

A FILM BY SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL

CHOSEN

GANG EDITION

Gang Sex Trafficking Fact Sheet

- The majority of youth join gangs between 13 and 15 years old.
- Gangs are involved in human smuggling, human trafficking or prostitution-related activity in at least 35 states.
- Gangs consider human trafficking a low-risk, high-profit form of revenue for the gang.
- Gang trafficking differs from pimp-controlled trafficking in that the controller is not just a single pimp but the entire gang “family” consisting of brothers, sisters, cousins, and elders.
- Gangs commit most of their crimes in the territory run by their crew or set and typically prostitute their victims to trusted buyers, using intimidation and their reputation for violence to control their criminal enterprise.
- Girls involved with a gang may see themselves as gang members and view the act of prostitution as a “chore” they perform to support the “family.” But they will never achieve any status or hierarchy within the gang and are simply viewed as property by male gang members.
- Each gang, set or crew has its own colors, signs, symbols and terminology specific to that gang.
- Loyalty to the gang family will always come before loyalty to the biological family. Gang members are willing to sacrifice the well-being of their biological family if it benefits the gang.
- Victims can come from any socio-economic background and are commonly seeking an identity, protection and family structure. They are attracted by the gang lifestyle and the gang’s power in the community. Sometimes they are encouraged to join the gang because a biological family member is already gang-involved.
- Gangs target youth who have few friends, weak family connections, and a desire to belong.
- Gangs use drugs, alcohol and their reputation for violence to control victims.
- Girls involved in gangs may be used to carry concealed weapons or drugs for trafficking narcotics; as bait for rival gang members; and as sex toys for fellow gang members.
- In a 2010 national survey, 45% of high school students and 35% of middle school students said there were gangs—or students who considered themselves to be part of a gang—in their school.
- Girls were more likely than boys to agree that “my gang is like family to me.” Gang girls were also more likely than gang boys to report that they were lonely in school and with friends, and that they felt isolated from their families.
- Girls in gangs have significantly lower self-esteem than girls who are not in gangs.
- Girls in gangs have serious histories of sexual and physical abuse. In one study, researchers found that 62% of the girl gang members had been sexually abused or assaulted in their lifetime; three-fourths of the girls (and more than half of the boys) reported suffering lifetime physical abuse.