Exploring substance use, ideal interventions, and legal needs of human trafficking survivors in Cape Town, South Africa

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foundational research on demographic composition, substance use, intervention, and legal needs of survivors, all of which have been discussed as important aspects for services, but of which little is known.

The objective of this project was to expand the understanding and knowledge base of human trafficking in Cape Town by synthesizing the expertise of anti-trafficking service providers. Specifically we aimed to understand the following aspects of victims of human trafficking served in Cape Town:

The demographic composition of the population (i.e. race, ethnicity, foreign or domestic status, gender, LGBTQIA+ status, age, rural and urban origins).

Substance use and abuse (alcohol and drugs)

Interventions and services needed

Legal service needs

Ethics approval was attained from both UMSL and UWC. Research Assistants and Dr. Rich utilized and built on the anti-trafficking contacts our team made in prior TIP research in South Africa. Each member of the team conducted face-to-face or virtual in depth interviews, as preferred by the participant. Interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. Participants were asked about their own basic demographic background prior to audio recording. Then using an audio recorder, participants were asked about the services they provide, the number of human trafficking survivors they have served, the demographic composition of survivors served, substance use patterns among survivors, ideal interventions, and survivors' legal needs. Audio recordings were transcribed and cleaned.

Our team reached out to approximately 102 individuals and organizations that are likely to work with survivors of trafficking in South Africa to recruit participants. Between May 17 and June 17, 2022, our team conducted 23 semi-structured interviews with 28 anti-trafficking stakeholders. Most participants were from the Cape Town area, but we did not

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