

National Planning Meeting to Eliminate Demand for Commercial Sex

Cambridge, MA

May 8–May 10, 2010

**Sponsored by the Embrey Family Foundation
and Hunt Alternatives Fund**



Background

Most public and private resources dedicated to human trafficking in the past decade have been crisis oriented, understandably geared toward rescuing and rehabilitating victims and, to some extent, prosecuting the perpetrators. However, policymakers, academics, and activists increasingly recognize that the endless supply of victims won't abate unless we combat the demand for trafficking. A growing number of countries and cities worldwide have designed policies and programs to end this demand. We are not starting from scratch.

Inspired by the work of others worldwide, and in collaboration with a team of top-level advisers, Hunt Alternatives Fund is launching a multi-year, multi-stakeholder campaign to eradicate demand for commercial sexual exploitation in the United States. As a first step, Abt Associates Inc., a consultancy in Cambridge, MA, was contracted to review practice, policy, law, and research related to demand reduction. The Abt consultants were asked to suggest three to four frameworks for developing a national strategy.

During the May 2010 National Planning Meeting, participants formed a coalition dedicated to eliminating the demand for commercial sex.

As a second step, the Embrey Family Foundation and Hunt Alternatives Fund hosted a national planning meeting that brought together 75 stakeholders—including federal government officials, practitioners, academics, criminal justice personnel, donors, corporate leaders, and survivors—to examine Abt’s research and identify opportunities in and challenges to combating demand for commercial sex. The meeting’s format was intentionally flexible to maximize networking among participants and be responsive to participant needs.

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As one leading abolitionist put it, the meeting was “historic,” showing that there was indeed a capacity for joint effort.
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The meeting attendees discussed prevention and intervention tactics, and experts from Britain, Colombia, Iceland, India, and Sweden shared lessons learned in tackling demand in their own countries. Small groups examined best practices in the United States and identified gaps at the national and local levels. As one leading abolitionist put it, the meeting was “historic,” showing that there was indeed a capacity for joint effort.

Opening Remarks

Gayle Embrey, executive vice president of the Embrey Family Foundation, welcomed participants and thanked them for addressing the problem of human trafficking around the country. Ambassador Swanee Hunt, president of Hunt Alternatives Fund, shared her vision for a national campaign to end demand in the United States, which has begun with convening stakeholders who want to eradicate it. “We’re not the experts,” she said. “You are.” She noted that, despite the debate over the exact percentage of prostituted persons who are *not* victims of human trafficking, the

The National Planning Meeting brought together 75 key stakeholders from a variety of disciplines to discuss commercial sexual exploitation.



Fund's position is that ending demand for all forms of commercial sex is the most effective way to combat sex trafficking.

Via a taped speech, David Arkless, president of corporate and government affairs for Manpower Inc., affirmed his organization's commitment to ending the demand for human trafficking and called for collaboration between corporations and NGOs. Ambassador Hunt concluded by noting that David Arkless is among the group of donors Hunt Alternatives Fund convened in Los Angeles on November 10, 2009, to discuss a coordinated effort to reduce demand nationwide. It was at that meeting that Hunt Alternatives Fund was asked to develop a national action plan.

Landscape Assessment for the National Campaign: Preliminary Findings

Michael Shively, PhD, an Abt senior associate, explained that his firm had not yet arrived at any conclusions, and the planning meeting was a chance to develop a common understanding of demand and create a national campaign focused on effectiveness and devoid of partisanship and ideology. Recommendations included the following:

1. Conduct ongoing research, especially as a tool to unlock public (thus, official) support.
2. Leverage survivors' knowledge and experiences to put the research in a human context and to cultivate political will by making an undeniable case for addressing demand.
3. Lobby Congress to pass, strengthen, and fund laws.
4. Build coalitions to unify the movement's work. Dr. Shively cited mental health as an example of how a movement can use procedures to establish consensus in an occasionally fractious field.

Dr. Shively also discussed participant reactions to several broad issues Abt had studied:

1. There is far-reaching support for educating boys so that they don't grow up into purchasers of sex and instead respect the dignity of all human beings.



Jimmie Briggs, founder and executive director of Man Up, focuses on messaging in a national campaign and stresses the importance of creating a message that welcomes male allies.

2. While shaming divides the movement and its effectiveness is uncertain, more than half the police departments who arrest buyers publicize their identities.
3. "John schools" draw support because they educate men; however, some schools are set up as diversion programs, and buyers may have their charges dismissed, both of which elicited negative reactions from participants.

Combating Demand: Lessons Learned from Abroad

Guy Jacobson, activist, filmmaker, and executive director for the Red Light Children campaign, moderated a panel of international experts who discussed work to end demand in their home countries:

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"If you try to make that distinction, you will get nowhere when focusing on demand."

*Julie Bindel,
British journalist, researcher,
and feminist campaigner*
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1. Guðrún Jónsdóttir, spokesperson for Stígamot (Iceland), where strip clubs were recently outlawed, said, "We learned the connection between porn and sexual violence. The women in prostitution and in the porn industry were terribly damaged, suicidal."
2. Julie Bindel, journalist, researcher, and feminist campaigner (Great Britain) commented, "We decided we wouldn't make a distinction between women who are coerced and [women] who choose. If you try to make that distinction, you will get nowhere when focusing on demand."
3. Ruchira Gupta, founder and president of Apne Aap Women Worldwide (India) remarked, "Women [who were prostituted] keep saying that as long as there is demand, there will be supply."
4. Wiveca Holst, board member of Feminism & Human Rights (Sweden), said, "Prostitution is male violence against women. So women are automatically not criminals; they are victims."
5. Maria Isabel Nieto, director of government affairs for Bavaria S.A. and former deputy minister of the interior (Colombia) asserted, "We need to change the culture, because we still have fathers who initiate their 12-year-old boys into sex by bringing them to brothels; it is part of the culture."



Kevin Bales, president of Free the Slaves, pays close attention as Lisa Thompson, liaison for the abolition of sexual trafficking for the Salvation Army, shares ideas for moving from common cause to common action.

Transforming Culture: Strategies from Parallel Social Movements

Jeff Sedgwick, managing partner and co-founder of Keswick Advisors, LLC, moderated an open discussion as participants applied their experiences from other social justice efforts to the abolitionist movement and to the demand for trafficking. Critical insights included the following:

1. Participants need to articulate key values that brought them together to the national planning meeting. “The sex industry is so skilled at painting us as prudes who are *against* rights and liberties, but we are *for* something, for equal rights, for dignity and life,” said Lisa Thompson, liaison for the abolition of sexual trafficking for the Salvation Army.
2. Despite progress, relatively few people have been mobilized. According to Kevin Bales, president of Free the Slaves, “We need to achieve a quantum leap around the idea that buying sex is a gross violation of human rights and must be unthinkable; this will require a change at the very core of our patriarchal/misogynist culture.”
3. It’s important to look at the humanity of this tragedy. “What happens when we victimize other human beings—whether it’s 500,000 or 500? If it’s one, it is still wrong,” asserted Marian Hatcher, vice president of the Women of Power Alumni Association and administrative assistant to the executive director of the Cook County (IL) Sheriff’s Office.

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Discussions: A Closer Look at Demand Reduction

Twelve roundtable discussions allowed participants to examine an aspect of demand reduction with other experts by sharing programs and policies. Talks highlighted best practices, identified gaps, and explored innovative recommendations for tackling the particular issue. These topics were chosen based on recommendations made during a Fund-coordinated experts meeting at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in October 2009—as well as on the feedback Abt received during its interviews—as strategies, tactics, and programs that could be focus areas for the national campaign.

The roundtable discussions included the following topics and facilitators:

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*Kevin Bales,
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1. “Critical Collaboration: Engaging and Supporting Criminal Justice System Professionals in Anti-demand Efforts” was facilitated by Karen McLaughlin, former director of the Massachusetts Human Trafficking Task Force and an international consultant on human trafficking victims. The participants discussed the need for new collaboration, focusing on survivors and work with the criminal justice system. Crucial suggestions included the following:
 - a. We need to attack prostitution as “a business like any other corporation,” and we must convert profit-making practices into liabilities, as was done to the tobacco industry.
 - b. We should seize large marketing opportunities, such as the upcoming World Cup matches in South Africa, to “create controversy on a world level” and use it to draw attention to prostitution.
 - c. We must create a climate at the state and local levels for focusing on demand and couple it with higher penalties for charging those who buy prostituted persons with something more than a misdemeanor.

2. “Needed Knowledge: Filling Demand-reduction Research Gaps” was facilitated by Professor Donna Hughes, co-founder of Citizens Against Trafficking. Participants dealt with how demand contributes to human trafficking. Professor Hughes soon realized the difficulty of discussing



From left: Kristy Childs, founder and executive director of Veronica's Voice, Marian Hatcher, vice president of the Women of Power Alumni Association and administrative assistant to the executive director of the Cook County (IL) Sheriff's Office, and Audrey Porter, assistant director at My Life, My Choice, co-facilitate "Vital Voices: Strategies for Ensuring Survivor Leadership in Tackling Demand."

human trafficking without also talking about the way in which pornography, the Internet sex industry, and prostitution contribute to demand. Key observations included the following:

- a. We need wide-ranging research across issues to inform all parties (e.g., law enforcement, advocates, and funders) and to mobilize this movement.
 - b. The Hunt Alternatives Fund and the experts are particularly well situated to conduct this research.
 - c. We should better define important terms, such as *demand* and *prostitution*.
3. "Preventing 'Joey' from Becoming a 'John': Educating the Next Generation of Men" was facilitated by Rachel Durchslag, executive director of the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation. She outlined CAASE's Chicago-based curriculum for educating and empowering adolescent boys. CAASE's curriculum builds rapport and equips young men with a vocabulary to understand such topics as sexually based violence and trafficking, first covering commercial sexual exploitation and then the larger societal/cultural contexts; it also helps boys realize they can be agents of change and allies for their female friends. To be successful, a curriculum must do the following:
- a. Teach providers how to discuss human trafficking at potential facilities (e.g., schools and juvenile detention centers).
 - b. Bring reality, through education, to suburban neighborhoods.

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Pornography has become increasingly violent, and the degradation of women is a key component.
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- c. Target the media.
 - d. Change young girls' mindsets.
 - e. Use positive male role models, especially sports figures, as examples.
4. "Buyer Boot Camp: The Role of Pornography in Creating Demand" was led by Gail Dines, Wheelock College professor. The discussion focused on the role of pornography as a training manual for men to buy sex. Professor Dines noted several key points:
- a. Pornography has become increasingly violent, and the degradation of women is a key component.
 - b. Pornography has gone mainstream; it is a profitable and profligate business our popular culture has largely embraced.
 - c. Because of these two factors, boys need to start being educated about gender equality at a young age; the average American boy has seen porn by age 11, and today's porn is violent and extreme.
5. "Corporate-led Initiatives and Prospects in Tackling Demand for Commercial Sex" was facilitated by Dawn Conway, senior vice president for corporate responsibility at LexisNexis. Participants discussed how best to engage corporations in social change. In the words of one participant, NGOs have to show they have been effective and do the following:

During opening sessions, Gail Dines (center), professor at Boston's Wheelock College and anti-pornography activist, shares ideas for collective goals and expectations of the meeting. She explains that she hopes to explore the connections between sex trafficking and the pornography industry with participants.



- a. Demonstrate an understanding of corporations as money-motivated businesses in order to align their missions with the corporations’.
 - b. Identify how to appeal to consumers while they demand social responsibility from corporations.
 - c. Create a proposal that delineates a mission, a purpose, and actions. Essentially, this proposal needs to detail “the ask” public-sector entities make of the corporate sector.
6. “Cultivating Male Allies, Role Models, and Spokesmen against the Sex Industry” was led by Ted Bunch, founding director of A CALL TO MEN. Mr. Bunch discussed how hyper-masculinity, homophobia, heterosexism, and male privilege—activities in which “regular guys” participate—contribute to human trafficking. Although men participate in the domestic violence and sexual assault movements, they aren’t yet working to end demand. Key recommendations included the following:
- a. Involve men in existing conversations, such as ending domestic violence against women, instead of starting conversations just for them.
 - b. Show men it’s not just the extreme cases, but regular men with typical “guy stuff” who contribute to the culture that perpetuates human trafficking.
 - c. Invite men to the conversation; don’t indict them simply because they are men.
7. “Harnessing Resources within the Public Health Sector to End Demand” was facilitated by Brian Willis, director of Global Health Promise. Brian characterized the public health elements of demand as a relationship: Public health is *affected by* and *can affect* demand. Using campaign strategies from past successes, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, would help raise nationwide awareness. The public health domain can change norms, make the acceptable unacceptable, and therefore play a huge role in the movement against demand. Key recommendations comprised the following:



Julie Bindel, British journalist, researcher, and feminist campaigner, raises a question to participants and expresses her frustration regarding the “war of statistics.”

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- a. Develop a compelling international campaign/slogan against demand targeting all sectors of population.
 - b. Understand mental health predispositions for trafficking.
 - c. Investigate the effects of immoral parenting examples on children.
 - d. Teach moral behavior to young children regarding buying sex.
8. "Vital Voices: Strategies for Ensuring Survivor Leadership in Tackling Demand" was co-facilitated by Kristy Childs, founder and executive director of Veronica's Voice; Marian Hatcher, vice president of the Women of Power Alumni Association and administrative assistant to the executive director of the Cook County (IL) Sheriff's Office; and Audrey Porter, assistant director at My Life, My Choice. People generally agreed on the need to push legislative reform; fund programs; help those in "the life" to escape, heal, and speak out; and develop a model for structuring programs that include survivor leadership. Key challenges consisted of the following:
- a. How do organizations reach women and girls still in the life?
 - b. How does anyone overcome ignorance about what is really going on? How do programs reach parents who think their children are not at risk (as either buyers or victims)?
 - c. How can organizations build training and support for survivors so they will assume leadership positions?

During the session "Transforming Culture: Strategies from Parallel Social Movements," Beth Klein, founding managing shareholder at Klein | Frank P.C., explains how lawyers collaborated to pass human trafficking legislation in Colorado.





9. “Moving the Masses: Strategies for Community Awareness and Action against Demand” was led by Janice Crouse, PhD, senior fellow at Concerned Women for America. The group brainstormed about how to persuade the public that sexual exploitation is a critical issue. Dr. Crouse reviewed the Monroe sequence, which delineates how modes of logic can coincide with emotion and produce a persuasive argument. Key observations included the following:

- a. We must protect the privacy of victims and survivors.
- b. We need to harness the power of technology, specifically e-advertising, to raise awareness and increase public engagement.
- c. We should tap “celebrity power” to use major stars’ influence to encourage public engagement.

10. “Building the Will and Applying the Pressure: Advocacy Opportunities at the State and Federal Levels” was facilitated by Bradley Myles, executive director and CEO of Polaris Project. He led a discussion to determine if existing laws accomplish enough. Key observations consisted of the following:

- a. Our culture protects johns in many ways.
- b. Gathering adequate statistics (e.g., the number of johns vs. prostitutes arrested) is a challenge for changing political will and creating the outrage necessary for change.
- c. Efforts could focus on either enacting newer, tougher laws or on enforcing existing laws. (Participants could not agree on this point.)

From left: Guy Jacobson, executive director of the RedLight Children Campaign, moderates a panel of international experts featuring Ruchira Gupta, founder and president of Apne Aap Women Worldwide (India); Julie Bindel, journalist, researcher, and feminist campaigner (Great Britain); Wiveca Holst, board member of Feminism & Human Rights (Sweden); and Guðrún Jónsdóttir, spokesperson for Stígamat (Iceland), as they discuss combating demand in their home countries. Maria Isabel Nieto, director of government affairs for Bavaria S.A. and former deputy minister of the interior in Colombia, delivered closing remarks (not pictured).

11. "Targeting Those Who Target the Kids: Stopping Child Sexploitation" was led by Carol Smolenski, executive director of ECPAT USA (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking). The discussion addressed the inherent tension between children's and women's advocacy. Key points included the following:

- a. It's important to distinguish between child rapists, those who prey on younger people because of their vulnerability, and pedophiles. Focusing law enforcement on pedophiles may allow child rapists to operate undetected.
- b. Hotels that are sites of exploitation should train employees to recognize the signs of sex trafficking and require that they sign a Code of Conduct sponsored by ECPAT, but many refuse to do so.
- c. Governments and police forces should be better equipped to make anti-trafficking and anti-exploitation campaigns effective.

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12. "Engaging Faith-based Communities in the Struggle against Demand," was facilitated by Sister Carole Lombard, director of justice and peace for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston. Participants shared the array of activities currently under way. Key points comprised the following:

- a. People want to do a lot but aren't sure how to direct their efforts; they need more ways in which to volunteer time and/or donate money.
- b. Leaders must be aware of the broader challenge of engaging the entire church community.
- c. Discussing trafficking or porn addiction in a church can be difficult because one might appear to be against first amendment rights or to be a prude. The problem can also be perceived as something that happens overseas or elsewhere, but not in *this* church.

Key Observations

The discussion led by Ambassador Hunt and Dr. Michael Shively on the day's programming provoked many comments. Lessons learned by the participants included the following:

1. They had a newfound appreciation of pornography as a training manual for men who want to buy sex.
2. Participants learned that we all need to talk about our achievements and present data to document both the challenges and successes.
3. Stakeholders need to collaborate.

It quickly became apparent that participants did indeed share a sense of "we."

"Everyone [agrees] that paying money for sex is against human dignity—period."

From Common Cause to Common Action: Is There a "We" Here?

Lina Nealon, program manager for Demand Abolition at Hunt Alternatives Fund, asked if participants felt they had come together around demand. It quickly became apparent that they did indeed share a sense of "we." Comments and observations included the following:

1. "Our diversity is our strength."
2. "Everyone [agrees] that paying money for sex is against human dignity—period."
3. "A possible division is funding, [which] could be something to negotiate about instead of fight over."

Participants gather during the final day of programming to determine core principles and messaging for a national campaign.





Martin Monto, professor of sociology at the University of Portland in Oregon, communicates the importance of developing a sense of common purpose during the planning meeting.

Core Principles

Survivor Marian Hatcher, who co-facilitated with Ambassador Hunt, opened the discussion by saying, “I want to talk about getting out of our comfort zone and addressing the indignity of prostitution. Not everyone sees it as we see it.” Amid a wide-ranging discussion, three key points emerged:

1. Simplify the focus to “end the demand for commercial sex.” As many participants noted, “Johns don’t discriminate between trafficked and non-trafficked women, and neither should we.”
2. Be inclusive and welcome all who want to end demand.
3. Leverage survivor leadership. As survivor Kristy Childs said, “I have a PhD in demand.”

Framing the Message: Language and Context

Janice Crouse and Ambassador Hunt moderated a wide-ranging discussion about how a national campaign might address victims, perpetrators, and the actions inherent in buying sex. While participants didn’t reach consensus over which words to use, they agreed on several principles:

1. Adapt our language to the audience with whom we’re working, realizing that talking to the general public isn’t the same as speaking with fellow experts.
2. “Call it what it is”: Johns are exploiters or enslavers, the word *pimp* needs to be linked to its original meaning, and buying commercial sex is an act of abuse, greed, and slavery.
3. Expect our words to draw intense scrutiny from the opposition.

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Next Steps:**Steering Committee for the National Action Plan**

Mark Russell, deputy director for Hunt Alternatives Fund, asked for volunteers to sit on a steering committee to help move from common cause to common action. This would involve reviewing Abt's final report, recommending several strategies for reducing demand, and developing a national action plan. More than a dozen people volunteered.

"Quick-win" Committees

Ambassador Hunt asked for suggestions for "quick-win" actions—ways in which organizations and individuals could collaborate to reduce demand prior to the creation of a national action plan. Hunt Alternatives Fund announced that its staff would provide coordination and communications support (such as conference calls, webinars, and a NING site) to facilitate the work of these ad hoc groups. After an initial brainstorming session, participants broke into small groups and came up with the following first-round actions:

1. Develop a craigslist campaign ranging from lawsuits to sting operations.
2. Initiate civil lawsuits against johns, possibly targeting Houston and Chicago.
3. Produce public service announcements that focus on demand and show the harm prostitution causes to individuals.
4. Generate local demand-reduction activities to increase the community's stake in abolishing demand.
5. Cultivate high-profile male leaders who would be allies and public standard-bearers.

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Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Ambassador Hunt and Gayle Embrey thanked everyone for their hard work, ideas, and goodwill. The next steps included disseminating Abt Associates' final report to meeting invitees for feedback on the frameworks and working with a steering committee to recommend several strategies for a national action plan based on those frameworks.

A Final Thought

Of course, it is easy to be pulled in a thousand directions when taking on a problem as large as this one. But this group will maintain its laser focus on demand reduction. And we will move forward with confidence, remembering that throughout history, visionaries have addressed terrible scourges. Focus, determination, creativity, collaboration, compassion—these drivers are propelling us forward as we face both predictable and unexpected challenges.

Each of us has taken on a piece of this complex problem. Now we are banded together to abolish modern-day slavery in the United States. Meeting this challenge, we will create a cry to action that will resonate around the world.

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For more information, contact:

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