



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023: Volume 5, Issue 1



**GLOBAL
ASSOCIATION
OF HUMAN
TRAFFICKING
SCHOLARS**

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Introduction Letter from Jennifer Middleton



Dear GAHTS Members,

The anti-trafficking community is no stranger to trauma. The impacts of trauma and violence associated with human trafficking are well documented, calling for trauma-informed programming, trauma-responsive organizations, and trauma-resilient communities. Trauma is a physical and emotional response to individual or on-going threatening events (American Psychological Association, 2016; Loomis et al., 2019) or experiences of racism, poverty, and marginalization (American Psychological Association, 2016; National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2015). Organizations that serve clients recovering from traumatic experiences, such as human trafficking, are becoming increasingly aware of trauma's complex and structural dynamics, making trauma-responsive approaches an organizational imperative (Hummer et al., 2010). Trauma-responsive approaches address complex trauma experienced at every level of an organization and the community as a whole, and aid the organization in providing care to clients (Hummer et al., 2010). Importantly, equity must be at the center of all trauma-informed change work. Special attention must be paid to an organization's commitment to anti-oppressive practices, including how individuals who represent underserved communities (e.g., Black, Indigenous and other People of Color; BIPOC) experience the organization's culture and climate. This perspective is critically important in informing trauma-informed organizational culture change efforts in order to enhance our ability to effectively promote healing and recovery for individuals with lived experiences of human trafficking and exploitation. It is imperative that trauma-informed organizational change interventions account for the structural determinants of organizational health, namely structural and institutional violence.

Structural violence refers to a form of violence wherein policies, social structures, or social institutions harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs (Galtung, 1969). Examples of structural violence can include but are not limited to ableism, classism, elitism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, nationalism, racism, and sexism. Embedding and embodying anti-oppressive organizational practices to combat the effects of institutional violence remains a challenge for many organizations. Yet, the hard work of exposing an institution's structural biases (e.g., internalized racism) is critical to our efforts to create inclusive, trauma-responsive organizations.

If organizational culture change efforts are to be successful, they must respond to structural violence in the systems and communities that our organizations operate within. Without this purposeful interruption, organizations will unknowingly perpetuate structural violence and inequity against those they are trying to serve. Dr. Sandra Bloom (2002) describes a parallel process as when two or more systems are closely connected, they begin to take on characteristics of each other, often becoming "trauma organized" in the way they structure and organize around chronic and





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Introduction Letter, Continued

prolonged stressors. Building on Galtung's (1969) definition of structural violence, public systems such as the national child welfare system are rooted in structural violence, which can manifest in racially disproportionate outcomes (Dettlaff & Boyd, 2020; Krase, 2015). In a similar manner, the organizations that serve the public system may perpetuate similar outcomes. By the same token, the public mental health system that has used violence as a form of control and treatment (e.g., institutionalization, seclusion/restraint, overmedication) has partnerships with organizations that perpetuate these destructive patterns and contribute to institutional violence (Rossiter & Rinaldi, 2018). In a more benign example, when systems are in a constant state of change or "reform" and resources are unreliable, organizations closely aligned with that system reflect that chaos and instability, often resulting in competitive and/or siloed organizational cultures (Bloom & Farragher, 2013). Trauma-resilient, mezzo-level interventions are designed to disrupt the destructive parallel processes between systems of power and the organizations whose purpose is to serve vulnerable individuals.

The GAHTS membership network has a unique opportunity to take a global, leadership role in helping anti-trafficking programs and organizations prepare the soil for courageous conversations that will challenge the structures that are violent and move toward disruption of the system as a whole. GAHTS can provide the anti-trafficking field with evidence-supported approaches to help anti-trafficking organizations to embed language and develop organizational neural networks built upon trust, safety, and restorative practices. If these anti-oppressive neural networks are not developed, "diversity, equity, and inclusion" programming becomes nothing more than an intellectual exercise. The same holds true for anti-trafficking research. The GAHTS Winter 2023 newsletter will feature a progress update regarding what GAHTS has accomplished in 2022, helpful resources for members, and a spotlight on Jarrett Davis's research, which speaks to the heart of disrupting structural violence.

- Jennifer Middleton, PhD, MSW, LCSW
Associate Professor & Director, University of Louisville Human Trafficking
Research Initiative
GAHTS Senior Research Scholar Member

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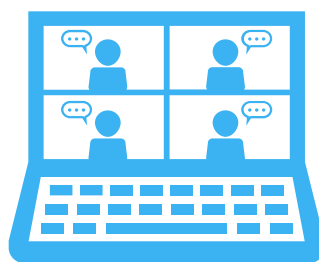
GAHTS 2022 Progress Report

2022 was a successful year for the Global Association of Human Trafficking Scholars. Below are some of the highlights:



Increased Membership to **480 MEMBERS!**

Continued expansion and engagement of diverse monthly live webinars



Created the Membership, Networking, and Translational Workgroups for Scholar Members to guide and grow the mission of GAHTS

Stay tuned for many more exciting developments to GAHTS coming in 2023!

Valuable Resources:

Members of GAHTS have access to free resources on our website including...

- Library of over 700 publications related to human trafficking.
- Calendar of upcoming webinars, events, and conferences.
- List of professional development resources ranging from helpful websites, tools, global networks, and on-demand webinars.
- COMING SOON...FREE online access to the Journal of Human Trafficking! Stay tuned for more information.

Find all of these resources on GAHTS website: <https://www.gahts.com/>





Spotlight on a Researcher:

Jarrett Davis, MA



I am a researcher and analyst specializing in human-centered and evidence-based research and programming for children and vulnerable persons who have experienced exploitation and other forms of violence. In my BA, I pursued Philosophy and Theology at a private Christian University. I served as a youth pastor at a Korean Holiness Church outside of Cleveland during this time. This period was complex and traumatic. I was gay, and the community that I found myself in had convinced me that I was sick and evil. Somehow, this did not prevent me from continuing my education at my University's sister institution in Manila, Philippines, which served local Asian missionaries and pastors. Studying intercultural communication, I became obsessed with ethnography and other forms of sociological research. My master's thesis looked at the function of social identities developed between high and low-income Filipinos within a "mission outreach church" in a squatter relocation community on the outskirts of Manila. After completing my MA, I met Glenn Miles (another GAHTS Scholar), who was guest lecturing in the PhD program at my institution. Glenn has been working in the Greater Mekong Subregion (Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam) to close essential gaps in child protection from trafficking and exploitation. As time passed, Glenn and I worked together to develop a research project on the needs of young males who traded sex in Siem Reap, Cambodia. At the time, boys and young men were not considered vulnerable to sexual forms of violence-- often being met with uncomfortable laughter at even the mention of the idea. Since 2012, Glenn and I have worked with up! International, where we have continued to develop this series of studies on the vulnerability of children and young people, including young males who trade sex, street-working children, and vulnerable trans and third-gender youth. In 2015, my work diversified as I began working with Alastair Hilton and first Step-Cambodia to develop new research on children who exhibit harmful sexual behaviors, exploring their vulnerabilities and unique experiences of violence. This further revealed how gender binaries (and their inherent assumptions) made young people considerably more vulnerable to violence. They were also more likely to be blamed for 'participating' in their exploitation. This precipitated further work with Terre des Hommes- Netherlands, ECPAT International, and APLE Cambodia, among others-- the learnings that form the foundation of my work and approach to research today. I believe that data needs to be accessible and easily understandable to enable authentic human-centered communication between the worlds of programming and policy. My work has developed across many post-colonial settings, often at the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality. These unique perspectives guide my work, placing the lived experiences of vulnerable people at the forefront of research outcomes, where they belong, and form the foundation of my research today. I now find myself in New York City, where I transitioned in 2019 with my (at the time) soon-to-be husband. After several years of consulting on research and programming for children in Asia, our work now takes another turn with the development of up! Collective, which pulls together the collective efforts of these and many other survivors, activists, and researchers committed to grassroots action.



Join GAHTS in our mission of responding to human trafficking by moving the knowledge base forward! Become a member today at <https://www.gahts.com/become-a-member>

