

AUGUST 2026

THE INVISIBLE MOVEMENT SERIES NEWSLETTER

PURPOSE

A Year-Long Storytelling & Dialogue Series on the Human Trafficking Ecosystem

This initiative is a year-long, mindful storytelling and dialogue series designed to illuminate the full human trafficking ecosystem from its historical roots to the modern systems that enable it, and to advance collectively and responsibly for prevention, healing, and action.

Following the Money Economics, Demand, and Profit Structures

The Financial and Power Infrastructure in Human Trafficking

When considering human trafficking from an operational point of view, it generally takes place within broader systems. These systems involve not only criminal activity but also financial and power relationships that enable the crime. The environment they create can either facilitate or hinder exploitation. People who control these forces are in a special position when it comes to eliminating human trafficking permanently.

Power involves more than exercising control over a victim; it also means shaping the environment. People in positions of power can influence institutional and economic systems. Governments can use their power through laws, policies, and enforcement choices. Businesses can control markets and labor. Organized criminal groups can exert control over illegal activities. The main point is that power can shape the conditions surrounding a population.

Systemic factors strongly influence vulnerability because people are more susceptible to exploitation when nearby institutions do not offer real choices or sufficient protection. Political instability also causes people to feel insecure. Economic exclusion reduces opportunities, and poor governance makes it difficult to access



SERIES PRIORITIES

- Raise Awareness
- Create a Community of Practice
- Expand the Narrative to Include Demand Side
- Elevate Dignity & Compassion
- Create Partnerships & Sponsorships
- Collaborate Resources and Priorities



OTHER PRIORITIES

- Improve Social Media Presence
- Shift How We See, Relate, and Respond

assistance. For these reasons, vulnerability is not something that concerns only individuals; rather, it is shaped by how a society distributes security and opportunities.

“Institutional power can either decrease or increase these vulnerabilities; when institutions are strong, they can safeguard and regulate people who take advantage of others, but when they are weak, they create opportunities that make it easier for traffickers to exploit victims. The mere existence of laws does not guarantee protection, particularly when the system is fundamentally weakened. Institutions must not only have the ability to enforce laws but also the willingness to do so; when enforcement is weak, trafficking offenders can act with greater confidence that their activities will not be detected or punished.

Power can also prevent investigations, since political connections can make it harder to carry out an investigation. Corruption can reduce accountability, and institutional protection can lower the risks of getting involved in illegal activities. It is not essential for institutions to openly support trafficking if they are to obtain benefits from it. Trafficking can thrive when existing systems make it less likely that people will be thoroughly investigated or face repercussions.

Informal power is just as significant. Criminal organizations usually determine who can take part in underground markets and who is allowed to do so. They provide protection and opportunities that individuals could not obtain on their own. Thus, criminal groups function as informal governments in illegal markets, with their power stemming from setting the rules for others.

Formal and informal power tend to overlap because criminals can participate in legal businesses or form links with those who have influence within organizations. The more such connections develop, the more the boundary between legal and illegal activities becomes unclear. Business success can also lead to greater political or social influence. Groups involved in trafficking can use the money from their illegal activities to strengthen their position within legitimate systems.

Finance forms the foundation that enables this larger system to function. The financial aspect of trafficking involves not only making money from victims but also includes the ways in which money is transferred, borrowed, concealed, invested, and reused. It is precisely because of these methods that trafficking is able to link with the wider economy.

Money can move through formal financial systems. Businesses such as banks enable money to pass via the usual economic routes. Once trafficked money enters these systems, it becomes difficult to distinguish it from legitimate transactions. Although financial institutions may not intend to assist in trafficking, their services can still be made use of by those taking part in illegal markets.



OPPORTUNITIES

- Write Articles
- Arrange Webinars
- Create a Movement
- Expand Awareness through Social Media
- Outreach and Ambassadors

HEALING

- Visit our website at <https://www.invisiblemovement.org>
- Find the Healing Hub
- Money Tree
- Human Pulse
- Healing Hub
- Healing Art
- Healing Songs
- Healing Sounds
- Healing Temple
- Healing Words
- Stillness Sanctuary



There is also the possibility of using informal financial systems. Money may be transferred through personal lending or informal networks based on trust and relationships. Such arrangements can cross borders and leave fewer records. Informal finance can connect people who do not use regular banks.

Formal and informal finance tend to blend together. Money may move from one system to the other, with informally sent funds later appearing in a business or a bank. Illegal money can also be mixed with legitimate income. Because of these connections, money involved in trafficking can move between the underground world and the regular economy.

Money laundering enables this transition. It goes beyond simply concealing illegal profits. It lets illegally obtained money enter legitimate markets. Once the link between the money and the crime is less obvious, such funds can finance more business. In this way, criminal money can move through ordinary markets, making its origin harder to trace.

The financial system also allows trafficking to take part in the global economy since money can cross borders even when the crime takes place in a single location. Financial networks enable people in different places to exchange value and continue their activities. As a result, trafficking acquires a scope that could not be achieved through local cash transactions alone.

This is especially true when power and finance interact. Power systems determine where trafficking can occur and how much resistance it will face. Financial systems enable money to move and allow trafficking to enter larger markets. Political protection can reduce risks, and financial tools can enhance operations. In this way, the two systems help trafficking develop from a small-scale crime into larger operations and generate resources. These resources can then be incorporated into normal economic activity. Economic resources can in turn increase influence, and greater influence can then lead to further protection or access to markets. The outcome is a process in which economic success strengthens the power systems that make exploitation easier to sustain.

More broadly, power can drive efforts to combat trafficking. Governments can drive change at the macro scale where trafficking operates. Businesses can reduce the opportunities for exploitation. Civil society organizations can strengthen protection and oversight. It is important that all of our institutions work together and exercise their power to help disrupt and dismantle the instrumentalities of trafficking itself. If these systems support each other, exploitation can become more lasting, interconnected, and hard to disrupt.

LOOKING UPSTREAM

At the Invisible Movement, we believe that preventing trafficking requires more than responding to exploitation after it occurs. It requires understanding the conditions that increase vulnerability long before harm becomes visible. Our work focuses on helping individuals, communities, organizations, and systems better understand the social, economic, environmental, and psychological factors that contribute to vulnerability, dependency, exploitation, and resilience.

Through research, education, community dialogue, survivor-informed resources, and practical tools, the Invisible Movement seeks to shift the conversation from reactive intervention toward proactive prevention. One of the tools currently being explored is the Drift Assessment.

The Drift Assessment was developed to help individuals reflect on patterns that may influence decision-making, relationships, opportunities, resilience, and personal well-being. It is not intended as a diagnostic tool. Rather, it is designed to increase self-awareness and encourage reflection on the factors that may either strengthen resilience or increase vulnerability during difficult periods of life.

While vulnerability is shaped by many external factors, including economic conditions, housing stability, community support, safety, education, and opportunity, our internal beliefs, perceptions, and responses to adversity also play an important role in how we navigate challenges.

The Invisible Movement explores both sides of this equation.

Visit us at:

<https://www.invisiblemovement.org>

There you will find:

- Educational resources and articles
- The Healing Hub, a growing collection of wellness, recovery, resilience, and community resources
- The Healing Temple, a reflective space designed to encourage healing, renewal, and personal growth
- Community conversations and webinars
- The FREE Drift Assessment (Know Your Drift)
- Opportunities to learn, volunteer, collaborate, and support the movement
- Sponsorship opportunities to seed survivor-led enterprises are available

Together, we can create communities where vulnerability is reduced, resilience is strengthened, and exploitation has fewer places to thrive.

Join us for the SEPTEMBER Webinar | SEPTEMBER 23 @ 2 PM PST

FREE ZOOM Webinar: <https://calstatela.zoom.us/j/83168591613>

Panelists:



Derek Marsh, Associate Director, Global Center for Women and Justice, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice. Derek retired from the Westminister Police Department, CA, in 2013, as Deputy Chief after more than 26 years of service. His law enforcement career was spent at WPD. During that time, he held various assignments. As an officer, he worked in patrol, DARE, hostage negotiations and our business Mall. While a sergeant, he worked patrol and as the Chief's Adjunct (during which he handled administrative, technology, and miscellaneous assignments). As a lieutenant/commander, he worked in patrol, detective, and administration. As an acting deputy chief, he was responsible for supervising WPD operations, investigations, and administrative activities. After retirement, Derek returned as an interim deputy chief and continued his duties for an additional ten months. He then worked with a consulting firm and supervised the City's technology systems for a little more than a year.



Dora Ramirez is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with 8 years of experience supporting individuals through trauma, abuse, depression, anxiety, ADHD, immigration-related stress, and the aftermath of crime. I provide a compassionate, nonjudgmental space where you can safely explore your thoughts and emotions. My approach is rooted in empathy and trust. She works with adults and teens, bringing extensive experience in treating depression, anxiety, and trauma. She also offers specialized support for survivors of abuse, victims of crime, and individuals navigating immigration-related stressors. Her goal is to create a safe, empowering space where clients feel seen and supported.

Featured Resource: The Healing Hub

Understanding exploitation is important, but awareness alone is not enough. Healing is equally important.

The Healing Hub was created as a growing collection of resources designed to support healing, resilience, self-discovery, and personal growth. Visitors can explore articles, wellness resources, mindfulness practices, healing art, inspirational stories, community connections, and tools that support recovery and well-being.

Whether you are a survivor, family member, professional, student, advocate, or simply someone seeking greater peace and resilience, the Healing Hub offers a space to learn, reflect, and grow.

Visit: www.invisiblemovement.org

OUR UPCOMING **SEPTEMBER 2026** WEBINAR TOPIC:

ACT III — CHOOSING TO ACT, DISRUPT AND RESPOND (Months 9–12):

From awareness to responsibility and regeneration.

Detection and Disruption.

What Can YOU Do

You do not need a title or a degree to make a difference, but you do need awareness and the willingness to act on it. With this first step, you can help by slowing down, asking questions, noticing patterns, and joining in on the conversations.

Every human trafficking system is made of people, and every victim is a person. The shift begins with someone deciding to see, understand, and act. Become aware and find the courage to act.

The Invitation

The Invisible Movement is building a community of practices across industries: people committed to looking more closely at the systems around them.

Slow down —————> Notice patterns —————> Ask questions —————> Speak up.

This series is not just information; it is a **community of practice**. Over the next year, we will move together through three acts:

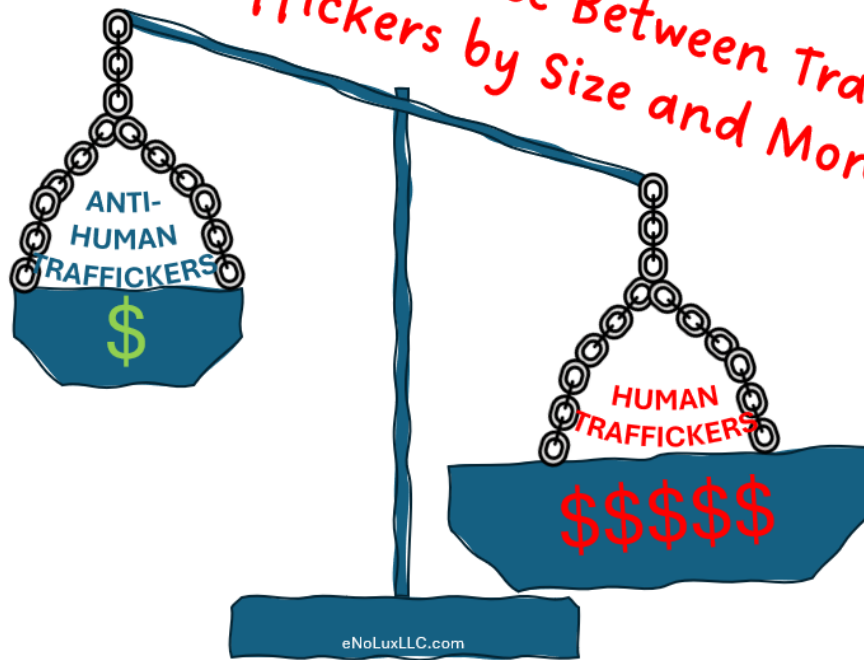
- **Act I:** Seeing the Whole
- **Act II:** Understanding the Machinery
- **Act III:** Choosing to Act

Each month builds on the last. Each conversation deepens awareness. Each story brings us closer to clarity. Each action shifts the system.

Human trafficking thrives in what remains unseen. Awareness is the light that exposes the path.

Begin by seeing the whole system and your place in it. Take the pledge to join the Invisible Movement Community of Practice today.

An Imbalance of Justice Between Traffickers and Anti-Traffickers by Size and Money



The Invisible Movement Pledge

Seeing Clearly. Acting Intentionally. Protecting Human Dignity

I recognize that human trafficking does not always appear as force. It often begins with influence, vulnerability, and unmet human needs.

I commit to:

- **See clearly** – understand how grooming, manipulation, and coercion unfold
- **Stay aware** – of both my environment and my internal patterns
- **Speak openly** – to normalize informed conversations
- **Support others** – by creating spaces of trust and dignity
- **Act early** – when something feels off, even if it doesn't look like harm

I understand that prevention is not just about reacting to danger—it is about recognizing patterns before harm takes hold. I choose awareness. I choose responsibility. I choose action. I am part of the Invisible Movement.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



**INVISI
MOVE**

CONTRIBUTORS



Chang, Paul is a part-time Lecturer at the Global Center for Women and Justice and at California State University, Los Angeles. Paul received his BA and MPA from California State University Los Angeles and is currently pursuing his Ph.D. at Claremont Graduate University, where his scholarship focuses on human trafficking.

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Ley, Aloha is a seasoned transportation leader with over 30 years of service at the U.S. Department of Transportation, where she held key roles including Chief of Staff, Senior Advisor, and Director across the FAA, FTA, and the Office of the Secretary. She brings expertise in aviation and transit safety, safety management systems, community development, anti-human trafficking initiatives, strategic planning, grants management, and public engagement. Aloha also integrates mindfulness and modern leadership into her work as a certified yoga teacher and practitioner of manifestation and mindfulness mastery. She has social media mastery and is currently pursuing AI mastery. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Maryland, and is a graduate of the Federal Executive Institute. Her career reflects a commitment to innovation, resilience, and meaningful community impact.

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McKeithen, Isaac is the Regional Leader of the EPIK Project in Southern California, where he leads initiatives to combat sex trafficking by reducing demand. A U.S. Army veteran with service in Germany and Kansas, Isaac also spent over 25 years as a martial arts instructor in Central Florida before moving to California in 2015 to work with the Department of Transportation. His anti-trafficking work began at Saddleback Church, where he joined the Human Trafficking Ministry's street outreach in Santa Ana. He later served as Orange County Coordinator for Men Standing Against Trafficking (MSAT) and worked with Magdalena Hope's outreach in Anaheim. In 2019, he launched the Southern California chapter of the EPIK Project, which has been actively addressing demand since January 2020.

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Yagci Sokat, Dr. Kezban is an award-winning Associate Professor of Business Analytics at San José State University and a Research Associate at the Mineta Transportation Institute. Her research uses decision analytics and management science to address human trafficking and other societal challenges. Her work has informed policy and practice in the United States and globally, including her current SB-1-funded research examining transportation system vulnerabilities and human trafficking during major events. She has served on the U.S. Department of Transportation's Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking and has received a U.S. Senate Citation, the 2024 AACSB Influential Leader Award, and recognition from the U.S. DOT and IBM. She holds a Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering and Management Sciences from Northwestern University and multiple degrees from Georgia Institute of Technology.

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SUPPORTERS



Founded in 1991, the **Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI)**, is a university transportation center located within the [Lucas College and Graduate School of Business](#) at [San José State University](#) (SJSU). MTI increases mobility for all by improving the safety, efficiency, accessibility, and convenience of our nation's transportation system. Through research, education, workforce development, and technology transfer, MTI helps create a connected world.

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for
Entrepreneurship
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Center serves Orange County's broader ecosystem by fostering collaboration between students, industry leaders, and local startups, helping drive new business creation and strengthening the region's entrepreneurial community.

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