years age group. While the population profile for Guyana is heavily skewed towards a youthful population it is not surprising that this is not represented in this purposive sample for which it was assumed that people of working age were much more likely to have information and to be prepared to speak on issues pertinent to the survey. Women were more likely than men to have only primary education although equal proportions had educational experience beyond secondary level school. Again these results replicate trends within Guyana of poor women and men having low levels of education (and educational attainment) but of women out performing men at tertiary levels of education. The employment profile is also what we would have expected from a population that has endured the negative economic consequences of structural adjustment programs and neo-liberal policies i.e., although there is a high proportion of the population making their living from being

employed by the public sector (although this has declined drastically in the last decade) a number of these indicated having other sources of employment in the informal sector and/or from being self employed.

Table 4: Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Female (n=22)	Male (n=12)
Union status:		
Married/ Live in;	12	11
Single;	7	0
Separated/Divorced/ Widowed	3	1
Age group		
18-25	1	0
26-40	11	2
41-55	8	8
56-65	2	1
66+	0	1
Education		
Primary	7	1
Secondary	5	7
Advanced	10	4
Type of employment	15	8
Government agency	2	1
NGO	1	0
Private sector	4	3
Self employed / Retired/Other	0	0

C. CONTEXT OF TIPS IN GUYANA

a. GENERAL COMMENTS

Our initial concern was to make clear the extent to which TIPs was considered an issue by the research participants. The answers below clearly indicate that the vast majority (83%) of participants (n=58) knew what trafficking was and 76% considered it a problem in Guyana (44 out of 58). A large number knew of specific cases in the country. Considerably fewer, however, were able to give details relating to specific cases of trafficking overseas (n=8). We would caution that these answers may have been influenced (i.e., inflated) by the recent government campaign against trafficking as well as the press coverage given to the US State report about Guyana being given Level Three status. This means.....??[\[KAREN DO THIS Author ID1: at Thu Sep 9 10:48:00 2004 \]](#). One respondent, for example, indicated that TIPs has been present for decades in Guyana but is only now being highlighted as needing serious attention in the interests of the population. Certainly, Red Thread's understanding of the phenomenon described in this report is that they are not new activities but that government action in relation to them is, and this may have altered people's perception of these activities that are now being referred to as trafficking. Thus while we would have expected a large number of participants to have knowledge of trafficking we did not expect that so many of them would have been able to articulate what it comprised.

What is trafficking in persons?

Of the 58 respondents only 10 did not know how to define trafficking. Of the remainder the vast majority phrased their definition in terms of movement for the purpose of exploitation, "Trafficking is moving persons from one place to the next and have them under control" (R2). "It is physical movement of persons from their home to another environment for the purposes of exploiting them" (R30). The most comprehensive response is listed in Box 1 below. It was the only definition to mention the possibility of trafficking taking place outside of national borders and is indicative of the perception of trafficking in Guyana as a localized occurrence. It also explains why few participants were aware of trafficking of peoples from Guyana (see below).

Box 1

Taking people from their homes/communities to other countries/areas to work for little or no money/treating them like slaves or dogs, forcing them to do things they don't want to do.

Female respondent, aged 26-40, single, secondary education, self-employed, Georgetown. Q.001

Is trafficking a problem in your country?

Of the 58 respondents, 44 said yes, 4 said no, 8 did not respond and 2 said they did not know.

Of the 58 who thought trafficking was a problem the majority explained this in terms of lack of economic opportunities. People are considered as wanting to 'better themselves' and they are 'tricked' into believing that leaving their communities will lead to this. Respondents especially saw this as a problem of young girls in the interior where Amerindian communities were being targeted although others also stressed that it was something that was happening to people of all races.

Are you aware of any trafficking of people IN your country?

Of the 58 respondents, 43 said yes, 10 said no and 5 did not reply. These responses indicate that knowledge of trafficking activities is widespread.

Are you aware of any trafficking of people FROM your country?

Of the 58 respondents, 19 said yes, 21 said no and 8 did not respond. Of those answering about specific cases and the numbers involved one half did not know how many people were involved and the others ranged in answers from 1 to 5 individuals. Of the 8 people who knew of specific cases they answered that these were mostly women who were taken to Barbados, Trinidad, Venezuela, Suriname, Holland, and French Guiana.

These responses indicate that trafficking does take place from Guyana to neighbouring countries in South America and the English speaking Caribbean (even though movements overseas do not feature in the participants' definitions).

What is the scale of trafficking in your country?

In terms of the scale, 26 out of 34 (77%) said they did not know the extent of the problem; 3 said it was not very widespread and 2 said it was widespread. (NB. This

question was only asked of the purposive sample). It is impossible to gauge the true extent of trafficking in Guyana for two reasons. First, people are not always prepared to speak openly about illegal activities. Second, there is no general agreement on what activities constitute TIPs. Some respondents for example, do not place young girl being taken to the coast to work in bars in the same category as women being forced to work as drug mules or women being sent overseas to work in the sex trade.

b. TIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION

Given the longevity of the issue of TIPs in Guyana and the centrality of movement to its definition we believe that the activities it comprises must be understood in terms of the broader context of migration - both internal and external - that have characterized life in Guyana. Within Guyana and regionally, in the Caribbean, there has always been movement for work and settlement. Internally, movement has been from rural to urban areas and from coastal to hinterland areas, and regionally, there has been movement to and from Caribbean territories, including the Atlantic coast of Central America. Hence in the first half of the 20th century there was substantial migration from Guyana into other Caribbean countries. There was also migration from southern parts of the country into other Amazonian territories such as Venezuela and Brazil by Amerindian peoples who have traditionally not recognised national boundaries. More recently, in the post WWII period, migration to the UK and North America has taken place, with a second wave beginning in the mid-1960s, which continues to date. Since the 1980s there has also been a substantial increase in temporary movements across borders with the arrival of petty trading. Migration into Guyana from other Caribbean territories has been limited since the decline of the bauxite industry. In the latter half of the 20th century and particularly since the onset of SAPS since the early 1980s small numbers of migrants have come to Guyana from further a field

The analysis below is taken solely from the purposive sample of 34 individuals. It sets the broader context in which TIPs takes place in Guyana.

(i) Migration TO Guyana

- The main reasons given why people come to live and work IN Guyana were related to setting up business and developing the country; other reasons cited were to work in health and education and as VSOs. The picture presented of migration into Guyana was of a variety of people seeking economic opportunity.

Guyana was portrayed by respondents as being a 'friendly', hospitable place to do business where the cost of living is cheaper and which is free of natural disasters, a peaceful place that provided business opportunities, and a place where contract workers (such as those with VSO and the Peace Corps) might want to stay. It was also presented as a county where entrepreneurs could thrive given the availability of land for farming and mining and the availability of other resources such as forests.

- The main countries of origin of migrants coming to live or work in Guyana (based on multiple responses) were said to be Brazil -20; China - 13; USA - 13; Canada - 10; Suriname - 6; Trinidad & Tobago - 6; Venezuela -4; England - 4; Japan - 4; Barbados - 3; Caribbean islands - 2; St. Lucia - 1; Norway - 1; Jamaica - 1; Cuba - 1; Korea - 1; Africa - 2; Germany - 1; and Holland - 1.

The reasons cited above correspond with Red Thread's understanding of the current contours of migration. Namely, migration from Brazil to participate in gold mining in the Guyanese interior; Chinese nationals who arrive in Guyana as part of a transnational process of migration whereby a short stay in Guyana acts as a prelude to migration to North America; re-migrants from the USA, Canada and Caribbean islands who are Guyanese nationals returning from these countries (reasons include family reunification, lack of economic advancement, and engagement in criminal activities resulting in forced return by North American authorities) as well as people coming from the neighbouring countries of Venezuela and Suriname. The responses relating to countries in S.E. Asia (apart from China) - namely Japan and Korea - may be indicative of professional employees from multilateral and bilateral assistance programmes as well as from MNCs working in Guyana, such as that of the controversial Malaysian based logging company of Barama that has also been associated with bringing in illegal migrants who work in debt bondage (see p.31). Hence, there appear to be three migration streams to Guyana; those who come from neighbouring countries where ease of access is a major factor; the relatively new stream of migrants from S. E. Asian countries that appears to be related to ease of access to exploiting Guyana's natural resources; and re-migrants (some voluntary, some forced) from North America.

(ii) Illegal Migration TO Guyana

Answers as to where illegal migrants come from corresponded to a large degree with the answers on migration perhaps indicating the large degree to which illegal migration is

synonymous with migration experiences in the Caribbean. A significant exception however, was that none of the participants assumed that illegal migrants came from the USA and Canada, indicative of the fact that Guyana is, and is perceived to be, a sending country as opposed to a receiving country of migrants to these countries.

- Twenty-three out of 34 respondents i.e., 75% said they knew of people living and working in Guyana illegally.
 - Just over a third of the respondents could not estimate the scale of this illegal migration. Of the remainder 4 estimated it was between 100-200 people, and 2 said over 300 but less than a 1,000 while seven said it was in the lower thousands.
 - Just under a third of respondents chose not to answer where illegal migrants came from. Of the remainder 21 mentioned Brazil and 6 mentioned China; 7 said Suriname; and 7 said Venezuela; while one said Trinidad.
 - Ten out of the 34 respondents did not reply to the question about specific knowledge of illegal migrants. Of the remaining 24 who said they knew of people living and working in Guyana illegally 12 said that these migrants were both men and women while another 8 said mostly men, 3 said mostly women and 4 said children. There was little agreement on age with a few respondents stating 'all ages'. Also some of the respondents gave more than one age range, responses were as follows: 13 - 25 (n=7); 18-25 (n=12); 26-40 (n=11) 41-55 (n=6); and 56-65 (n=1). In relation to the level of education of illegal migrants to Guyana, 2 said they had no schooling, 10 said they had primary schooling, one said secondary level and one said advanced studies. In terms of type of labour respondents think illegal migrants do in Guyana 19 said mining/ logging; 9 said working in restaurants and/ or bars; 9 said prostitution; 3 said trading, 1 said labouring, 2 said to open a shop or a business and one said working as a cook.

Given the prevalence of out migration among Guyanese we would have expected these answers i.e., that participants would have been aware of people coming into the country to work, and the fact that in-migration occurs on a much smaller scale than outward migration. Nobody estimates illegal immigration was more than in the low thousands, which may be indicative of the true scale of its level or of peoples' perception that this was not an important issue or also of the fact that it has not been an issue receiving a lot

of media attention. However, the fact that 33% of respondents 'chose' not to answer this question should not be ignored. While this may be indicative of people's ignorance of the issue it may also speak to respondents' lack of willingness to have a public opinion about movements of people they associate with illegal activities, including TIPs.

In terms of the major characteristics of illegal migrants the majority were assumed to be between the working ages of 18 - 40 although families with children were also assumed to migrate. Levels of education were not assumed to be high with the majority of respondents assuming illegal migrants had only primary education. In terms of employment Brazilians were linked with mining and construction. People from Venezuela, Suriname and Trinidad were also associated with these two sectors but to a lesser degree. Chinese were associated with the retail sector i.e., owning restaurants. One respondent also mentioned that Barama and other MNCs have been bringing in tribal people from their own countries whom they hold in debt bondage.

Some respondents indicated that people migrated to Guyana because of the country's resources; the majority of responses about this were couched in neutral terms although a few stated that migrants were in Guyana to "get rich on our resources". Women were assumed by some respondents to have migrated as the partners of men who were in the logging or mining sectors and then worked in bars or restaurants. Women who migrated alone were assumed to be working either as prostitutes or also in bars and restaurants. The variety of views expressing approval or disapproval of these activities is indicative of the different views held about in-migrants. For example, some garimpeiros (Brazilian miners) are resented because of the belief that they are given better mining grants than Guyanese but others view them more benignly because they are reputed to pay higher wages than Guyanese nationals. Similarly, construction workers from Trinidad are resented for what is perceived to be the shoddy nature of their workmanship as well as the favouritism they receive from the government. And views about women engaged in prostitution also ranged from those who felt the women were 'bad' to those who stated they did this because it was the only way they could make enough money to live on.

(iii) Migration FROM Guyana

- The countries most people go to FROM Guyana were identified as follows: there were numerous choices each for Canada = 23; the US = 28; and Barbados = 21. There were slightly fewer responses for Trinidad = 11; Suriname = 11; and England = 8. Other Caribbean islands figured most prominently in

terms of; St. Marten = 5; Antigua = 6; and St. Kitts = 4. Other Caribbean territories figured less, such as Bermuda = 1; Montserrat = 1; St. Vincent = 1; Cuba = 1; Virgin Islands = 2; Bahamas = 1; St. Lucia = 2; Montserrat = 1; as well as neighbouring countries in mainland South America such as French Guiana = 2; Brazil = 2; Mexico = 1; Columbia = 1; Belize = 1 and Venezuela = 5. The remaining countries to feature were Holland = 1; and Botswana = 2; as well as responses such as “all over the world” = 2.

- Twenty four respondents said that migrants from Guyana were both female and male, 18 also stated children were involved; only 4 claimed that migrants from Guyana were mostly men and only 5 claimed they were mostly women. In terms of ages responses were as follows: 0-12 (n=12); 13-17 (n=5); 18-40 (n=27); 41-65 (n=10); 66+ (n= 0). In terms of levels of education, 18 respondents said out migrants had primary level education, 14 said secondary, 13 said advanced, 5 said some technical and 2 said none. (Seven said they did not know). For the activities in the country of destination in which out migrants are engaged, the responses were family reunification =23, professional work = 14, study =12, prostitution = 10, informal trading/ vending = 9, agriculture = 8, construction =5, domestic work = 8, marriage including business marriage = 4, while 7 responses were recorded as `work' and 2 were don't know. There was one response for each of domestic problems, entertainment and self sponsorship.

The answers above indicate that it was assumed that most people migrating from Guyana went to North America or the Caribbean, particularly Barbados (which has one of the highest GNP per capita in the English speaking Caribbean) and the neighbouring countries of Trinidad, Venezuela and Suriname. A few respondents also said migrants go to England, indicative of the links to family members already established in an earlier migration stream to the UK. The findings are also suggestive of professional recruitment (of teachers and nurses mainly) to Botswana, USA, some Caribbean Islands.

Men, women and children were all assumed to migrate. They were perceived to either have little education above primary level or secondary and above indicating a wide range of class groups engaged in migration. This is reflected in the kinds of activities in which people engaged in the country of destination. Those with education were there to study or work in professional positions and those without were engaged in the informal sectors. Men without education were engaged in construction or agriculture (including cane cutting) while women without qualifications were engaged in trading, prostitution, or

domestic work or in family reunification. However, the majority of migrants were assumed to be part of a process of family reunification and 'getting a better life' although this did not preclude their engagement in occupation activities as well.

Only two of the respondents made specific mention of women going to Brazil, Trinidad and Barbados as prostitutes.

(iv) Migration THROUGH Guyana

- In relation to countries of origin of people migrating THROUGH Guyana, there were again multiple answers, with 20 for China; 11 for Brazil; 10 for Suriname; 6 for Africa; 3 for Venezuela; 2 each for French Guyana and the USA; and one each for Canada, Barbados, Cuba, Germany, Asia, and India. "Islamic groups" was volunteered by one person 5 said "don't know".

Responses to the questions relating to migrants passing through Guyana indicate knowledge about Chinese nationals using Guyana as a transshipment point that it is assumed will gain them easier entry into North America than applying directly from China. They also give an indication about the small numbers of Africans, who in the last five years or so, are also starting to appear in Georgetown (a few of whom have been charged for illegal entry), presumably on their way to elsewhere. We assume the relatively high number of through migrants from the neighbouring countries of Brazil and Suriname to indicate the level of movement that would normally be associated with countries in which various ethnic groups predate the imposition of colonial boundaries. Some of the respondents also suggest that some of the Surinamese passing through Guyana are Javanese nationals or descendants who may be part of broader ex-colonial migratory routes.

(v) Circumstances of migrants

- Only one respondent was unaware of people who migrated INTO, FROM, or WITHIN Guyana for work and then ended up in circumstances that were not what they expected.
- There were multiple answers on forms of control used against these persons: debt bondage (n=15); low wages (n=21); delay or denial of payment (n=22); physical, emotional, sexual violence (n=14); verbal abuse (n=10); threats

to individuals (n=10); restricted movements (n=13); withholding of documents (n=4); and false contracts (n=2). Only 2 respondents did not respond.

- As far as awareness of migrants TO Guyana forced to work in dangerous or poor conditions, the majority said no (n=25) with only 8 saying yes. In interpreting answers to this question it should be kept in mind that the majority of people working in Guyana work in these conditions so the high level of negative responses indicating that migrants are not forced to work in these kinds of conditions is suggestive that they simply experience the same kinds of work conditions that the majority of Guyanese experience.

NB. All the respondents answering this section only gave examples of migrants WITHIN and FROM Guyana, so the comments below relate to Guyanese nationals.

The majority of specific cases mentioned - 21 out of 30 - related to girls and women being taken from one area of Guyana to another, being promised domestic work or work as waitresses and ending up being pressured to engage in various forms of sex work such as table dancing or prostitution. Of those who mentioned the ages of the girls and women involved most commonly said they were within the range of 13 -20 years. In most cases they were taken from small rural communities on both the coast and interior into other communities. A large number of these cases (n=16) were of young Amerindian girls being taken from their villages. Certainly, Red thread agrees that as members of a minority coastal population, young Amerindian girls are very visible in the communities the participants were familiar with and their presence is suggestive of their centrality to trafficking practices. This centrality is largely due to the fact that their villages of origin are isolated politically, economically and socially from the rest of the country, indeed many of these villages are based on subsistence economies and paid work is extremely limited. Furthermore these villages have been and still are characterized by high levels of patronage from the church, politicians, and 'do-gooders' which historically has led to a situation of sending their young people out of the village for education and unemployment. Given these conditions it is still common to send young girls to the coast in the hope of a 'brighter future'.

Only a small number of respondents mentioned cases of women and girls being taken overseas, namely to Barbados (n=3), Suriname (n=2), Brazil (n=2) and Trinidad (n=2).

In both overseas and domestic cases respondents stated that the girls and women were kept in the industry by use of verbal and physical threats and actual abuse, being kept in debt bondage, delay or denial of payment and by having their movements restricted. The boxes below illustrate these kinds of situations in terms of both local and overseas trafficking.

Box 2

Yes. People are encouraged to go to other communities to work, when they get there they have no where to stay and have to come back. Miners take men and women away to work and don't pay them. Women are taken to the interior to work as cooks then told they have to do prostitution; some decide to stay, others don't. Most rum shops on the coast have Amerindian girls as young as 14 recruited as waitresses but are then told they have to offer other services including sex. I know one proprietor who has sex with all the girls working with him; they are afraid of being fired if they refuse. They can only go out if he agrees. Clients have to pay in advance and the boss takes part of the money. Three or 4 girls live in a little shack, 10'x15', with mattresses on the floor, with free meals and lodging. Since their pay is small they have no means of getting back home; others don't go home because they think there is nothing in their communities for them.

Male respondent, over 40 years, married, secondary education, self-employed, Essequibo coast. Q. 008

Box 3

In the interior, the girls are place to live in Caimoos or tents. They are somewhat exposed and unprotected. Sometimes they don't know who their clients are. Some of the clients if you don't do what they want, they would beat you or throw you overboard. I know of cases where some girls were killed.

Female respondent, single, 26-40 years, secondary education, self-employed, Essequibo. Q.025

Box 4

Four girls in their 20s from Pouderoyen, were taken to Suriname to work in a business place (Supermarket) but when they get there it was for prostitution. They eventually came back, they got away and made a report to the station and the police made arrangements to get others back.

Male respondent, over 40 years, common law, advanced studies, government worker, Corriverton, Corentyne Q.012

Box 5

A cousin was taken to Trinidad by a friend to do nursing with a private firm Medical International but when she arrived they took her passport and had her working long hours. They didn't pay her, they told her she would get all her money when she was ready to leave.

Male respondent, over 40 years, common law, secondary education, government worker, Georgetown. Q.032

Box 6

In one case two sisters in their mid twenties were recruited by a friend of their uncle to go to Barbados as waitresses. After showing them around for two days they were then told they had to do sex work. Their passports were held and they were subjected to threats and verbal abuse.

Female respondent, aged between 26-40 years, single, secondary education, self-employed, Georgetown Q.001

D. CHARACTERISTICS OF TIPS

The previous section on migration reveals that it is widespread, especially migration by Guyanese overseas. Answers from participants in the purposive sample also reveal however that TIPs is not commonly perceived as being associated with migration overseas and is most commonly seen as an internal issue. It is moreover mostly perceived as involving females. In this section we discuss respondents' knowledge of TIPs to reveal how more specific questions might reveal a more nuanced picture. We begin by examining what kinds of exploitation respondents think TIPs is associated with.

a. DOMINANT FORMS: LINKS TO SEX TOURISM, THE DRUG TRADE, CHEAP DOMESTIC LABOUR AND THE SEX TRADE

- On whether trafficking in persons in Guyana is linked to sex tourism 20 out of 34 (59%) said they didn't know or weren't sure, while 8 said “to a great extent”, and 4 said to a lesser degree they were connected.
- On a link to the drug trade, 16 (50%) said they didn't know or were not sure and 16 said yes and 2 said they didn't want to answer.
- On a link to the demand for cheap domestic labour, 23 (68%) said yes, 9 said they did not know, and one said no.
- No one attitude to women coming in or being brought in for prostitution or the entertainment industry prevailed among respondents with responses being characterized by polarised views. Fourteen said it was bad, but 20 expressed neutral views.

NB. We feel the high number of responses of 'do not know' in relation to sex tourism relate to the virtual absence of this activity in Guyana. Obviously sex tourism is only one element of the sex trade and the latter is well in evidence in Guyana. Answers to the question about the drug trade seemed born of fear of reprisal or at least caution, hence the relatively high number of respondents unwilling to answer the question or saying 'don't know'. This we feel is suggestive of the visibility of organised crime in Guyana and its involvement in the drug trade. Also, answers to the question on domestic service do not strongly relate the use of domestic labour to trafficking. Participants tended to talk about the abuse of domestic workers who are made to work for a pittance. Hence, the extent to which participants associate these activities with TIPs is uncertain.

i. Sex tourism.

Previous work by Red Thread (2000) on the sex trade in Guyana, part of a Caribbean wide study that investigated the links of the sex trade, made no links between sex tourism and the sex trade in Guyana. Given that Guyana does not fit the stereotypical notions of an island paradise with white sand beaches and blue seas it has never had a substantial tourism trade. The majority of 'tourists' to Guyana are themselves Guyanese visiting family members. There is also a nascent eco-tourist trade but it is unknown whether this has any links to the sex trade. In relation to trafficking links to sex tourism one respondent made specific mention of girls from overseas being brought to Guyana to work as exotic dancers in bars and clubs (a practice that Red Thread believes to be increasing), but no mention was made of Guyanese women being sent overseas to work as exotic dancers.

ii. Drug trade.

The link of TIPS to the drugs trade was mostly unclear with comments such as 'rich people use poor people to make money from them'. The comments made most specifically in relation to TIPs involved men, women, boys and girls working as 'mules'(see Box 7 below). Given that Guyana is well known as a transshipment point for cocaine from South America to points in the Caribbean and North America we would have expected more respondents to have spoken about these links, although our above caveat about fear of reprisals could well explain the low response rate.

Box 7

Shop owners in Bartica will come and say they want girls to work and then take them to transport drugs. If they refuse they might be threatened or even killed.

Female respondent, aged 26-40 years, single, secondary education, self employed, Essequibo. Q. 025

iii. Domestic labour.

In relation to domestic work no examples were given of women being taken overseas. Most commonly stories were told of young Amerindian women being made to work for very low wages (see Boxes 8 and 9 below).

Box 8

Because of the economic situation, people on the coast go into riverain areas, recruit the young inexperienced Amerindian girls preferably without children and bring them out to work as domestics. Pay them \$1,000.00 per week. They give them free food, accommodation and clothes that are not fashionable. Domestics who live in are always on duty.

An Afro-Guyanese woman in her 50s was lured into the interior (Region 8, Mahdia) as a cook. She expected to work from 8am-4pm. Instead she had to wake at 3am to prepare breakfast, stop at 7 or 8 am, prepare lunch from 10am - 4pm, dinner from 6pm-9pm. If the food was finished earlier than expected she had to prepare more. She was paid G\$1000 a day with free meals and lodging. She also had to wash the dishes and sometimes sell. In the interior \$1000 is like \$100. She had to pay back money that was spent to take her up. She seldom bought anything and saved the rest of her money including TIPS; after 8 months she paid her passage back home. Her daughter went to St Lucia as a cook and experienced a similar situation.

Male respondent, aged over 40, married, secondary education, self employed, Essequibo Q.008

Box 9

A large percentage of people moving from one area to the next to do what ever work most people refuse to do in that area. They work 12 or 14 hrs e.g. 7am-10pm, they are paid little or no money, stay in the same home with the owners. Money deducted for meals and lodging. They can't go back home. There are threats of not getting their jobs back. They have nothing to do at home, they are in mental bondage.

Male respondent, aged 26-40, married, secondary education, NGO, Port Mourant, Corentyne.Q.020

(iv) Sex trade

Views of women who were trafficked within Guyana to work in the entertainment or sex industry were mixed ranging from those who said they were 'wicked' or 'bad'; they spread STDs and other diseases; they end up in the drugs trade and should be jailed/stopped from coming, to those who pitied them because they did not realize they were being exploited. Although a number of the responses were very moralistic about prostitution, claiming it was a criminal activity and that this trafficking should be stopped it was unclear whether this view was extended to the women engaged in the sex trade. Others were less equivocal claiming that the women were simply earning a living and probably could not do better; that circumstances of poverty meant this was all they could do for survival and their children's sake; they do not know they are being exploited. A few

participants claimed it should be the woman's choice about how to make a living; that they should not be judged; and that some of them enjoy it.

Respondents were also mixed in their views as to whether the women and girls knew what they were being recruited for, saying that some would be and others would not be (n=21); ten said no they were not aware and only two said yes, they were all aware. Reasons for this included not being fully aware of the degree of pressure that their boss would put on them to engage in sex work; because the circumstances they left were so dire they had not thought that worse could lie ahead; because they had never been exposed to this situation before they had no idea what to expect (although some would be 'smart' enough to figure out what was going to happen). Box 10 below illustrates this point.

Box 10

A girl aged 17, was recruited to be an accountant at G\$30,000 [monthly] but had to do prostitution and striptease dancing. She refused and was thrown out on the street with nothing. She was rescued by her father's friend. He went into the area to work and saw her at the road corner crying and went to help her not realising that it was his friend's daughter until he took her home.

Male respondent, married, over 56 years, advanced studies, government worker, Essequibo.Q.009

2. TRAFFICKING FOR SEX WORK, FORCED LABOUR AND DOMESTIC SERVICE (INCLUDING METHODS OF RECRUITMENT AND CONTROL).

- Asked about their awareness of forced prostitution, forced labour or domestic servitude (or none of the above) in Guyana, the responses (multiple answers)) were: forced prostitution (n=24) and nude dancing (n=1); forced labour (n=13); domestic servitude (n=7); and none of these (n=6).
- Re. trafficking for forced prostitution or sex work, of the 24 people who knew of specific cases only 2 reported cases involving transporting young women and (in one case) young men overseas (Barbados and Trinidad). All other cases related to women engaged in sex work in Guyana.
- Re. trafficking for forced labour, answers were less full and fewer respondents answered (n=12 knew of specific cases). All cases related to trafficking within Guyana. Methods of recruitment and of control were the same

as for forced prostitution: low wages and debt bondage with restricted movements along with verbal and physical abuse. Information on living/working conditions pertained to long hours, commonly up to 18 hours a day.

- Re. trafficking for domestic servitude there were 8 answers overall and all related to trafficking in Guyana. Given the responses on the characteristics of migrants within Guyana we would have expected a higher response. We assume that this lower response is because respondents were attempting to make the link between domestic servitude and trafficking instead of just between domestic servitude and exploitation and also because most respondents classify migration that is supposedly for domestic work, but tends up as sex work, as trafficking for forced prostitution.

i. Sex trade

Responses from participants indicate that their perception is that trafficking takes place primarily in response to the demand from the sex trade. It is unclear however to what extent 'trafficking' overseas is involved. While participants were aware of a few cases in which women have been tricked into traveling overseas to other countries the majority of cases appear to be of Guyanese women working in Guyana. Red Thread (1999) is aware however that an increasing demand from the local entertainment industry has given rise to the recruitment of women from Brazil, Trinidad and elsewhere in the Caribbean as go-go dancers, lap dancers and exotic dancers in bars and at private shows along the coast.

Respondents indicate that the majority of girls come from the NW area of Guyana and the Pomeroon, a fairly isolated part of the country. These cases involve young girls (from early teens to early twenties) who live in riverain or interior areas who are deceived into leaving their communities to work as waitresses in small establishments on the coast. After a period of often only a few days they are told they have to engage in sex work and through various forms of control they are prevented from leaving. The method most commonly used by recruiters was to make friends with people in a community and then get them to recruit girls. Methods of control involved debt bondage, restricted movement (including being locked up); withholding of pay or insufficient pay; and threats (including death threats) and physical violence from the employer and clients. In terms of their living conditions there were several cases of women living in a room (sleeping on mattresses, make shift beds, or a single bed for which they paid), or of living in a room in

the owner's house or of sleeping in a former pig pen. Specific examples are outlined in Boxes 11 to 18 below.

Box 11

A female Guyanese took 3 girls aged 19, 21 & 25 (1 Mixed, 2 Afro) to Barbados to work as domestics. On arrival they were told they had to repay their airfares and all other expenses and that they had to go nude on stage and dance. They were locked up in a dark room, their clothes taken away and allowed out only to dance or for clients. Someone watched them. Rescued by a stolen phone call from one of the girls to cousin. Police and Embassy came in & they were freed. The girls weren't paid while they were working. Other girls are still with the woman who is also still recruiting.

Female respondent, aged 41-55, married, secondary education, government employee, Essequibo Q.007

Box 12

I am a church person who was called many times to rescue people. People are taking men to Trinidad to work in Gay clubs. 14-15 year old boys and girls are also being recruited. Also young women who are just out of school or school drop outs. They are mainly Indo and Blacks, some are taken into mining districts. It's not only Amerindian girls. The highest amount of trafficking is among young Indian girls. There are more Indo business men who are doing it. Victims are controlled by violence physical, sexual and verbal. Trafficking is also done under religious pretence. Know of a man who told me that he got a plane ticket to take people to Trinidad, took them, handed them over to the person over there and they were taken to a hotel and were left there. They didn't know that they were trafficked, just a bunch of innocent boys and girls. Some of the men are controlled by violence. I know of one teenage boy who was handcuffed. A lot of the young girls want to get out of this poverty situation and want to go overseas, So they take the chance to seize the opportunity. Also know of a young boy from a single parent household who was sexually molested by a Catholic Priest, he was taken by the priest to his home with the intention of helping out the financial situation in the boy's home. He was 12 yrs at the time, he didn't refuse because the man was older than he was and was also supporting him financially. Boy couldn't understand why this was happening, he wasn't the only one there were other boys. Priest is now deceased, boy is willing to help young people not to let the same thing happen to them.

Male respondent aged 41-55, married, advanced studies, government employee, Georgetown Q.034

Box 13

Rich business women go into interior communities and recruit girls aged 13 to 20 promising them domestic jobs and a brighter future. They are forced to work in restaurants and bars and as prostitutes. They are not allowed to leave the restaurants

except once a week accompanied or to go home. Families are allowed only a brief visit on holidays. Their wage is low and they have to repay passage, meals and accommodation. They have room attached to the back of the restaurant which is used as living quarters, with make shift beds.

Male respondent aged 41-55, separated, secondary education, self-employed, Essequibo. Q.005

Box 14

Young girls 11-15 yrs of all races, business people go to rural communities, talk to parents, and pay them large sums of money as advance to bring the girls out. Are told they are going to work as domestics but forced into prostitution. Movements are restricted, they have to obey employer, can't interact with people except male clients. They're not paid. Everything they need is provided but they must repay. Boss decides what they should or shouldn't do, and they are threatened by boss. Know of male boss who has sex with the girls before they go with anybody else. People don't tell Police of incidences because the Police go back to the proprietors and tell them what they were told and from whom. People are afraid of being killed so they don't report. Police get money from the proprietors.

Male respondent aged 65 plus, married, secondary education, local government, Corriverton, Corentyne. Q.013

Box 15

Bar owners on the Corentyne are paying people to bring young girls from rural communities. They trick the girls into coming, fool them that they are going to Georgetown to work as salesclerks and domestics and their salary would be big. Parents are given advances and are told girls would be well taken care of. Girls are taken to Corentyne and are handed over to business people who then tell them the kind of work they have to do. In 2 business places I know of - Crimson Light and Embassy Club - the proprietors work these girls like slaves. Movements are restricted, no interaction with others but clients, no pay, work from one morning to another, given rooms attached to the back of the house with bed. Girls are padlocked in those rooms after work, they get free foods and are taken to market by boss to buy clothing, if sick boss pays bills. These girls are abused verbally and physically by their bosses. Sometimes the owner of Crimson Light goes to Charity and brings girls, some for her business and some to sell to other businesses.

Female respondent aged 41-55, divorced, primary education, self-employed, Corriverton, Corentyne. Q.015

Box 16

Young Amerindian girls as young as 10 yrs old, brought from Essequibo by a man from Georgetown to work as maids and waitresses, he told them he was taking them on the East Coast but sold them to a woman who took them to the Corentyne. They realised what happened when they were at Rosignol and refused to go any further . The woman had a police friend and threatened them that they would get locked up if they didn't go with her, promised them that they work as domestics and go to school so they went. She handed them over to a man who owns Embassy bar (Chowmein from Crabwood Creek) who placed them to work in a bar in revealing clothing. They sleep on mattresses on tables in the bar. Not allowed to go any where nor have friends. Part of their TIPs are taken away, they only get money to buy clothes. Abused verbally and sexually by proprietor. Work from 8 am to 3 am.

Female respondent aged 26-40, single, advanced studies, government employee, Corriverton, Corentyne. Q.021

Box 17

Club owners have contacts with people in the rural communities who would recruit young girls and bring them out to a certain point on the coast with permission from their parents. They are promised a good salary and parents are given a large advance. Most recruiters hire a car or bus to transport the girls. They are well treated on their way and also for the first two days. This makes them feel that they would have a better life. The first two days they sleep in the owner's home. After then they are placed in rooms attached to the back of the house or business. Some of them sleep on mattresses on the floor in the shop after business is closed. They work in the business from 10 am - 11 pm week days and from 10 am -2 or 3 am on weekends But they work in the boss' home starts earlier than 10 am. They do all the household chores, serve in the bars and do prostitution. When they get business, the boss collects the money, gives them a small portion. They don't get paid for the other work they do. They are told that they are getting free lodging and meals. They can't go out without the boss, not allowed to have friends or interact with anyone excepts clients. If anyone goes into the shop and talks with them, the boss would clap his hands and the girls know that they have to move away. Can only talk to clients, don't know if they are controlled by violence or what happens if they are ill. But they are controlled by threats, if they run away, they or a family member would be killed. Not allowed to go home for holidays. Family don't know where they are, can't visit.

Male respondent aged 41-55, married, secondary education, self-employed, Essequibo. Q.027

Box 18

Young females 18-24, not only Amerindians but mainly them were recruited men from village to come to Georgetown to work as sales clerks and domestics with permission from their parents. They were primary school dropouts . They were taken to Bars to work as waitresses and prostitutes. They are encouraged to sit and drink with men but at the

same time have to remember how many drinks were bought. Sometimes they get drunk and can't remember and would be beaten and made to pay back money by Boss. No visitors are allowed, movements are restricted, they are under paid, and owner buys clothes for them and takes them back when he gets vexed. Can't go back home. Some want to leave but are stopped due to debts. If they insist on leaving owner promotes them to make them stay. Then he would raise an alarm that he lost money and call in the Police.

Male respondent aged 41-55, common-law, secondary education, government employee, Georgetown. Q.032

In addition we present two outlines of the situations of two other women interviewed by Red Thread in the course of this research, both of whom are women involved in trafficking who were made contact with through the research (see Boxes 19 and 20).

Box 19

`Mary', 25 year old Afro Guyanese woman

`Mary' is a dancer at a club on Sheriff Street, Georgetown, Guyana, who was recruited with two other women in July 2004 to serve tables in a club in Barbados. The recruiter was a mature Guyanese woman who lives some of the time in Barbados with the Barbadian club owner, Mr. A. Her children live in Barbados. The recruiter arranged travel documents for Mary and paid her airfare to Barbados. The agreement was that Mary would work in the club for three weeks and would repay a total of Barbados \$200 out of her earnings. She was told that the club owner had organized a house which the three women would share, and they would be responsible for their own meals.

On arrival in Barbados, her travel document was taken by the club owner and she was told that she would have to repay Bds\$600. Mary was also told that she would lodge with a friend of the club owner (with whom she would have to have sex), and that the job was prostitution not waitressing. He said he could not pay her to dance. Mary left the club and located a relative in Barbados who took her to another club that was prepared to pay her to dance. Her employer, who has connections to Barbados immigration caused Mr. A to return Mary's travel document. She paid Mr. A, saved some money and returned to Guyana towards the end of August.

Mary met three other Afro Guyanese women in Barbados with recruitment experiences similar to hers. One of the women she met, she estimates to be between 16 and 17 years old; this woman has been in Barbados for over a year and sells lesbian sex. The regular customers at the clubs Mary visited are Barbadian men. She met a number of male Guyanese construction workers who were not being paid for their work, although she thinks they are in possession of their travel documents. Mary's experience of recruiters at the Georgetown clubs is that they usually make individual approaches, and most of the time their first choice would be Indo Guyanese girls.

In Guyana, Mary has met Brazilian women working as prostitutes at Germans Club. These women were brought here to dance, and she was told by one of them that though they had repaid the recruiter his expenses, they continued to pay a percentage of their prostitution fees to him.

Box 20

Samantha's Case Study about traffickers.

Some people are from the islands, some from Suriname. They are in the discos and looking for the young girls night time, and they pay your passage for you and then dem to go out of the country, and when you reach to Suriname with them, they tell you dey gon get a job for you and they gon book a room and put you in the room and say you got to make your heights on you own, you got to go with different men and you got to pay them back, and if you don't pay them back they take advantage of you, and if you don't pay them back they come and take away your money, abuse you, rowing and going on.

My sister-in-law told me that she was taking me with her to Suriname to sell clothes, she pay my transportation and buy what I need on the way. When we reached to Suriname she booked a room and put me in and said that I must make my heights. I asked her what she meant and she said.

Forced labour. Nine of the 12 examples given of forced labour either referred to sex work or domestic work or a combination of the two (see Box 21 below).

Box 21

Women in clubs and bars are forced to work as waitresses and sex workers for long hours, e.g. 8 am to 12 am; if clients come in later they have to accommodate them and still report for work at 8am. They have to clean up the business area for the same money. They face sexual harassment from clients and customers with little protection from bosses.

Male respondent aged 41-55, separated, secondary education, self-employed, Essequibo Q.005

The other 3 cases of forced labour all referred to the specific situation of Amerindian peoples (see Boxes 22 and 23 below).

Box 22

Amerindian women and men are taken out to work on grants in the Pomeroon river - The men in the farm and the women in the owner's yard digging coconuts. Women work from very early in the morning until evening. The women have to do 1000 or more coconuts for \$350. - \$400. They are not paid any money. The owners have shops and the people

are allowed limited amount of credit per week; they always end up owing. They cant afford proper meals or clothes. They can't leave to go home because they owe their boss and there is nothing to go home to. They can't go out of the area without boss' permission. Logies are built at the back of the owners' yard for workers to live in.

Female respondent aged 26-40, married, primary education, government employee, Essequibo Q. 010

Box 23

Six Amerindian boys aged 14-20 yrs old were brought out from village to work with this business man. These boys have to do all the fetching and packing of things, clean yard, wash concrete, clean shop. This man works these boys like slaves, they have to do all the dirty work . Meals are provided, they live in a tent at the back of the yard. They are not being paid so they can't go back home. These boys don't have clothes, they can't mix with other people because they are very untidy. They don't have clean clothes. These boys are being beaten by the man's 17 yr old son and abused verbally. He would curse them and tell them they are lazy. He would hardly give them food. When they have the chance they would steal biscuits from the shop to eat. One of them got caught and he was badly beaten. Lack of education has a lot to do with this situation.

Female employee aged 41-55, married, primary education, government employee, Essequibo Q.031

Domestic servitude. In all the 8 cases cited by respondents young girls were taken from their place of residence and were either trafficked to work as domestics or domestic labour was also expected of them was well as sex work (see Boxes 24 to 26 below). Methods of control are coercive including withholding of wages, threats of loss of employment and restriction of movements. Living/working conditions are basic with domestic workers often having to share rooms with others and sleep on the floor or a mattress on the floor and with no control over their working hours.

Box 24

The woman who works as a live in domestic at a couple's home starts work at 5.30am and finishes whenever the family retires. She also has to wake at nights to look after the 2 year old. She is not allowed visitors or phone calls or to go out by herself. She was told she would be paid \$1200 a week but hasn't received any money.

Female respondent, single, aged 26 -40 , secondary education, self employed, Georgetown Q.001

Box 25

Most bar owners don't employ maids. Girls who work in the bar have to be the cleaners, cooks and laundresses.

Female respondent, divorced, aged 41-55, primary education , self employed, Corriverton, Corentyne Q.015

Box 26

Amerindian women from Orealla come out to look for work and are under paid, because they are living in they have to do everything, babysitting, cooking, cleaning, washing, selling and sometimes even shopping for the one money. They are allowed to go home on holidays e.g. Christmas. If they want to go home on weekends, they are threatened that they would lose their jobs. They have no exact working hours. They are given a room in the boss' home to live.

Female respondent aged 26-40, single, advanced studies, government employee, Corriverton, Corentyne 021

c. VICTIMS OF TIPS; TRAFFICKING OF GIRLS, WOMEN, MEN AND BOYS

(some of this needs going into summary of findings)[\[Author ID1: at Thu Sep 9 10:57:00 2004 \]](#)

The majority of cases of TIP in Guyana reportedly involve women and girls in the age ranges of early teens to late twenties either for sex work or domestic labour. Men and boys were trafficked far less, especially for sex work. The majority of cases of men being trafficked relates to cases within Guyana for forced labour in the interior. Hence many cases involve Amerindian men.

In terms of men and boys, 14 respondents said that men are trafficked; 9 said they weren't sure or didn't know; and 9 said no. Of those respondents who knew one respondent told how men are taken from communities by grant owners to work on farms and live in logies [old plantation shacks] on grants, sometimes without beds. They are not paid but given credit at the grant owners' shop and forced into debt bondage. They are unable to return home since they have no money and no job in the community. In other cases sawmill owners bring Amerindian men to work for them. They work very long hours and are paid with food rations and then they have no money to get back home. In another case men were reported to being taken in to remote areas in the bush to work and as they did not know where they were they could not leave. One knew of boys as young as 7 who were sent by their families to work as labourers in sawmills, markets, in the backdam and stellings (ports) although commonly respondents mentioned boys in between the ages of

10-13. Only one respondent knew of boys/men being used for sex purposes; boys from as young as ten years old who were being tricked into sex work.

In terms of overseas examples one respondent mentioned men being taken to Barbados as skilled workers -carpenters and mechanics - who were then forced to do more work for less money than at home. Another respondent knew of girls and boys who were taken overseas to engage in sex work.

d. IMPACT ON VICTIMS

We discuss impact in relation to 2 issues; health care and being able to tell people of their plight.

a. Health care.

In relation to health care concerns we found it difficult to get specific information. The main issues surrounding health care are to do with HIV/AIDS and pregnancy. Previous research with sex workers (Red Thread 1999) has revealed that women engaged in sex work often have little opportunity to use condoms because many male customers refuse to use them. Some participants reported that when girls and women got pregnant they were simply sent away to fend for themselves. Given that abortion is also the main method of birth control among women in Guyana it may be that girls and women had abortions or used abortifacients to promote miscarriage (Red Thread 2000).

In terms of HIV/AIDS, Guyana has one of the highest level of AIDS in the Caribbean. Again, previous research by Red Thread (1999) has revealed a high level of HIV infection among sex workers. **KAREN PUT IN MORE DETAIL**

b. Ability to tell people of their plight.

When asked if they were aware of victims of trafficking telling someone of their plight, of the 58 respondents, 30 said yes, 23 said no and 5 did not reply.

Of the 21 replying (with multiple answers) affirmatively they said victims have told the following: 15 said friends, 8 said family, 5 said neighbours 2 said law enforcement people, 4 said a government agency, 2 each said an NGO, law enforcement agencies, or their clients and one each said a hotel owner and a counsellor. Obviously informal networks of friends and family are much more likely to be turned to than formal channels. There was some indication in responses that individuals in formal agencies were suspected of being involved in trafficking themselves or of being more beholden to traffickers' interests than in upholding the law. This may help to explain why a number of victims had not told anyone of their ordeal.

Respondents claimed the following reasons explained why victims did not tell anyone (of the 58 respondents 27 responded). Multiple answers resulted in 15 saying this was because they would be too ashamed to do so because of the social stigma attached to being a victim of trafficking; one said they would be afraid of victimization from the law. Other responses indicated not knowing where to go (n=5) not knowing that the incident is a crime (n=5); a lack of trust of officials (n=2) or knowing that many other cases are reported yet nothing happens (n=1). There were also responses indicating fear of reprisal, either to themselves (n= 7) or their family (n=1).

e. TRAFFICKERS; LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION

Responses to questions about the beneficiaries of trafficking were striking in their similarity in the fact that they had only one story to tell: the respondents were all in agreement that it was business people working with go-betweens in communities who were benefiting by exploiting poor people. Either business people - both women and men - would directly go into communities and recruit young girls (and in fewer cases young boys) or they would have an intermediary in the village who would tell them who to contact. Boxes 27 to 29 illustrate typical responses to this question.

Box 27

Because of the economic situation there are a lot of poor communities. Business people seize the opportunity to recruit young girls in those areas. For the want of a better life for self and family, parents and girls take the chance to go with them.

Male respondent aged 41-55, common-law, secondary education, government employee, Georgetown Q.032

Box 28

Most time business owners know someone in communities who would recruit the girls or point them to the families they should go to. Families are given advances of about \$40,000.00 before taking the girls, just to make families feel that everything would be OK, not realising that the child/children would be indebted to them. The business persons and the contact persons are the ones who are benefiting from this.

Male respondent aged 41-55, married, secondary education, self-employed, Essequibo 008

Box 29

The business people are targeting the communities that are very depressed. They know that the people there are vulnerable so they seize the opportunity to present a bright future for these girls, trapping them into exploitation. The business persons are the ones who are benefiting from this.

Male respondent aged 41-55, separated, secondary education, self-employed, Essequibo 005

When asked if they were aware of any cases where someone has been accused of trafficking, of the 58 respondents, 15 said yes, 24 said no, and 19 gave no response.

Of the respondents replying affirmatively all were talking about the same two cases, one of a 13 year old girl who was 'rescued' by the Ministry of Human Services in August 2004 from a bar where she was being held. One business man called 'Chowmein' was arrested and put on bail, although two of the respondents claim he is now back in business, still recruiting under age girls under false pretences. One respondent who knows the wife of Chowmein stated:

Chowmein and his wife took two girls who work with them to the riverain areas in Pomeroon to recruit other girls. They left on Sunday, August 22th 2004 and returned on Tuesday August 24th 2004 with six other Amerindian girls. Some of them look as young as 14yrs old or younger. Only one of the girl looks as though she is in her 20s and she is from Hackney Canal Pomeroon River or at least that is what she said in a very brief conversation. Chowmein's wife had a book in which she was writing down the names and date of birth of those girls. According to what was written, some of the girls were born in 1986 and 1988 but I don't think that the information of the girl's date of birth is true. I think that the information is written down in case there is a raid by police, to show that the girls are of age to do what they want to do. Of the 6 girls who were recruited, 4 were sent to Crab Wood Creek where Chowmein's son now runs a business and the other 2 stay at the Embassy Club in the business that Chowmein and his wife are running.

The police are waiting on advice from the DPP as to whether he should be charged because they don't have enough evidence against him. The other case involved a

businessman called `Chiny' taking girls to Suriname. He and two women who were responsible for recruiting the girls were arrested. The investigation is continuing.

E. ANALYSIS OF MEDIA REPORTS AND OTHER SOURCES

We turn now to an analysis of the four newspapers looked at in the course of this research as well as other sources. They all serve to corroborate the data given in the interviews with research participants.

a. MEDIA SOURCES

There was no media coverage of TIPs prior to the GoG campaign which began in April 2004, although articles appearing since the campaign began make it clear that some elements of the media had knowledge that it existed. Among 5 newspaper reports of alleged cases of trafficking between April 23 and August 30, 2004, 3 were cases of actual trafficking and one of these (the first, in Stabroek News 07/01/04) was written like fictionalized fact and may be a composite based on existing information (see Boxes 30 to 32).

Box 30

Case 1: 18-year-old “Susan” was recruited 2 years ago from the NWD (WHERE?) by the owners of a liquor restaurant in Mahaicony and hired with 3 other girls to work there. She was told that she would sell at the counter, but the owner and his son had sex with her and told her to allow men visiting the restaurant to have sex with her as she would make extra money. However, the owners collect the money and give her a “small piece” from it. Susan does not know if her parents, who are poor, were paid money. The report added that “there are reports that some girls, mostly virgins, are traded for as much as G\$200,000” (Stabroek News 07/01/04, Berbice Special)

Box 31

Case 2: A proprietor of a Corentyne restaurant and 4 females (referred to as “women”), including a 13-year-old girl were arrested on July 9, 2004. All the females were from the Essequibo and the interior and were allegedly taken to the Corentyne by the proprietor. The police said that they believe that the Corentyne business is used to lure women who are then pressured into activities including prostitution in Brazil and Suriname. (Kaitour News 07/11/04). This story was carried in several newspapers across several days. Stabroek News of 07/11/04 added the information that the 13-year-old had been taken from her home under the impression that she would be a domestic in the man's home but was made to work in a bar and provide sex for clients with the clients paying the owner. The report added that the 3 other females reportedly were made to sign 6 month contracts with the owner which prevented them from leaving the location.

Box 32

Case 3: Local police were reportedly hunting for a man who lured 5 Amerindian girls to Suriname for prostitution after promising them work in a restaurant in that country. The girls were taken from Georgetown to Corriverton where they spent the night in a hotel and then put in a boat in the company of a woman whose name was given as Brenda Griffith. After the girls discovered on route that they would be employed as prostitutes and objected to this, the woman told them when they reached Suriname that she had paid US\$300 for them and held on to their bags. After arguments she allowed two of the girls to leave (Kaitour News 07/26/04).

An analysis of these three cases yields the following information:

Routes: the three routes were North West District to Mahaicony, East Coast Demerara; Essequibo and the interior to the Corentyne; and the interior to Georgetown to Corriverton (on the Guyana - Suriname border) to Suriname.

Forms of TIPS: all three are cases of forced prostitution.

Characteristics of victims: Case 1 involved 4 girls, one of them 18 (other ages not stated), by inference Amerindian (they were recruited in the NWD); Case 2, four females, one of them aged 13 (other ages not stated), by inference Amerindian (they were from Essequibo and the interior); and Case 3, five girls, no ages stated, all Amerindian.

Method of recruitment: the method in all three cases was deception and in some cases payment to family members to 'purchase' the victims.

Method of control: the method in the first two cases was denial of payment, with the second case also involving restricted movement for 3 of the victims. In the third case the girls argued their way out of being held before their intended work as prostitutes could begin.

Characteristics of the recruiters: in Case 1 the recruiters were the owners of a liquor restaurant in Mahaicony and in Case 2 the recruiter was the proprietor of a restaurant on the Corentyne; the recruiter in case 3 was referred to simply as "a man" who handed the victims over to a named woman who said she had paid US \$300 for the girls.

The following information (see Boxes 33 to 35) was also taken from newspaper reports and further substantiates the information given above.

Box 33

Trafficking in Amerindian girls is not new (actual title)

“In a report on the Pomeroon-Supenaam Region published over six years ago, evidence was produced to show that proprietors of rum shops, discos and hotels were recruiting girls as young as 14 years from Akawini, Moruka, St. Monica's and elsewhere as `waitresses'. These innocents were turned into sex slaves and forced by their unscrupulous employers to provide unprotected, and sometimes gratuitous sexual services to their customers.

Girls were paid low wages, lived in substandard accommodation, and were simply sent back to their settlements when they became pregnant or too sick to work. The evidence suggests, too, that young women were taken to timber grants and mining camps and abused in a similar manner” (Editorial, Stabroek News 06/15/04).

Box 34

The exploitation must be addressed (actual title)

“The exploitation and abuse of Amerindian women and young girls by some unscrupulous businessmen has been going on for years, seemingly without any major intervention by the authorities to curb the practice.

Young Amerindian women and girls - many of school age - have been lured by the owners of restaurants, hotels, bars and other places to the city and coast with promises of gorgeous lifestyles and high salaries.

However, on arrival they find themselves as virtual slaves of their employers, working in some instances as sex slaves under the guise of being domestics or employed as waitresses at hotels and bars to attract main customers.

Far from the gorgeous lifestyles and lucrative salaries promised them, most end up as drunks and prostitutes because of the environmental and societal conditions under which they exist.

In the process they are subjected to all forms of abuse and human degradation, including rape and other forms of physical abuse.

The slightest show of dissent most times results in harsh measures by their employers, including being thrown out on the streets in the wee hours of the morning” (GC Editorial: 06/18/04).

The third major reference was made not in an article but in a “Person in the Street” feature: the public was asked by the Berbice Special of Stabroek News to comment on the issue of TIPs. Four of 8 respondents spoke with knowledge of TIPs, demonstrating a level of public awareness pre-dating the government campaign.

Box 35

The Exploitation of Amerindian girls (actual title)

- i. "Community worker" spoke of shop owners in West Berbice using girls to attract customers and underpaying them, the girls having been tricked into coming out of the interior; he used the word "trafficking".
- ii. "Store owner" said that trafficking had long been a feature throughout Guyana especially in Berbice where people go to Amerindian areas, trick the girls into coming to work and then threaten the girls into complying with what they demand.
- iii. "Owner" said that his business is under "one of these shops". He spoke of Amerindian girls being lured by promise of jobs with good pay and then being taken advantage of, using them for prostitution.
- iv. "Disk jockey" spoke of businessmen going into Amerindian areas and taking Amerindian females out to make money off of them, paying them little or nothing. He also spoke of one Amerindian girl who told him that if she is paid \$1000 for sex she has to give the owner \$700 and she is paid \$2000 to work as a waitress. The girl said that men take advantage of them and treat them cruelly. (reported in SN 07/31/04)

b. DATA FROM OTHER SOURCES

(i) Red Thread

In the course of conducting a participatory needs assessment into female CSWs in 2001, Red Thread was informed of several cases of girls being lured by deception into prostitution and conditions amounting to domestic servitude, but in many of the cases the victims remained in the situation because they saw no alternative (see Box 36). However, the following cases met the conditions for trafficking.

Box 36

Case 1: In Corriverton, Terri, the female owner of a hotel and bar, (Crimson Lights), was said not to be a trafficker herself but to take girls who had been trafficked by Chowmein, the male owner of a bar in the same area (he also had a business in Crabwood Creek). Red Thread spoke separately to a teenager from the first bar/hotel who was taken there by someone who asked the woman to house her and find work for her, and the woman made her do sex work, sell in the bar and kept her in debt bondage (reported on November 29, 2001).

Case 2: A female bar proprietor reported that in some places they keep the women's money so they aren't free to move on. It had "come to her attention" that two Amerindian

girls were being kept at Santa Rosa in Rosehall and were trying to leave. They smuggled out a note which she heard about, but when she went to the club there were no women there. She went back with her Amerindian mother who demanded to see “her family” and the girls were allowed to come to the fence but not speak (reported on Nov 29, 2001).

Case 3: Chandra Mangru, the female proprietor of a bar in Albion (Santa Rosa), told Red Thread that she recruits in Essequibo or the North West District and that because she feels responsible for the girls working for her she doesn't allow them to go out of the bar. However, one of the women whom the proprietor reported had been with her a long time asked a woman from G+, an organization of people living with HIV/AIDS which was collaborating with Red Thread on the research, to come back and get her out of there, adding that the proprietor owed her G\$47,000. Red Thread reported “There was a sense of real tension and fear in the place...” (reported on November 30, 2001). The same report cited one of the girls who said she and others had been recruited from the West Coast Demerara near Parika. She said that they had been brought to the NWD to work in a bar there and when they wanted to leave the proprietor seized all their clothes and said they owed her G\$25,000; they had to work to pay her back. Subsequently one Red Thread woman reported orally that in order for Red Thread to speak to the girls at the Santa Rosa bar they had to go to the washroom and signal the girls to follow, then climb up on the toilet and talk over the wall. The building has a grill gate that is always locked when there is no business unless there's a client (reported orally on August 12, 2004).

Case 4: Simone, a girl at the “Rits” in Skeldon, reported that girls there are not allowed to keep their earnings - the proprietor or agent keeps the money, and if they want to go out they have to leave \$2000 and they have a curfew to get back in (reported on November 29, 2001).

Case 5: The male proprietor from Borderline bar, Chowmein, told Red Thread that he recruits girls from the Essequibo, Supenaam or Charity; he goes to the parents to arrange for the girls to work (reported on November 30, 2001). Another report (undated) said that the women at Borderline, Chowmein's place (2 Amerindians aged 20 and 22) said they can only go out with their boyfriends with the boss' permission but not go out alone, that they all stay in one room and when the business closes in the night they are locked in with a big padlock.

In ‘Givin' Lil Bit Fuh Lil Bit’: Women and Sex Work in Guyana, the publication arising out of the needs assessment, Red Thread said: “There appears to be an organized ring involved in procuring young Amerindian women seeking employment ... While there is widespread knowledge on the coast of this state of affairs, very little is done to protect the women (26-27).

(ii) GHRA

GHRA reported being informed of the case of 14-year old and 16-year old schoolgirls from Georgetown travelling to Springlands and going “back-track” to Nickerie, with the 14-year old being encouraged into prostitution in Paramaribo and hospitalized after serious beating and sexual assault by a businessman from Suriname. (GHRA Concerns over Vulnerability of Minors at Corriverton Border, Press Release, Feb 8, 2000)

(iii) Amerindian People's Association

An article dated July 2004 and entitled “Trafficking in Persons: the Case of Young Amerindian Girls” by Jean La Rose, (Programme Administrator APA) included the following information on trafficking of Amerindian girls; the article cites one actual case but includes observations on methods of recruitment, routes, and methods of control.

Victims and Methods of recruitment, especially of young Amerindian girls from the coastal communities. Recruiting methods include someone, usually a non-Amerindian female, going into communities to seek young Amerindian girls to work as maids or domestic servants in homes or to work in restaurants as waitresses, promising good wages and healthy living conditions. In other cases, young Amerindian girls similarly recruited are being used by their employers as recruiters to entice other girls to join them in working away from home. “Buck nights” where girls are taken to parties and sexually abused are reportedly held, and many girls end up in mining camps where the incidence of “kayamoos” is increasing steadily with girls under eighteen, especially virgins preferred.

Routes: Many of the girls enticed in this way come from the Amerindian communities on the Pomeroon or Moruca rivers and end up working in Indian and Chinese restaurants on the Essequibo Coast, in Georgetown, Parika and even in Mahdia.

Methods of control: The girls are controlled by a range of methods including denial of payment. Some are paid a minimum of the money they earn engaging in prostitution for their “bosses”, while many others are left unpaid and without a job once they have served out their usefulness. Employers virtually hold the girls in debt bondage. For many of the girls returning home is not seen to be an option as there is a stigma attached once a person has been engaged in prostitution.

(iv) Reports on implementation of Conventions to which Guyana is signatory

The NGO Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2003 cited a lack of job opportunities available to young Amerindian girls in their communities, together with limited formal education, as making them vulnerable to being lured out of their communities by non-Amerindians to work as domestics, waitresses and bar attendants. It also cited Guyana Review 1998 re “numerous reports of the abuse of Amerindian domestic workers in coastal households where young girls are paid wages below the minimum wage even while being made to work long hours into the night. They are also frequently denied freedom of movement or expression by their employers.”. (CRC NGO Report, 26)

The Report of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1998-2002 referred to “the practice of employment of young hinterland Amerindian girls in coastal locations, particularly in urban centres, many of whom have no documentation to verify their age. Many of the girls are subject to abuse from employers and their clients and have little recourse in environments to which they are often unaccustomed. (CEDAW Report, 28).

(v) International agency sources

The Report Guyana - The Situation of Children in the Worst Forms of Child Labour prepared by George K. Danns for ILO and dated October 2002 reported that:

- “big women” who own shops in the interior actively recruit young girls in Bartica to take them into the interior to work as prostitutes, “bush whores” or “piraii” (named after the flesh-eating piranhanna). (ILO, 46).
- Madams sustain child prostitution sex trade by actively recruiting “girls of all ages, sizes and descriptions” to take to interior hot spots for sexual exploitation (ILO, 47).

Voices of Children: Experiences with Violence written by Dr. Christie cabral in collaboration with UNICEF, Red Thread and the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security and dated June 2004 reported as follows:

Reports were received from health workers, teachers and some older children in certain areas of Region 2 and region 3 of internal trafficking of girls, particularly Amerindian girls, for prostitution. All the accounts were second-hand....however, the secondary accounts all described similar circumstances.

Individuals went into remote rural villages, where the population was primarily Amerindian, and offered work for young girls as domestic workers in homes or as waitress (sic) or cleaners in restaurants. These girls would go with the person to take up these jobs but would subsequently find themselves drawn into prostitution. Some remained in shops around the built up areas along the coast and some were subsequently taken to mining camps in remote hinterland locations.” (Cabral 28-9).

In its comments on the first State Party report of the Government of Guyana to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, 8 October 2003, UNICEF remarked under “11. Special Protection Measures” - Issues for recommendation: - c)” that “[S]exual exploitation and trafficking of particularly Amerindian girls is recognized as a concern. However, little actions are on the ground for protection and prevention. This area needs urgent attention.” (11)

F. KEY CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO TIPS IN GUYANA

A number of factors that contribute to TIPs in Guyana can be identified from the preceding analysis of all data sources. The level of poverty and the high number of people living in poverty has an impact on the opportunities available and the sense of opportunities available to people. The paucity or non existence of economic opportunities in the places where people live has led to the equation of betterment with movement away. Given the entrenchment of migration into Guyanese ways of living, both for employment and for family betterment (for example, child shifting), and its acceptance as a norm there has been very little questioning of movement associated with trafficking. This situation is even more prevalent in areas that are geographically isolated from the coast. In addition the prevalence of child labour and its general acceptance further contributes to TIPs. Moreover, the ambivalence towards prostitution works against any attempts to help women who want to leave this occupation. Finally, lack of awareness of the problem (until recently) by both the government and within civil society has allowed TIPs to proliferate.

This latter point is further exacerbated by a lack of an institutional and legal framework to combat TIPs and by peoples' lack of knowledge as to what exists. For example, when asked if Guyana has laws that address practices such as forced labour, forced prostitution of child labour, of the 58 respondents, although 53% said yes, the other 50% were split evenly between not knowing or saying no. Of the 16 who replied affirmatively, 10 said they were not familiar with specific laws while the remaining mentioned child labour laws (citing that children under the age of 18 were not meant to be employed), laws regarding forced prostitution and laws about forced labour, (citing that people should not be paid below the minimum wage). Only one mentioned the Convention of the Rights of the Child and one other that Guyana had ratified the ILO. No other specific laws were mentioned.

Further evidence of lack of awareness of activities and procedures aiming to prevent TIPs is evident in answers to questions about what government and NGO bodies are doing to address trafficking in Guyana. Of the 58 respondents 36 offered responses;

In terms of NGOS who are doing something, 8 said Red Thread; 3 said the Amerindian Peoples Association; 3 said Guyana Human Rights Association; 2 said the St. Francis Club; one said Camal's Home (a shelter for battered women); one said East Berbice Life Savers; one said church organizations; and one said Parent teachers associations.

In terms of government, 22 said the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Services (but only recently); one said Ministry of Amerindian Affairs; one said the Ministry of Labour; one said the National Democratic Council (local government); one said the Region 6 Committee for the Rights of the Child; and 3 said the police.

In terms of multinational organizations one said UNICEF.

In terms of what was being done by these agencies multiple responses resulted in the following types of activities:

a) Prevention: Research; advocacy; sensitizing the public; information seminars; television programmes; job provision; skills training.

b) Protection of victims: Shelter; Counseling; Advocacy returning victims home or closing down the business they were working in.

c) Prosecution: Legal assistance; Law enforcement training; Policy legislation.

When asked how well are these responses working, of the 58 respondents, 29 (51%) gave no response. Only 3 said these measures were working well, 15 said they were not working well, and 4 felt these measures were too recent to be able to give a response in terms of their effectiveness. Those who thought they were not working well thought this was because of lack of financial support; gaps between what its reported and the help offered; not enough social services available; and that the response to trafficking was still in its infancy stages.

G. ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT CAPACITY TO ADDRESS TIPs

Prior to assessing what this analysis yields for recommendations for combatting TIPs, we assess both government and civil society's capacity to address TIPs.

Before April 2004 TIP was not on the government's agenda. As an institution which addresses the effects of social problems more than their root cause, the MLHSSS would have dealt with individual victims as they emerged without distinguishing them from victims of other social problems. Thus in assessing the government's capacity to address TIPs we are assessing what the government has been or has not been able to put in place since it launched a campaign against it.

a. THE ONGOING CAMPAIGN TO SENSITISE THE PUBLIC AND ORGANIZATIONS ON TIPS

The GoG campaign against TIPs was announced by the Cabinet Secretary on April 22, 2004, and this announcement was carried in the press on April 23 (SN, April 23, "Plan to combat people trafficking). The MLHSSS was identified as the lead agency. A newspaper article on June 17, 2004 also reported that "President Jagdeo had summoned a meeting on the issue (TIPs) in April this year which included US Ambassador Roland Bullen, relevant Ministries and stakeholder non-governmental organizations" (Kaiteur News, 06/17/04: "Minister dubs US State Dept. report unfair").

The awareness component of the campaign was launched on May 12 with a seminar on Guyana's plan for dealing with TIPs, held in Georgetown, with participation from several government Ministries, NGOs and other agencies. Participants included persons from rural and interior areas. According to the NPoA, publicity surrounding the event immediately aroused "broad-based interest in the subject" (8).

By (date) the Ministry team had visited the following communities: Moruka, Mabaruma, Port Kaituma in Region 1, Charity, Huis-t-Dieren, Hogg Island and Anna Regina in Region 2, Vreed-en-hoop and Uitvlugt in Region 3, Fort Wellington, Region 5, Orealla, Port Mourant, New Amsterdam and Corriverton in Region 6, Bartica, Region 7, Mahdia (a township), Princeville, Micobie, El Paso, Tumatumari and Campbelltown in Region 8, Lethem, St. Ignatius and Annai in Region 9, Linden, Region 10. The Campaign in Region 4 and started with Paradise (ECD) and the plan is for the next trip to be to Region 8 starting on 02/09/04 at Paramakatoi then on to Kato. (Doc centre email, 31/08/04)

The Minister of LHSSS has also met the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Geology and Mines Commission, Central Islamic Organisation of Guyana (CIOG), a representative of the Hindu community, leaders of the Catholic and Anglican communities, and the Inter-religious Organization.

The assessment of the MLHSSS is that the campaign is working well because of the responses they have been receiving: calls have been coming in; people are now being made aware of what has been happening (Interview with Ministry officials, 08/25/04). It is certainly true that the campaign has put TIPs in Guyana on the map, given the level of media coverage it has garnered. Unfortunately, the intensity of the campaign has fuelled skepticism that it is externally-driven. The following box shows the views expressed in the Editorial column of a prominent newspaper which is by no means hostile to the US:.

Box 37

The TIPs campaign as following a US agenda

“The present Guyanese attention to people-trafficking...seems not to have been activated by the long-standing local Amerindian problem but by the growing US interest in the security implications of the international scourge in the wake of the recent Anglo-American-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Tens of thousands of internally-displaced people, many left homeless after bombing, have been on the move creating problems for their neighbours and the developed countries. Trafficking in people, especially women and children, has therefore now become a major issue for the USA and its allies” (Stabroek News Editorial, 06/15/04).

Elsewhere the same newspaper referred - again in an Editorial - to “the merry-go-round that the US has precipitated over the so-called Trafficking in Persons...” (SN 08/23/04).

b. LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS OF TIPs IN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Statements made during the campaign revealed continued but decreasing confusion among officials on what precisely constitutes trafficking. There remained a tendency among some to confuse trafficking with prostitution or child labour, even when other conditions were not present. This is not surprising given the report of the IOM representative that the Caribbean, including Guyana was in one of the world's regions with the least understanding of the issues of trafficking (SN 06/22). However, during the interview with Ministry officials on August 15, 2004, they gave the following definition of TIPs: Persons being forced, tricked or coerced into a situation against their will and

forced into prostitution or any work activity against their will. A great part of TIP, it was added, is exploitation.

c. LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE THAT TIPs IS A PROBLEM IN GUYANA

While responses from the 58 respondents in the survey indicated a high level of awareness of the existence TIP in Guyana, a similar level of acknowledgement did not emerge in the interview with officials of the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and social Security on August 25, 2004. One response was that what they have found during the campaign is a high degree of voluntary prostitution and that while there is some degree of trafficking not all of it would meet the standards for prosecution. The view was also expressed that there are very few cases of TIP in Guyana, that there should not be any cause for alarm and that the country should not have been placed in Tier 3. As among the general public, there is a strong feeling in the Ministry, as expressed in the interview, that many people enter voluntarily into situations that are now being defined as TIP. Although there are examples of government officials at various levels, including in the MLHSS, acknowledging the existence of TIP in Guyana, overall, statements by the GoG seem designed to refute what is generally considered unfair in the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report June 2004.

d. STATUS OF THE TIP LEGISLATION

Notwithstanding this view, the imperative of being removed from Teir 3 has at least accelerated the drafting of relevant legislation. Bill No 12 of 2004 - "Combatting Trafficking in Persons Bill 2004" - was taken to Parliament at its last sitting before the annual recess. However, it cannot be enacted until October 2004. The Bill proposes among other elements witness protection, measures to accommodate child witnesses in criminal prosecutions, and support for victims including counseling, medical assistance, employment, education and training.

An article headlined "GHRA hails human trafficking bill" (Stabroek News 08/24/04) reported that the GHRA had called the bill "a legislative breakthrough for the protection of the country's vulnerable groups, adding that in a press statement issued on 08/23/04 the group had said "For the first time Guyanese legislation in this area incorporates concerns about the victims of crime and other modern concepts in straightforward language (while) [P]revious legislation (had) addressed specific acts which were to attract (UNCLEAR)

criminal penalties, but did not focus on effective strategies for monitoring or eliminating the offending behaviour”.

e. THE NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION

A National Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons in Guyana - subtitled “Protecting the Exploited” - has been developed by the MLHSSS. The document, dated April 2004, identifies nine areas of operation: public awareness programmes focusing on the issues and dangers involved such as HIV/AIDS; identification of victims, perpetrators, sites, centres, locations and critical areas of activities; education of victims and the general public; mobilization of all stakeholders and relevant organizations and the promotion of networks; dialogue or other appropriate means of contact with alleged perpetrators; strategic monitoring and the surveillance of activities; appropriate legislative and law enforcement system; development of the capacity of key agencies to execute the planned programmes; and identification and training of personnel.

A steering committee has been established including representatives of the MLHSSS, NGOs, the GGMC, the police and the media.

In the August 25, 2004 interview Ministry officials reported that in addition to the first activity, that of public awareness programmes the MLHSSS has begun work towards the following areas of operation:

- Training: more than 300 persons from the 10 regions will be trained in a training of trainers exercise to recognise cases of trafficking and exploitation. The process will start with about 50 persons.
- Shelter: A building has reportedly been identified and negotiations are in train.

It has been reported that the President has committed funds for a national action plan for TIP and that USAID has pledged financial and technical assistance including an expert on public awareness programming to assist in the dissemination of information, especially in the “far-flung” areas of the interior (Kaiteur News 06/17/04). Specifically, USAID has approved funding of training of 300 people to identify problems in relation to TIP. (07/10/04).

f. READINESS OF INSTITUTIONS

There is serious concern about the readiness of institutions to deal with trafficking.

The GHRA, in the context of hailing the bill, pointed out the inadequacy of resources to implement the policies, that the staff at the relevant Ministries is increasingly depleted, and that there is insufficient capacity in the Ministries for monitoring.

The NGO Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2003 is expansive on the subject of how unready institutions are to carry out the tasks needed to protect children, pointing out that “[W]hile children are guaranteed access to care in law, the government has not invested enough resources to ensure that they enjoy such access in practice” (10). Table 5 shows the relationship between the number of available social workers in 2003 against the child population: while figures for the latter are from the last census in 1991 they would not have changed much since birth rates and attrition rates are similar:

Table 5

Region	Number of Social Workers who could intervene for children (2003)	Child Population (1991) (0 - 14 years)
Region 2, Essequibo	1	17, 042
Region 3, West Demerara	1	31, 867
Region 4, Soesdyke - Georgetown - Mahaica	18 (6 of whom work in administrative functions)	98,833
Region 5, West Coast Berbice	1	19,187
Region 6, New Amsterdam-Corentyne	6	45,601
Region 10, Upper Demerara	1	17,042
Total	28	229,572

CRC NGO Report

The same report makes three further points: (a) the need to provide “realistically adequate” staff and infrastructure, especially in welfare and probation services and in the MLHSSS to monitor children at risk, investigate reports of abuse, counsel children and parents who need it, and arrange for practical assistance including money (5-6). (b) the need for immediate changes in the procedures, practices and rules of evidence governing the Guyana legal system and the delivery of justice (8); although this is especially a

problem for child victims of sexual offences it is a problem for all vulnerable witnesses; (c) the need to address the limits on institutional care in terms of both the number of places and the capacity of the services, and the inadequacy of monitoring and oversight of the residential services in spite of the recent establishment of an oversight committee for institutions providing shelter to children (10).

The police and judicial services are also in no position to deal adequately with a new area of work. During the MLHSSS meeting with the GCCI on July 6, 2004 , one member remarked that “Guyana practices seasonal law enforcement” and according to the report, added that “the police operated in spurts to address various crimes - one time clamping down on a certain activity then slacking up at another” (Kaitour News 07/07/04). Efforts to implement the new TIPs legislation will be stymied by weaknesses not only in the police services but in the judicial services, where there is a shortage of magistrates and judges and a massive back-log of cases.

H. THE CAPACITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY TO COMBAT TIPs

The organizations we are aware of which have shown public awareness of trafficking in persons in Guyana or taken any action against it are Amerindian organizations, the human rights organization GHRA and Red Thread. Since the general understanding in Guyana is that TIP is an Amerindian problem, other ethnic organizations have never seen it as an issue to take up until recently (Catholic Standard 08/0204) when several of them made a public statement condemning it as exploitation of Amerindian girls. As a sector, civil society in Guyana has not developed as an autonomous or strong force. Some elements function as arms of political parties. In terms of numbers, its NGO component is made up largely of single-issue NGOs (often HIV/AIDS) which have arisen or shaped themselves in response to donors' agendas and do little advocacy even in relation to those issues. The local business sector remains relatively weak. Given these factors, the model of state reduction with civil society taking up the slack of providing services is unworkable. For example, while groups such as Help and Shelter are able to provide counseling what it has been unable to do is sustain large scale projects such as shelters. The Amerindian organizations summarise what civil society has been able to do: advocacy; investigation; research; acting as an advocate/go-between for victims with authorities. As the MDGR points out: "The responsibility to reverse the growing trend of (economic, social and environmental) vulnerability belongs to the government....a major challenge will be resolving conflicting advice and requirements regarding the role of government and its corresponding size and structure" (10). In these circumstances, while we would expect that those organizations which have previously shown concern about TIP will continue to do so, a major part of the responsibility for coordinating TIP will rest with the government.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS

When asked what they thought should be done to combat trafficking all 58 respondents replied. Responses were extensive with no shortage of suggestions and most respondents giving a multiple number of activities. These are listed below:

- a) Legal responses: Establishing laws against trafficking (n=16); Enforcing current laws (n=38); People had to be brought to justice (n=8); Make the police more involved (n=2); stern penalties for traffickers (n=1); better border security (n=1).
- b) Economic responses: Jobs and training opportunities had to be provided so people were not so economically desperate (n=15); Address poverty (n=2); mechanisms to assist victims to return home (n=2).
- c) Community based responses: Educate people (n=23); Work with community leaders to create economic projects (n=1); Form youth groups (n=2); Get everyone involved (n=1); Red Thread should be able to defend cases (n=1).
- d) Educational responses: counseling (n=1); visits to communities by officials about trafficking (n=1); involve religious bodies and youth groups (n=1); programs in schools (n=1)
- e) General: Government should work with NGOs to bring about a resolution (n=1); Monitor business places every month (n=1); Research (n=1); provide more financial resources (n=1); increase agency capacity (n=1); have a national strategy (n=2).

The boxes (38 - 40) below indicate the richness of the replies given.

Box 38

People from outside the Amerindian community should not be allowed to go in and bring out people to work. Amerindians should be empowered to stand up for themselves, more jobs should be made available.

Female respondent aged 26-40, single, advanced studies, government employee, Corriverton, Corentyne Q.023

Box 39

Government should get people to look into the interests of the victims. Place people in the community to stop this from happening. There should be laws to deal with trafficking.

Female respondent aged 56-65, single, primary education, government employee, Essequibo Q.024

Box 40

Traffickers should be dealt with according to the law, people who are leaving the community to work should leave home with money so that they can be able to return home when they want. Traffickers should compensate victims. Trafficker should be dealt with.

Male respondent aged 26-40, married, secondary education, government employee, Capooey, Essequibo Q. 028

Below we outline the recommendations that Red Thread feel have resulted from this research project.

A. There is a need for Guyana's actions by both government and NGOs to be (a) internally driven, and (b) aimed at addressing the issue of the abuse of power (financial, race, gender, age) and not the issue of prostitution as a “moral” issue: when they are not trafficked into forced prostitution, most women and girls become prostitutes because it provides them with a better income than the other options for those who are poor and without much formal education: domestic work, work as security guards, etc . Marginalisation of sex workers and the illegality of their work make it very difficult for them to seek protection from physically abusive clients, pimps and guest-house owners, and where women are ostensibly being hired as waitresses, cleaners and domestics the research has shown that they may be reluctant, fearful or ashamed to disclose the actual nature of their work.

B. Active efforts must be made to identify victims and to provide them with protection without criminalizing them.

C. The role of the media in publicizing available services/protections etc. should be increased. Given the fact that (a) victims are generally unaware of any official channels to get assistance and are unsure of their rights and (b) that trafficking within the country is so pervasive and has a long history (hence our title, “You talking ‘bout everyday story”), it is vital that the media plays a prominent role in advertising the steps the government is taking to eradicate/ reduce trafficking and to punish traffickers. Without knowledge that victims have recourse to the law people who have been trafficked are unlikely to make any attempt to change the situation they find themselves in.

D. In addition to advertising what steps the government is taking there also need for educational campaigns to be conducted in communities from where victims originate in order to convince people of the determination of the government and police and other state agencies involved to help them. Levels of trust in these organisations need to be built up. Hence, educational campaigns also need to be conducted with members of these various state agencies to explore ways in which trafficked peoples can increase their levels of trust in them and be ensured that the aim of the police and the courts is in protecting victims and interdicting and prosecuting traffickers.

E. The public also need to be educated about increasing their preparedness to intervene, rescue and support victims of TIPs.

F. The institutional capacity to protect and assist victims needs to be built up.

G. Given the high level of poverty in the country the protections necessary re. trafficking are not totally different from the laws already in place for domestic violence, child abuse, child labour etc. There is a need to recognise that not everything that encompasses TIPs can be covered in one piece of legislation, and to guard against establishing new systems and agencies to deal with trafficking separately from already existing agencies.

H. The absence of regulation in the sex trade industry in Guyana combines with an apparently growing demand for commercial sexual services to create exploitative working conditions for sex workers with no avenue for redress. Hence, unless there is an attempt to regulate the sex trade girls and women who are trafficked to work in it will continue to be opened to abuse.

I. Laws against child labour need to be enforced.

I. Educational work on youth sexualities. Unless young girls are encouraged – both through school and community based activities - to explore and talk about their sexualities and to recognize that they have the right to take control over their own bodies exploitation is virtually inevitable.

J. In addition, the GoG should take advantage of the smallness of the number of victims in absolute terms to provide victims with alternative sources of income. This would also

necessitate providing alternative economic opportunities for their communities. Without the provision of other sources of employment within their own communities young girls will continue to leave rural areas for employment on the coast. Hence, economic development opportunities in the interior are essential.

K. Red Thread is opposed to a focus on the movement of people between countries except where this involves their exploitation by backtracking or trafficking industries of any country: we support the free movement of labour (people).

J. ACRONYMS

CCA

CIOG Central Islamic Organisation of Guyana

COK

CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child

EU European Union

EFA-FTI

ECD East Coast Demerara

ERP Economic Recovery Programme

GCCI

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GGMC Guyana Geology and Mines Commission

GHRA Guyana Human Rights Association

GMP

GoG Government of Guyana

HIPC Highly Indebted Poor Country

ICT Information and Communication Technologies

IDA International Development Agency

ILO International Labour Organisation

IOM International Organisation for Migration

KN Kaiter News

MDGR Millennium Development Goals Report

MICS

MLHSSS Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security

MOH Ministry of Health

NGO Non Government Organisation

NPV

NWD North West District

PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

ROC Rights of the Child group

SN Stabroek News

TIPs Trafficking in Persons

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

WAB Women's Affairs Bureau

SAPS Structural Adjustment Programmes

VSO Voluntary Services Overseas

MNC Multi-National Corporation

STDS Sexually Transmitted Diseases

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