

“He invited me and didn’t ask anything in return” Migration and Mobility as Vulnerabilities for Sexual Exploitation among Female Adolescents in Mexico

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ABSTRACT

Although human trafficking is recognized as a major human rights violation, there is limited evidence regarding the vulnerabilities that contribute to female adolescents’ risk of being forced or coerced into the sex trade. Vulnerabilities such as gender-based violence, economic and social inequalities have been shown to shape the risk of sexual exploitation among adolescents. In-depth interviews (n=18) with current sex workers who reported being deceived or forced into the sex trade as adolescents (<17 years old) were analysed to explore their experiences of migration and mobility in Mexico. Driven by socio-economic and vulnerabilities in home communities, adolescents often engaged in internal migration and mobility to other Mexican communities and states. Migration and mobility further predisposed them to social isolation, economic hardship and abuse, which were used as tools to trick them into the sex trade. Policies that support safer migration for adolescents in origin, transit, and destination communities are needed.

INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, globally and regionally, human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation has become a topic of great interest (Goldenberg et al., 2012; Servin et al., 2015; Silverman, 2011; Silverman et al., 2006; United Nations of Drugs and Crime, 2014). The most recognized definition of human trafficking is the 2000 United Nations Palermo Protocol, which defines trafficking as the use of force, deception, or other fraudulent means for purposes of exploitation (e.g. sexual exploitation). It also states that any recruitment, transport or use of force of a minor or adolescent (“minor or adolescent” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age) for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” (United Nations of Drugs and Crime, 2000). Human trafficking needs to be acknowledged as a phenomenon that is shaped by different socioeconomic forces such as rapid demographic growth, stratification by gender, race, ethnicity; and social inequality among other factors (Tiano, 2012). Across the world, these structural vulnerabilities make women vulnerable to human trafficking (Barner, Okech, and Camp 2014).

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Human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation is a severe violation of human rights (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014) and previous research conducted in other regions has found that victims face numerous health and social consequences (i.e. malnutrition, substance abuse and misuse, mental health issues, sexual and reproductive issues, sexual and physical abuse, adverse social and economic well-being) (Goldenberg, 2015; Miller et al., 2007; Zimmerman et al., 2003), particularly for minors (i.e. higher risk of HIV/STIs infection extreme violence, high client volume, inconsistent condom use, forced drug use) (Silverman, 2011; Silverman et al., 2015; Goldenberg et al., 2012). Further, several research studies conducted with female participants who have experienced vulnerabilities (Galtung, 1990; Farmer, 2009) such as poverty, gender-based violence, family disruption and lower education levels, (Singer, 1996; Galtung, 1969; Servin et al., 2015) indicate that such conditions may predispose minors to being sexually exploited (Lau, 2008; Servin et al., 2015; Loza et al., 2010; Goldenberg et al., 2012). Human trafficking patterns have been proved to be closely linked to international migration flows, and this is not concentrated in a particular region or continent. There are several countries such as Mexico that are a source, transit, and destination for trafficking in persons (Barner, Okech, and Camp, 2014; United Nations on Drugs and Crime, 2014).

According to the UNDC 2014 Human Trafficking Diagnosis, the sex trafficking patterns in Mexico are South-North and this trend extends to Mexico's neighbours (Central America – Mexico – United States), with the northern states of Baja California, Sonora and Tamaulipas being the states with the highest numbers of trafficking cases (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014). Most research conducted worldwide on trafficking has focused on cross-border flows and patterns (Kiss et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2007; Raj et al., 2009; Department of State, 2015; Tiano, Murphy-Aguilar, and Bigej 2012). There is an absence of evidence on internal trafficking experiences and how these relate to experiences of mobility and internal migration, particularly among young women. This is particularly important because the origin of most of the victims identified in Mexico are nationals (80%) from several Mexican states (Chiapas, Campeche, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Veracruz, Tabasco and Yucatán) among which are found some of the poorest states in the country (i.e. Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero) (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014). Adolescents and girls in Mexico who come from contexts rife with structural vulnerabilities (i.e. poverty, low levels of education, domestic violence contexts, teen pregnancy), such as the South-east of Mexico, may be especially vulnerable to abuse, gender-based violence, and possibly sexual exploitation (Servin et al., 2015; Goldenberg et al., 2015). Since 2012, Mexico's government has conducted special efforts to prevent, penalize, and eradicate human trafficking in all its forms. However, limited evidence exists on how internal migration and mobility consequences may be used as recruitment tools into the sex trade in Mexico (Cámara de Diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión, 2012; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014).

This study aims to explore how experiences of migration between cities and mobility between households shapes vulnerability to sexual exploitation for current sex workers in two Mexico-United States border cities. Likewise, this study aims to describe the current anti-trafficking policies in Mexico, and to emphasize the need to consider internal migration and mobility dynamics for further policy design and implementation.

METHODS

Study Setting

This study was conducted in Mexico's northern border cities of Tijuana, Baja California and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. These two cities have been key points for the Mexican migration to the

United States due to their geographic location and proximity to the US border. The proximity to the United States, the economic prosperity, and the heritage of migration patterns, created ideal points of binational economic and cultural exchange. From 1995-2000 the northern states of Mexico, including Baja California and Chihuahua, attracted large numbers of internal immigrants. In 2000, 12.5 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively, of Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez's total populations, were internal migrants (Viramontes et al., 2013; Pérez Campusano and Santos Cerquera, 2013). Today, the Tijuana-San Diego border remains one of the busiest international border crossing in the world, (United States Department of Transportation, 2014) which attracts extensive commercial activity, including the exchange of drugs, arms, human trafficking, (Willoughby, 2003; Astorga and Shirk, 2010) and sex tourism from both sides of the border (Curtis and Arreola, 1991; Bucardo et al., 2004).

In Tijuana, sex work is quasi-regulated in "tolerance zones" such as the *Zona Norte* (Sirotin et al., 2010a; Sirotin et al., 2010b). Public health regulations require that sex workers in certain formal establishments (e.g. bars, nightclubs) undergo periodical HIV/STI tests at municipal clinics to maintain a health permit to work without prosecution. Minors cannot acquire this permit because according to Mexican law, a girl or adolescent exchanging sex constitutes sexual exploitation (Senado de la República México, 2014). Ciudad Juárez does not have a formal tolerance zone, three years ago sex work was concentrated in the downtown area (*Zona Centro*), which was also the main commercial zone (Cepeda and Nowotny, 2014). However, this zone was demolished and currently sex work is happening in less visible venues such as hotels, and motels (García, 2015; Radiza Juárez-El Paso, 2016). The approximate 9,000 sex workers in Tijuana and 6,000 in Ciudad Juárez attract male clients from other cities in Mexico, the United States and other parts of the world (Servin et al., 2015; Strathdee et al., 2012; Patterson et al., 2008).

Data collection

From August 2013 to October 2014, researchers from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and field staff identified and invited 603 sex workers in Tijuana (n=301) and Ciudad Juárez (n=302) for a study of HIV risk. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee at UCSD, at *El Colegio de la Frontera Norte* (El COLEF) and at the *Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez* (UACJ). Eligible participants were ≥18 years of age, biologically female, reported having exchanged sex for money or goods at least 4 times in the past month with at least 4 different clients, agreed to treatment for any sexually transmitted infections (STI) detected, and resided in Tijuana or Ciudad Juárez. Participants were selected through modified time-location sampling at both indoor and street venues. All participants completed a questionnaire and biological testing for HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia at baseline.

Participants who reported in the quantitative survey that they had started to exchange sex for money prior to age 18 or were forced into sex trade, were recruited to participate in an in-depth interview on their entry into sex trade experiences (n=27). For the purpose of this analysis, we only included the testimonies of 18 participants who reported internal migration experiences and relevant mobility experiences (i.e. moving from a household to another, from a hotel to a house; voluntarily or involuntarily) prior to starting to exchange sex for money. Participants received US\$20 dollars as compensation for their time and travel costs, HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STI) information, free condoms and a small referral card with the contact information of different agencies. Recruitment staff and interviewers were trained according to the World Health Organizations (WHO) safety and ethical guidelines for conducting research with trafficked women (World Health Organization, 2003). Interviews were conducted in Spanish, audio-taped, and lasted approximately 60 minutes. The interviews loosely followed an open-ended guide, which was iteratively revised as

All interviews were transcribed and translated by trained, bilingual staff at UCSD. Any personal identifiers were removed, and each participant was identified by a unique pseudonym. The software Atlas.ti (Atlas.ti, 2014) was used to manage data coding. The software ArcMap 10.1 (ESRI, 2011) was used to map participants' communities of origin and destination (Map 1). Co-authors systematically read through transcripts and engaged in the coding process. We employed analytical strategies in order to create, for each participant, lifetime chronologies which placed their adolescent exchange of sex within the context of their broader lives, migration history, and mobility. A codebook which incorporated descriptive codes based on interview questions and emergent themes informed by the chronologies, was developed. The qualitative analysis was led by the first author in collaboration with co-authors. The analysis adopted an inductive perspective in which we used participants' language and experiences to categorize and connect factors related to internal migration and mobility before their entering into the sex trade.

Internal migration has been defined by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as “a temporary or permanent movement of people within the same country for different reasons (e.g. improve their economic status, family reunification)” (International Organization for Migration, 2004). For the purpose of this analysis, the term internal migration was defined according to the IOM definition and the term mobility was used to refer to participants’ movement from one household to another (whether participants think it is a short-term or long term move), both voluntarily and involuntarily.

TABLE 1
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN SEX WORKERS IN TIJUANA AND CIUDAD JUÁREZ, MÉXICO (N=18)

Measure	N
Age , mean (min, max)	29 (19-39)
Civil Status	
• Single	6
• Married/Partnership	8
• Widowed	1
• Divorced/Separated	3
Recruitment site	
Tijuana	11
Ciudad Juárez	7
Level of education	
• None	1
• Some primary school	5
• Finished primary school	6
• Some secondary school	3
• Finished secondary school	2
• Some preparatory school	1

RESULTS

Participant's characteristics

Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of participating sex workers. Participants' mean age was 29 years old. Eight participants reported being married, six single, three divorced or separated and one reported being widowed. Six participants finished elementary school, six others reported having less education than elementary school and the other six reported having at least some secondary school or higher. Map 1 illustrates the relevant places localities (*municipios*) of origin and destination for the purpose of sex trade. In green we indicated the places of origin or recruitment, usually where the participants were born, in yellow the localities that were reported to be places of origin as well as destination places for adolescent entry into sex trade (i.e. Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez) and in red, the places that were strictly reported as destination. The map shows that the places of destination are mainly in the center of the country (i.e. Tlaxcala, Mexico City, Puebla and Morelos), in the North part of Mexico (i.e. Ensenada, Mexicali, Ciudad Juárez and Tijuana) or in tourist zones such as Ciudad del Carmen, Campeche.

Findings

Driven by socio-economic factors and vulnerabilities in their home communities, participants reported multiple migration and mobility experiences prior to entering the sex trade; the majority of these experiences contributed to pre-trafficking vulnerabilities. Two types of mobility or internal migration experiences that were found to shape participants' vulnerability emerged from the data: 1) *involuntary migration based on deception by potential romantic partners or friends who introduced participants to sex trade* and 2) *migration leading to residential instability and consequent exposure to the sex industry*. The first type of experience usually involved a romantic partner or potential romantic partner who invited a participant to go to another city. The participant often did not know the individual for very long beforehand, and this invitation was usually to meet his family.

The second type of experience was reported among participants who had already migrated to a different city with a partner or an acquaintance and then experienced constant mobility from household to household or from a house to a hotel. For many participants, experiences of mobility were not the only vulnerability they faced that impacted their risk of sex trafficking. Most of these participants reported experiencing different vulnerabilities such as poverty, teen pregnancy, domestic violence and familial instability before facing internal migration and mobility experiences. Several participants reported more than one of the vulnerabilities mentioned. The ways in which these vulnerabilities played a key role in the underage entry pathway into sex trade among adolescents in this region has been analysed and reported by Servin and colleagues and contextualize participants' mobility experiences (Servin *et al.*, 2015).

Romantic and personal relationships: migration as a recruitment tool into the sex trade

The first experience of mobility (n=11) involves a second party, usually a romantic partner or an acquaintance who is actively involved in the process of migration and invites the participant to join them. Participants reported receiving an invitation from a recent boyfriend or a male friend to visit another city for a couple of days. Many participants described that once they went and visited this other city they realized that their new partner or friend was not going to let them go back to their communities of origin and that they were misinformed about what the trip entailed (e.g. the duration of the trip, purpose of the trip). Mariana's experience illustrates this type of invitation:

"I met this guy in a park [in Oaxaca] and he told me, just like that, 'I'm from Puebla and tomorrow I have to go to pick up some papers that I forgot'. Do you want to come with me? It's just in and out'. And I told him, 'really? I would like to see Puebla very much'... He didn't ask for anything in return. He didn't say something like, 'You wanna sleep with me?' I had just met him ... we went to Puebla and he bought me clothes, he bought me shoes and instead of buying me jeans or covered clothes, decent clothes ... he started buying me miniskirts, heels and ... I wanted to go back to my home, but he didn't take me, he took me to his big house. He told me, 'You're not leaving. You're going to stay with me because I have taken you and you'll stay with me.'"

[Mariana, born in Oaxaca, entered sex trade at 16 years old in Puebla]

Mariana, interestingly, mentioned that she was surprised that this new person of romantic interest would invite her to Puebla "without asking anything in return", revealing her assumption that she was expecting to have to give him something in exchange for taking her on a trip. In this case, visiting another city turned out to be a case of internal migration based on deception and misinformation. The ultimate aim of this type of migration was to convince women to start exchanging sex for money in the destination cities. Lourdes described a similar experience:

"... I was pregnant when I met him and we were only friends ... I didn't want to get involved again with someone ... and suddenly, after two months of knowing each other, he invited me to Tlaxcala to meet his family, he introduced me to his family as his girlfriend and I told him 'no, that's not true, we are friends'. He told me, 'I like you and sincerely I want to help you.' I started to think a lot of things and I told him, 'No, we only know each other for a few months, you are my friend, you are not my boyfriend, and no, not now.'"

[Lourdes, born in Puebla, entered sex trade at 16 years old in Tlaxcala]

Lourdes was more resistant than Mariana to staying and getting involved with another man and was not comfortable being introduced as his girlfriend, although economic vulnerabilities were powerful motivators to stay with him, which she eventually did. Some of the participants who

migrated with recent romantic partners mentioned that this was motivated by a desire to move away from their city of origin due to family stressors in their homes, including recent divorce, poverty, and psychological abuse. Judith's testimony illustrates this feeling:

"Well . . . I told him, 'it hasn't been long since I separated from my husband and I don't want anything serious, the only thing I want is to get out of here [Veracruz], they [in-laws] are bothering me'. All of a sudden he told me, 'Look, let's go over there [Puebla]. I don't have much to offer, but between the both of us we can do something'. And since I honestly was sick of being there, well, it was easy for me to leave . . ."

[Judith, born in Veracruz, entered sex trade at 16 years old in Mexico City]

Judith's desire to leave her community of origin (because of family stresses, recent divorce) created a situation in which she immediately accepted this new partner's proposition. Once participants migrated, most of them faced issues such as social isolation, severe abuse, and economic hardship, which eventually led them to exchange sex for money against their will. This was exemplified by Jimena's experience:

"I left my house [Chihuahua] because my father used to hit me a lot. After I met him [stranger] in the train [to Los Mochis], I thought he was good guy, but he took me by force, he kidnapped me and hit me so bad, pretty much destroyed my face. And he, he took me, the guy took me, he tied me, I lasted about 3 days locked in a room without eating or anything, and without drinking anything, I could not communicate with my family and I had nothing. Eventually he started bringing clients to the ranch."

[Jimena, born in Chihuahua, entered sex trade at 14 years old in Los Mochis]

Residential instability and exposure to the sex industry post-migration

The second type of mobility identified was reported among participants (n=8) who migrated to a different city due a partner or an acquaintance invitation: once they arrived to the new city, they were moved from household to household (e.g. the households of the partner's parents, partner's siblings, other in laws') or from a house to a hotel by their partner or an acquaintance. In most of the cases this constant mobility played an important role in the recruitment process of the participants into the sex trade by facilitating economic vulnerabilities, social isolation, exposure to the sex industry, and sometimes drug use. This was exemplified by Isabel's story:

"After I escaped from my grandmother's house . . . because they [uncles] would hit me a lot. I met this lady in the *calafia* [bus] and she invited me to live with her. When I got to that house there were five boys who were her sons. They were, they were smoking that thing. 'Don't you want some?' I said, 'What is that?' 'That it's crystal' or I don't know what that is. And well trying that, you realize that you want more and then more. Then the lady took me first to a bar, and then to another one, I didn't work at first but . . . well, she brought me to accompany her and all that, and well after a while she asked me if I didn't want more of what I smoked? I tell her, 'Yeah why not' . . . I didn't have my own money, I was young . . ."

[Isabel, born in Tijuana, entered sex trade at 14 years old in Tijuana]

As in Isabel's testimony, early violence and pre-trafficking vulnerabilities were present in most of the participant's testimonies. Continuing mobility, exposure to the sex work industry as part of that mobility, exposure to substance use, along with lack of economic resources, facilitated her eventual entry to the sex trade. As a result of continuing mobility, other participants described

being exposed to the sex industry by spending time in bars where sex work was occurring or interacting with women who were already exchanging sex for money. Ana's testimony exemplifies this:

"After moving to Puebla with my friend Emma [a waitress], she introduced me to her brother in law, Gerardo. The idea was to live with Emma, but Gerardo asked me if he could call me regularly and then he asked me to move in with him. . . it was a big house with a lot of rooms and other girls were living in there. . . they were all working on this [exchanging sex for money]."

[Ana, born in Veracruz, entered sex trade at 16 years old in Tijuana]

Ana's case demonstrates that constant mobility between households created a situation where she interacted with women who were already exchanging sex for money for her partner's family members. It is likely that this constant mobility and exposure to a sex industry context was a recruitment tool to convince her later to start exchanging sex for money. A similar case is portrayed by Lourdes:

"After I moved to Tlaxcala we stayed with his niece, the next day he told me, 'We are going back [Mexico City] in the afternoon'. He left, and didn't come back after a week. I stayed with his sister by myself and I didn't have any money with me. He was supposed to take me back but he told me, 'No, I want you to stay with me; I'm going to support you. He told me, 'You are already a few months pregnant, you can't work anymore'. I didn't want to but . . . it was true, that I was going to need help . . . a few days later he [partner] had a fight with his sister, so we had to move with his brother . . . His sister told me, 'I'm going to be honest with you; I'm going to tell you what my brother does for a living . . . his wife sells her body and she helps him and supports them . . . ' She was the one who explained to me what I had to do after . . . [exchange sex for money]."

[Lourdes, born in Puebla, entered sex trade at 16 years old in Tlaxcala]

Economic vulnerabilities post-migration, isolation, and being pregnant were vulnerabilities that placed Lourdes in a precarious situation. Mobility between her partner's family members' households played an important role in introducing her to the sex industry. Several participants (n=7) reported similar experiences regarding continuing mobility from household to household as well as pre-trafficking structural vulnerabilities.

DISCUSSION

The analysis portrayed in this article illustrates how mobility and migration patterns predisposed adolescents to social isolation, homelessness, economic hardship and abuse (i.e. psychological, physical or sexual), which were then used as tools to force or trick them into the sex trade. Gender-based violence, structural vulnerabilities, patriarchal relationships and deception are present in most of the testimonies about migration and mobility included in this analysis. These issues intertwine with mobility to create profoundly complex issues, and as such, it is important to unpack them and to address how they are impacting female minors in Mexico and how these are translating into pathways to sexual exploitation (Frías, 2008; Hunnicutt, 2009).

Some of the migration experiences portrayed include evidence of how structural vulnerabilities (e.g. pregnancy, domestic violence) overlap with patriarchal relationships (e.g. male decides where to live, where to migrate, where his female partner works) in a way that allows for situations in which a girl suddenly moves to a new city with a recently established or potential romantic male partner to be normalized and socially accepted in Mexico (Frías, 2008). This conjunction of elements creates a context where girls and adolescents look for safer environments outside their houses or communities of origin and, as in the cases that we analysed, fall into unsafe and

extremely dangerous situations that facilitate abuse and violence against them (Goldenberg et al., 2012; Loza et al., 2010; Potterat et al., 1998).

This analysis portrays how adolescents' experiences of vulnerability and migration and mobility interact together to result in increased risk to exchange sex for money as minors. Other studies conducted in the same region have found that these factors may potentially translate into other health risks, such as HIV infection (Goldenberg et al., 2013).

Due to the complexity of these women's stories we were not able to include in this analysis what happened after they were deceived or forced into sex trade, and how participants eventually may have abandoned these abusive and exploitative relationships. While our sample size and study design do not permit generalization of findings to a wider population, the testimonies provided by this study offer key contextual data about how internal migration and mobility experiences play a key role in shaping the risk of sexual exploitation among adolescents in Mexico.

While this research focuses on internal experiences in Mexico, it is important to emphasize that Mexico is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking (Department of State, 2015; United Nations of Drugs and Crime, 2014). Research and policies considering the three phases of human trafficking in Mexico is needed (Oficina de las Naciones Unidas contra la Droga y el Delito, 2014; Zimmerman et al., 2011; Zimmerman et al., 2003). Additionally, current international migrations flows and economic push and pull factors impact directly human trafficking patterns, therefore, efforts to organize international migration movements it is essential to recognize how these two phenomena are connected (Lara Flores, Sara Maria and Sanchez Gomez, 2015; Organización Internacional del Trabajo, 2016).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are important gaps in the current anti-trafficking policies in Mexico. The General Law to Prevent, Sanction, and Eradicate Human Trafficking and for the Protection and Assistance of Victims, reformed in 2014 (CEIDAS, 2016; Pacheco, 2014; Congreso de Diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión, México, 2014), does not recognize or address the nature of sex work and does not acknowledge the differences between sex work and sexual exploitation (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014; Doezenia, 2002). The implementation of this law has mainly focused on conducting raids in establishments to detect victims of sexual exploitation. However, these raids have had social and economic consequences for women who are working voluntarily in these establishments and very scarce positive impacts for women who are actually being sexually exploited (Montejo, 2016; Madrid Romero, 2014).

Some of the consequences of these raids are that, due to closure of venues, women who voluntarily engage in sex work and those who are trafficked are forced to do this in less visible venues such as hotels, and motels, which are usually more dangerous than the formal work venues (Montejo, 2016; Madrid Romero, 2014). Additionally, corruption inhibits the implementation of this law and further jeopardizes the safety of women engaged in the sex trade, either voluntarily or by force. Local organizations such as Brigada Callejera, which work closely with sex workers in Mexico City, has documented that sometimes carrying condoms is enough reason for authorities to detain women on the streets (Madrid Romero, 2014; Montejo, 2016; Lamas, 2015). The subjectivity of the implementation of the law has led to extortions (e.g. asking for money or sexual favours) of the women working on the streets by authorities (Lamas, 2015; Montejo, 2016).

Furthermore, there have been severe critics of the reform made to the anti-trafficking law in 2014. Several lawyers, experts on trafficking cases, argued that there was no need to reform the law but to fight corrupt authorities and the impunity surrounding trafficking in Mexico. One of the

main obstacles implementing effectively this law is that the budget that was supposed to be allocated to implement the anti-trafficking law, has been reduced and only two of the five ministries received the assigned budget (Espinosa Soto, 2015; Valdez Rivera and Gluszek, 2015; Madrid Romero, 2014).

Interventions which address structural conditions that are pushing girls and adolescents toward these precarious situations are needed, specifically those which target girls who are at highest risk (e.g. those experiencing homelessness, domestic abuse, child abuse, parental neglect) and those who may potentially recruit such girls to engage in the sex industry (i.e. traffickers, pimps) (Servin et al., 2015). Educational campaigns and programmes aiming to identify and assist recent internal migrants could be beneficial in ameliorating the social isolation and the economic barriers that they face when they have just migrated, potentially preventing their engagement in the sex industry (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014).

For example, the 2014 Trafficking Situation Diagnosis in Mexico, published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, emphasized the need to train the people in charge of transportation centres in order to identify and assist adolescents in trafficking situations (e.g. bus drivers, flight crews); further efforts like these on disseminating and implementing campaigns in transportation centres and community are recommended (Carballo and Nerukar, 2001). Possible interventions also need to be complemented by broader structural and community-led interventions aimed at reducing the contextual factors which create risk for girls and adolescents, such as the demand for sex trafficked minors, the normalization of gender-based violence, poverty, and low levels of education (Shannon et al., 2015; Farmer, 2009; Fernández Chagoya and Vargas Urías, 2014; Servin et al., 2015; Madrid Romero, 2014; Barner, Okech, and Camp 2014).

Without addressing a broader structural context (e.g. structural vulnerabilities, context of sex work in Mexico) and without considering the three phases of migration (i.e. origin, transit and destination), including internal mobility, efficacy of efforts to prevent and eradicate sex trafficking in Mexico will be limited (Nieuwenhuys and Pécout, 2007; Zimmerman et al., 2011).

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