

National Outreach Survey Methodology

Longer Methodology Overview

Objectives of the National Outreach Survey

Research findings around the globe continue to confirm that there is a lack of open-source, comprehensive empirical data on human trafficking. To address the significant gaps of existing knowledge on human trafficking, UAS created the National Outreach Survey (NOS) with the aim to collect and disseminate comprehensive data on all types of human trafficking. The NOS will produce open source data from more than 23 anti-trafficking stakeholder groups for the benefit of research, programming, evaluation, and other needs of the anti-human trafficking community.

The survey, to be held every two years to help measure ongoing benchmarks, will identify and document unresolved challenges on the frontlines, gaps that may exist in training and services, effective and ineffective efforts and initiatives, and strengths and weaknesses across the anti-trafficking movement. As such, the survey will provide comprehensive, evidence-based, actionable data from each stakeholder group that will reduce sensationalism, help unify and positively impact the entire anti-trafficking movement, and strengthen efforts to fight sex and labor trafficking exploitation. Ultimately, the data will support efforts to provide more resources to survivors of sex and labor trafficking and to those who work on their behalf. Advocacy efforts will be undertaken to ensure the recommendations from the study reaches the stakeholders in position of power and authority to change practice, policies, and legislation. Although the first NOS will primarily focus on data collection within the United States, there will be global participation, even as we continue to build our global platform in preparation for NOS2.

The National Outreach Survey originally began as a comprehensive study in the United States but quickly included stakeholders across the globe. Since the NOS name was established and identified as our data collection platform, we maintained this name and welcome nations across the globe. So, the "National" now represents any nation that has participation in the NOS, even though our headquarters are in the United States.

Unique features

The NOS will become the largest comprehensive empirical frontline data collection in the anti-trafficking space in the United States and across the globe. We are solely focused on collecting frontline data and making that data available to the public-at-large. Our team is composed of stakeholders who have decades of expertise in this field, bringing our own experiences and knowledge of existing challenges. We are committed to a survivor-focused approach as the centerpiece of all development and ensuring that all stakeholder groups are properly represented on the NOS. To that end, UAS has collaborated with more than 50 experts across 22 countries, and with more than 40 Survivor Leaders of sex and labor trafficking who provided their trauma-informed expertise. UAS has bipartisan congressional support among more than 25 congressional members. Applying the NOS can yield the frontline data needed to help bridge the gap to federal, state, local, and private industry stakeholders.

Pilot

UAS held two pilot studies to confirm mission viability, document challenges across multiple stakeholder groups, and verify the willingness for stakeholders to complete a comprehensive, long form survey. Our 2016 NOS Pilot Study included participants from 47 U.S. states and represented 70 countries. Our 2018 Lingering Medical Symptoms Pilot Study, intended to determine a list of lingering medical ailments from survivors to include on the NOS, was conducted among a small sample of 27 sex trafficking survivors in 15 U.S. states. Both pilot studies confirmed the feasibility of our work and our mission.

Participants

We anticipate thousands of participants in the NOS. UAS worked with subject matter experts to identify the relevant stakeholder groups. Participants will include members of more than 23 stakeholder groups, representing three broad groups of individuals. The first group includes survivors of sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and

individuals who are vulnerable to human trafficking. The second group includes members of frontline anti-trafficking stakeholder groups that combat human trafficking and provide direct and indirect services to trafficking survivors. The third group includes individuals from the general public who may be exposed to signs of trafficking.

Participating stakeholder groups include: anti-trafficking advocates; attorneys and prosecutors; business owners; college students; concerned citizens; educators; former child soldiers; former foster youth; government employees; healthcare professionals; hospitality workers; human trafficking survivors; judges; law enforcement; the media; Native American and Indigenous people; parents; philanthropists; researchers; service providers; shelters and survivor housing; social workers; survivors of other types of abuse; transportation (air and ground). The final stakeholder groups may be modified prior to the launch of the NOS.

Recruitment procedures

UAS has built an extensive network of partners to ensure each population from the 23 stakeholder groups is invited to participate in the NOS. We created Oversight Agencies among different stakeholder groups - entities that have a larger database of any given population that will be queried on the NOS, and that have agreed to distribute a custom NOS link to their database. We will send invitation emails to additional existing anti-trafficking databases. We will send out a global mailing to leaders of countries identified on the annual U.S. State Department TIP Report and to U.S. embassy officials in those countries. We anticipate sending over 3,000 mailings, including to every U.S. congressional member, governor, lieutenant governor and key influencers.

To recruit participants from the general public, our marketing plan includes paying Qualtrics for 25,000 third-party participants to complete our public opinion questions. We will also engage in extensive social media marketing to reach thousands more. We will post a link to the NOS on the www.unitedagainstsavery.org website for participants to access. Furthermore, we will utilize snowball sampling that allows respondents to share the NOS link with other individuals. Remuneration may be provided for survivor participants. We are considering the benefits of compensating survivors for their time to complete the NOS, with the unintended bias it may create by not compensating all stakeholder groups. Further discussions with our Survivor Leader Advisory team and our Research Team will help us make this determination for remuneration.

Recruitment Limitations

We recognize several limitations to our recruitment procedures. First, given the existing research that suggests weak participation in surveys by labor trafficking survivors, we anticipate fewer participants from this population. To address this, we will collaborate with service providers that work with this population to encourage greater participation. Second, because recruitment will largely take place via the Internet, individuals without Internet access will likely not be reached. Third, although we have developed a paper standardized survey that is not Internet-based, it will not include as much branching logic as the Internet-based version, which means we will not be able to collect as much data from the paper surveys. Lastly, despite our extensive marketing campaign to reach as many stakeholders as possible, our marketing efforts will inevitably be limited, in part because this will be the first NOS. That means we will not reach all members of relevant stakeholder groups; however, we will continue to discuss the best marketing options with key influencers in all stakeholder groups to expand our rate of participation in the NOS1 launch and future data collection efforts of the NOS2 and beyond.

Methods

The NOS is a questionnaire survey with both closed and open-ended questions. Given that the study will be repeated every two years, it is also a benchmarking survey that will provide limited longitudinal data. The sampling procedure utilizes non-random purposive sampling, involving the deliberate recruitment and inclusion of participants, due to the characteristics they possess, given our targeting of individuals from 23 stakeholder groups, each with distinctive characteristics. With the use of non-random purposive sampling, we will not be able to make statistical generalizations. We do face some additional limitations with our methodology in terms of validity, reliability, and generalizability, since we do not have an accurate sampling frame across every stakeholder group; a difficulty inherent to trafficking research, given that it includes “hidden” populations that are difficult to locate and recruit for participation. To address the lack of sampling frame, we will utilize snowball sampling – a non-

random technique in which participants help recruit additional participants - alongside purposive sampling techniques. One of the strengths of the survey is that it will include a large sample of participants to help reduce difficulties with across-group and within-group analyses. We will utilize extensive skip logic branching on the survey instrument. This will branch respondents to a different survey flow, based upon previous answers, and allow respondents to be asked custom survey questions tailored to the stakeholder group(s) they identify as. This will help increase internal validity and reliability.

Efforts are underway to identify a proper method of collecting limited longitudinal data on the NOS while obtaining limited identifiers. Comprehensive longitudinal data collection in each stakeholder group provides a unique opportunity to track certain data over time. For example, tracking data collection methods, accountability, funding needs, and services provided by nonprofits and social workers would help measure the response capabilities in each U.S. state and in other countries. Likewise, tracking data from a certain sub-set of survivors over time would support positive progress for their physical, mental, and emotional health and aspirations for personal growth in life. Similar longitudinal datapoints would be defined in each stakeholder group for collection in biennial NOS launches.

Instrument

UAS worked with over 50 global subject matter experts who contributed to the development of survey questions. We utilized interview and non-interview sources to create survey questions tailored for each stakeholder group. Non-interview sources include existing research, news articles, and social media posts. UAS leadership spent a significant amount of time “listening” to the frontline challenges experienced by each of the participating experts and then worked with our research team to draft custom survey questions for each stakeholder group, based upon those interviews. The NOS will undergo several reviews: an expert review; a survivor review among sex and labor trafficking Survivor Leaders; and an Internal Review Board (IRB) review. All NOS soft launches and the official NOS launch will receive IRB approval to conduct research with human subjects.

We will use the Qualtrics survey platform for our official launch of the NOS and will use another online survey platform for smaller soft launches. With the NOS, participants will be queried during a similar time period. The NOS is a survey instrument with online and paper versions and consisting of closed and open-ended questions for 23 stakeholder groups with custom industry-specific questions. The online version uses an automated process with skip logic branching to determine the remaining questions that will be asked to each respondent. Participants with limited Internet access will be able to download a standardized survey instrument which will not include the full range of custom questions that appear in the online version, except in cases where participants are from pre-determined stakeholder groups.

All forms of human trafficking will be represented on the NOS, including more than 800 survey questions and hundreds of topics. Each stakeholder group will be asked a smaller number of custom survey questions on the instrument. Most questions will be asked to the global audience, providing comparable data across 50 U.S. states and participating nations. The survey will also collect empirical data from sex and labor trafficking survivors of all ages, genders, and races. There are custom survey questions for various sub-groups of human trafficking survivors including types of trafficking, gender and sexual identities, and age. The comprehensive survey is expected to between 30 minutes and over one hour to complete, depending on the stakeholder group with which the participant identifies and the corresponding customized set of questions. The NOS will ask minimal identifying questions; however, there will be an opportunity for each respondent to provide a few identifiers that will help us to collect longitudinal data in each NOS.

One of the questions will ask participants to share their email address which will be used to invite them to participate in the NOS every two years. Ongoing participation by select participants will allow us to track data over time and measure benchmarks, providing limited longitudinal data.

Data analysis

UAS will anonymize the data and then collaborate with dozens of academics, practitioners, and subject matter experts to analyze the data and write reports. The quantitative and qualitative data collected will be analyzed by those contributors. UAS will form an Appropriations Committee to analyze the NOS financial data along with other financial datasets to decipher a more accurate cost to combat all forms of human trafficking from the frontlines. We will use data visualization tools to provide another level of data analytics with creative and insightful dashboards.

Dissemination of findings

Dissemination of the NOS findings will take several forms. Every U.S. state will receive the first-ever custom *Governor State Report on Human Trafficking* which includes an overview of the findings from the NOS, based upon state-level data collected from each stakeholder group, a total of 50 such reports. This report will be available to congressional members, governors, lieutenant governors and constituents in each state. We will also disseminate a *National Governor State Report on Human Trafficking*, providing an overview of NOS findings in the U.S. at a national level. In addition, we will provide a *Global Report on Human Trafficking*, which will summarize findings for each participating country and global trends based upon those findings. Our *Appropriations Report* will provide a detailed review of the frontline costs. We will provide our *National Governor State Report* and *Appropriations Report* to members of congress who express interest in sponsoring a new anti-trafficking bill.

So that the NOS data and findings become available to the general public, we will launch an online open-source database to allow the public to utilize the NOS data. The database will include a simplistic data visualization dashboard, a search engine of NOS data points, as well as login capacity for researchers to further analyze and disseminate the NOS data. We may merge our dataset into existing open-source platforms or build our own platform to host the NOS database.

Data Protection/Compliance

UAS is committed to meeting or exceeding the data protection standards of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

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www.UnitedAgainstSlavery.org