

## 6. Myths & Beliefs about Human Trafficking



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DE VIDAS  
COLOMBIA



Reflection #6

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Defenders of Life Network

# M yths & B eliefs

WITH REGARD TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Today we invite you to learn about the investigation that the Defenders of Life did with regard to the indigenous people living on the Amazon Frontier... Visit: [www.tratadepersonas.org](http://www.tratadepersonas.org)

This research revolved around **cultural practices with regard to human trafficking** and was undertaken with the tikuna, yagua and cocama tribes on the Brazil-Colombia-Peru border.

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## Reflection #6



### Orientation:

In our daily conversations, we reinforce ideas and beliefs that we view as normal and universal, but in reality they are not. We call these myths, imaginings or social representations. Below we list some of these myths. We invite you to discuss them with the members of your group and to decide what the underlying meanings of these phrases are.

- The poor are thieves and lazy.
- Women provoke the violence that is inflicted upon them.
- Women are prostitutes because they want to be so and they enjoy it.
  - The poor are abusive and want to have everything given to them.
    - Men do not cry.
    - Indigenous and African women are more sensual.
- Children lie about sexual abuse and therefore not everything they say should be believed.

WHAT ARE MYTHS OR IMAGINARY REPRESENTATIONS?

**Myths or beliefs are biased or incomplete perceptions of reality, which are constructed and reproduced in a social context and in the collective unconscious and end up being prejudices or subjective representations of social phenomena.**

### VISUALIZE (SEE)

This theme of human trafficking, which we have discussed over the last few months, is interwoven with myths and beliefs that must be clarified in order to understand the full meaning of this crime.

**Place in a bag the following myths and imaginings with regard to human trafficking. Each participant should be given a phrase, which is then analyzed and discussed in the group.**

**What is the true meaning of the phrase? Is it a myth or a reality?**



## Reflection #6



- Trafficking occurs when a person is taken away from his/her country.
- The only form of trafficking is sexual exploitation.
- Trafficking only affects the more vulnerable sectors of society.
- Only the victims of trafficking can denounce this crime.
- Trafficking is a phenomenon that only affects women.

- Trafficked persons do not escape because they do not want to.
- According to reported statistics, there are very few cases of trafficking.
- Women who are exploited know and accept that they will be prostitutes.
- Only white women are the victims of trafficking.

Attempt to respond to the following question:

### What is human trafficking?

## Understand (JUDGE)

Social beliefs express assumptions that are unquestioned, that we assume to be normal, that we repeat and consider universal and unchangeable.

Beliefs, on the other hand, arise in a specific social context and even though they appear to be part of our common understanding, they are not so and can be transformed by more real and objective ideas.

In recent years, the phenomenon of trafficking has been clarified and refined, thus overcoming certain myths and false representations of this reality. The purpose of these reflections is to help our volunteers understand this reality so that they can speak to others about this human tragedy and in the services that they provide, minimize its impact, because:

## ONE MORE HAND IS ONE LESS VICTIM

Trafficking is a crime that makes the human person an object over whom another human person (through deception or force) has total control. Trafficking has no ethnic, gender, age or social boundaries. It can occur both inside and outside one's homeland and takes on many different forms (illegal organ extraction, begging, utilization of minors to commit crimes, slave work, forced marriage, etc.).



## React (ACT)



We now want to demonstrate the manner in which a belief can be clarified and transformed. We invite the group to engage in the same exercise with regard to the myths of human trafficking discussed in the previous step. For example:

**Indigenous and African women are more sensual**

Indigenous and African people have historically been exploited and enslaved, and therefore, women have been raped and mistreated. The belief that these women are more sensual is a colonial and masochist understanding.

With the material that has been developed, make a poster and place it in a visible place so that such myths and beliefs might be transformed.

**CONGRATULATIONS FOR CONCLUDING THIS  
FIRST PART OF THE FORMATION PROCESS**

**We invite you to continue with your AIC companions to defend life and to eradicate from your local context all forms of human trafficking.**

