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Trafficking in Persons in Mexico:  
An Overview in the Context of  
Migration

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- This presentation explores the issue of human trafficking in Mexico as a phenomenon that takes place in the context of internal as well as international migration.
  - Mexico is a migration country of origin, transit and destination, and also experiences large internal migration flows.
  - As a result, the human trafficking policies for prevention, protection and prosecution need to address the particular needs of each population.

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- Provide background information on the different types of migration that occur within and from Mexico with examples of why certain populations may be vulnerable to trafficking.
  - Discuss government and civil society work with some of these groups including efforts for prevention, protection and research related to trafficking in persons.
  - Raise questions regarding ways to enhance bi-national efforts for prevention and assistance.

- Agricultural workers
  - Approximately 5 million temporary migrant workers annually
- Domestic workers
  - Approximately 1.5 million domestic workers, the majority women and the majority internal migrants
- Sex workers
  - Between 16,000-20,000 children in commercial sexual exploitation, many of whom are internal migrants.
- Vulnerable Populations
  - Indigenous workers
  - Girls and young women



# imumi Immigration to Mexico

- Approximately 500,000 immigrants in Mexico (2000 Census)
- Resident workers
  - Domestic workers
    - Primarily Guatemalan women working in Chiapas and other southern states
  - Sex workers
    - Central American women in southern states
    - Women from South America and Eastern Europe in larger cities and tourist zones.
- Temporary Workers
  - Approximately 40,000 Guatemalan documented agricultural workers and 20,000 more undocumented.
  - New temporary worker programs extend to construction workers and other sectors and various border countries.



- Between 400,000-600,000 migrants, the majority Central Americans, enter Mexico and travel irregularly through Mexico each year without authorization.
- Approximately 20% of these flows are women migrants.
- In 2008, Mexico repatriated 7,064 migrant children from Mexico to other countries of which 5,983 were traveling alone.







- Approximately 27 million immigrants of Mexican origin residing in the U.S.
- 11.5 million were born in Mexico, 6.6 million undocumented.
- During 2000-2006, this population grew by approximately 400,000-485,000 irregular migrants and an additional 90,000 Mexicans who cross the border on work or family visas.
- Since 2007, the number of unauthorized migrants from Mexico has dropped. Approximately 175,000 unauthorized migrants from Mexico entered US between 2008-2009.\*
- However, while unauthorized migration in the US may have dropped by more than a million people recently, it has apparently only dropped by 5% for Mexicans.
- Mexican citizens received 184,438 visas in 2006. Of these, 89,184 Mexican workers participated in the Seasonal nonagricultural workers program (H-2B) and 33,056 in the Returning H-2B workers program. 40,283 worked in the US by acquiring a seasonal agricultural workers visa (H-2A) 17,063 had Specialty occupations visas (H-1B) (4%), and 9,247 received the NAFTA professional workers visas (TN).



Within these populations, the vast majority of migrants never ends up in a situation of trafficking of persons.

It is important to take into account the specific situation of each person and the combination of factors that made the person vulnerable to the trafficking situation.



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Internal Trafficking: La Merced, Mexico City  
Forced Prostitution

Immigrants: Chinese Maquila Workers

Transit Migration: Young Guatemalan in  
Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Emigration: Forced Prostitution, Forced  
Labor for Agricultural and Domestic Work,  
Begging, etc.

# Cases of Mexican Trafficking Victims in the United States

	México
<b>Women</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Men</b>	<b>907</b>
<b>Girls</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Boys</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>City/State of Origin</b>	<b>Campeche, Chiapas, Chihuahua (Ojinaga), Coahuila (Nueva Rosita, Saltillo), C. de México, E. de México (Toluca), Guerrero, Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Puebla (Zacapoaxtla, Tenancingo), Tabasco, Tamaulipas (Nuevo Laredo), Tlaxcala, Veracruz (Poza Rica)</b>
<b>Trafficker/Employer United States</b>	<b>Mexicans; Mexican-Americans; Latinos; South African; Bangladesh; North Americans (US).</b>
<b>Prostitution</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Selling and Begging</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>982</b>
<b>Domestic Work</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Forced Marriage and Servitude</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Factories, Restaurants, Construction</b>	<b>12</b>

Informal survey of Freedom Network Members, Global Rights, 2007.

## Challenges for preventing and prosecuting trafficking cases in the Mexican context

- Current situation of generalized violence related to efforts to curb drug trafficking
- Sectors of municipal governments that are influenced or being run by people in organized crime.
- Corruption within law enforcement and judicial system. 72/179
- Discrimination, xenophobia
- Violence against women
- Some indigenous customs
- While sex work is not illegal in Mexico, it is regulated in some areas and sex workers often experience extortion and physical and sexual abuse by authorities.
- USAID initiatives have been top down, sometimes excluding civil society.
- Anti-trafficking law is based on UN protocol, does not define sexual exploitation, requires proof of means (except for minors) and has been difficult to prosecute. (0 convictions at the federal level, some at the state level).
- Regulations require cooperation in criminal proceedings to receive assistance (immigration or otherwise), but do not define cooperation.

## Perceptions of Authorities in Tlaxcala

- *The women like it, with the slightest insinuation they will prostitute themselves for easy money, even for a beer.*
- *The boys know that when they grow up they will become pimps (padrotes)*
- *Violence is a way of relating to one another – if your husband hits you, it is because you deserve it.*
- *The girls are branded according to their pimps.*

- GTIP- funded range of NGOs for assistance, communication, research and prevention strategies.
- DOJ – training with law enforcement, judges.
- ICE – training for police and some observation of raids.
- USAID – through Merida Initiative and K with MSI will concentrate on training, legal reform and victim assistance.
- Banco de Desarrollo Interamericano and the Ricky Martin Foundation
- UNODC – Blue Heart Campaign
- IOM – assistance for internal and family reunification, training for Mexican consular personnel
- ILO – program related to child sexual commercial exploitation
- Regional Conference on Migration



## Examples of Prevention and Protection Efforts for Specific Populations

Tlaxcala, Mexico: Trafficking for Forced Prostitution internally and to the United States.

Domestic Workers in Mexico City: *Centro de Apoyo y Atencion a Empleadas del Hogar* (CACEH) community outreach and legislative advocacy.

Center for Migrant Rights (CDM) Zacatecas -- Settlement agreement with Dreamland Amusements for working conditions for carnival workers on H2B visas (august 2009).

## General policies for prevention of trafficking in persons within Mexico and between Mexico and the United States

### Immigration Reform in the United States

- Work visas or programs that are not dependent on one employer and that include opportunities for legalization
- Improve opportunities for circular migration
- Decrease vulnerability of transit migrants (screening mechanisms during exclusion and deportation proceedings)

Application of labor laws (and reform where relevant) to protect vulnerable workers, such as agricultural workers, domestic workers and sex workers.

Access to education and economic opportunities for girls.

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## Research needs and Opportunities for Collaboration?

Evaluation of prevention programs.

More information on cases of Mexican trafficking victims and survivors in the United States.

Enhanced coordination of information between academia-NGOs and government on both sides of the border.

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Government: Annual Reports of the Attorney General and Specialized Prosecutorial Unit.

Reports, books, articles

CEIDAS seminar publications on line ([www.CEIDAS.org](http://www.CEIDAS.org))

Books on trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation in Tapachula, Chiapas and Mexico City

Books on situation in Tlaxcala

Books on child pornography in Cancun, Quintana Roo

De Paul University [onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupid?key=olbp43098](http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupid?key=olbp43098)

Global Rights, Sin Fronteras, et al. Report to OAS

ABA Human Trafficking Assessment Tool: analysis of implementation of the UN Anti-Trafficking Protocol. [http://www.abanet.org/rol/publications/mexico\\_2009\\_htat\\_en.pdf](http://www.abanet.org/rol/publications/mexico_2009_htat_en.pdf)

National Human Rights Commission ([www.cndh.org.mx](http://www.cndh.org.mx))