

Child Exploitation Situation Analysis in Cambodia anno 2023



Literature Study and Exploratory Research

Comissioned by Terre des Hommes
to John Vijghen, 26 May 2023
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This study on commercial exploitation and sexual abuse of children in Cambodia was commissioned by Terre des Hommes Netherlands in Cambodia. It consists of a robust literature review and an empirical field study in the national capital and 5 provincial cities (Pursat, Batambang, Popet, Siem Reap, Oddar Meanchey and Sihanoukville). The study was exploratory and therefore, while based on empirical data, has resulted in more questions than answers. As was expected, more and in-depth studies are needed.

Note about the Author

John Vijghen, born in 1945 in the Netherlands, got a bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Masters' degree in Cultural Anthropology. He worked as developmental professional for two decades in Cambodia and since 2011 as researcher and evaluator in the South-Asian region. His speciality is evaluation of child protection interventions and research on child exploitation and protection.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of Terre des Hommes Netherlands.

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Foreword

Terre des Hommes (TdH) Netherlands is committed to fighting child exploitation around the world. As part of our commitment to the right of all children, we believe that every child deserves a safe and enjoyable childhood. Every young person should feel empowered and every community we work with is engaged. Together with children, we fight to ensure that child rights are respected and implemented in full, leaving no one behind. We advocate with policy makers, Donors and decision makers to provide a safe, protective and enabling environment for children. We act as a catalyst for systemic change which allows countries to serve their children and young people better.

In order to strengthen our programs and policy influencing in Cambodia, we have recently completed this child exploitation analysis, a multi-faceted study which helps our collective understanding of the current situation. It is a broad ranging study covering a range of issues in its scope. From child exploitation, to child sexual exploitation, child labour, child trafficking and migration, this study pulls together rich insights into the lives of children who have been left behind. The diverse target groups for this study include street children, children in communities, children who migrated with their parents inside or outside the country, children who are working including those involved in the worst forms of child labour, children left behind while their parents migrated, children in prison and children in conflict with the law. Importantly it helps identify intervention points that can help address the root causes of these complex challenges and problems faced by children. It helps inform the strategic prioritisation and positioning of child exploitation in the policy space and national discourse in Cambodia.

There are critical actions identified for the Government of Cambodia to ensure there are adequate policies, regulations and law enforcement to keep children safe from both online and offline exploitation. This study has well identified the key steps which need to be taken on a priority basis by the relevant ministries in order to deliver on its responsibility to protect and support the safety and wellbeing of all children.

I hope this study serves as a compelling call for action; to all key players and stakeholders including internal NGOs, local partners, research institutes, United Nations organisations to rally behind the Cambodia national plan of action to end the exploitation of children. Most of all, it serves the Cambodian Government and its key decision makers to join hands and lead the country into a much better, safer and happier future for its children.

Ms. Bushra Zulfiqar
Regional Director, Asia
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In chronological and geographical order representatives and staff of NGOs and Government Agencies are thanked who we met in the cities:

Phnom Penh: COCD, UNICEF, WVI, Save the Children, LAC, Friends International, Winrock, CODO, APLE, CRC-C, Child Helpline, Chab Dai, YCC youth council

Pursat: COCD

Battambang: Don Bosco, CFI, KMR, BSO, Anti-Trafficking Police Unit, DoSAVY, CAD

Poipet: Damnoek Toek, LWB, Trafficking Police Unit

Siem Reap: Child Helpline, Kalyanmith, The REACH, LICADHO, Caritas Cambodia, DoSVY, Anti-Trafficking Police Unit

Oddor Meanchey: ADHOC, Anti-Human Trafficking office, Primary school

Sihanoukville: M'Lop Tapang, DoSVY, Anti-Human Trafficking Police

I thank the commissioning organisation Terre des Hommes Netherlands for the opportunity to conduct this study and for its assistance to get government support letters and access to NGO data bases.

Last but not least I want to thank my research team without whom this study could not have been done and completed:

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Acronyms

BTB	Battambang
CEFM	Child, Early, Forced Marriage
CL	Child Labour
CNCC	Cambodian National Council for Children
CSEA	Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CVACS	Cambodian Violence against Children Survey
DoEYS	Department of Education, Youth and Sport
DoSAVY	Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
LBT	Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender
MoSAVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth
NCCT	National Commission for Counter Trafficking
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
OCSE	Online Child Sexual Exploitation
OMC	Oddar Meanchey
PHN	Phnom Penh
PPT	Poipet
PST	Pursat
SECTT	Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism
SHV	Sihanoukville
SRP	Siem Reap
TdH NL	Terre des Homme Netherlands
TIP	Trafficking in People
UN	United Nations
US(A)	United States (of America)
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labour
WVI	World Vision International

2023 Cambodia Child Exploitation Situation Analysis Summary:

How TdH NL will use evidence to end child exploitation

Background

At the end of 2022, Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) decided to conduct an updated situation analysis of the evolution and state of child exploitation in Cambodia.

This initiative was taken in the context of our new Listen Up! 2023-2030 Strategy which puts an emphasis on our organisation becoming a catalyst for systemic change.

In addition, we wanted to collect evidence on the situation of children in Cambodia after the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in sudden drastic changes in the Cambodian society and economy. The research was implemented by a team of researchers with expertise on issues related to child protection in the context of Cambodia.

Research Scope

The Situation Analysis started with an extensive literature review of the recent available resources on various forms of exploitation in Cambodia, including Sexual Exploitation of Children (SEC) through Travel and Tourism and online, the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Child Trafficking and Migration.

Based on the review of close to a hundred documents published by governments (Cambodia, United States) and international and local civil society organisations working in the sector, priorities were set for investigation through primary data collection :

1. The situation of SEC in link with travel and tourism.

2. The forms of child exploitation related to unsafe migration and trafficking.

Regarding the geographical scope, it was decided to focus on the following hotspots where domestic and international migration is the most prevalent: Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, as well as 6 provinces in the North (Oddar Meanchey, Siem Reap), West (Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Pursat) and South (Sihanoukville) of the country.

Collected Data

Fieldwork was conducted in April and May 2023. Key informant interviews were conducted with 26 representatives of NGOs and UN agencies and 11 government and law enforcement officials. Informal interviews were conducted with 28 workers of the entertainment and travel industry and with 25 local community members, including street sellers, tuk tuk drivers and local leaders. In addition, 6 children and youth representatives engaged in peer group activities were consulted through a Focus Group Discussion.

Main Findings

The Situation Analysis highlights how the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences have had a complex impact on the situation of children. It also shows how certain forms of exploitation persist and urgently need to be addressed through sustainable and multi-stakeholder initiatives. It is important to note that findings are qualitative in

nature and represent the situation of children in the provinces where the fieldwork was implemented.

Findings related to Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism (SECTT)

1. In 2023, SECTT does not appear to be a systemic at scale issue in the visited provinces. Previous efforts to decrease this issue have been successful in reducing this phenomenon, and the effects of COVID-19 still result in a reduced flow of travellers who tend to travel as groups rather than as solo travellers.
2. Anticipating a gradual increase in tourism in the coming years, there are still important risks for children as the travel, tourism and entertainment industries remain unregulated and insufficiently monitored. Anonymous workers did report that children are still being exploited, even though it is at a limited scale.
3. The shift of child exploitation from offline to the online environment was confirmed by informants. Therefore it is more important than ever to prevent and respond to Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE).

Findings related to Child Trafficking and Migration

1. Migration of Cambodian workers towards Thailand has resumed quickly after the reopening of the border.
2. Children over 10 years old who are “Left behind” because their parents migrated for work are often left under the care of older family members e.g. grandmothers who are not able to adequately take care of them. Most children engage in work which does not generally qualify as Worst Forms of Child Labour, but affects their capacity to continue their education. In Oddar Meanchey, a northern province bordering Thailand, there is no NGO working to prevent dropouts and risks of exploitation that affect children.
3. Children under 10 years old usually travel with their parents. In the South (Sihanoukville), many poor migrant families live on abandoned construction sites, resulting in a variety of risks for children (health risks, being out of school, being exposed to offenders and traffickers).
4. Begging by children has reduced, but persists in

cities and slums.

Other forms of exploitation

Interestingly, the primary data collection has highlighted situations where children are at heightened risk of exploitation that urgently need to be addressed:

1. Children in conflict with the law are still being detained in adult prisons and suffering from abuse and exploitation as a result of their detention, despite the existing efforts to implement the Law on Juvenile Justice.
2. Children who are domestic migrants, whether they migrate alone or with their families, face high risks of exploitation for labour and sex. Poor migrant children often live and / or work in the street. Even though their number has reduced in the past decades, this group is particularly vulnerable.

Way Forward

The full Child Exploitation Situation Analysis report commissioned by TdH NL is now published and available to all stakeholders. We are proud of this achievement that will support our efforts to lead and contribute to initiatives that address forms of child exploitation. We will use these findings to build context-relevant quality programmes in 2023 and in the coming years. At the same time, we recognize that the findings are mostly qualitative and do not comprehensively reflect the situation of child exploitation in Cambodia.

We will take the following actions:

- 1. Contribute to the development of legislation, policies and guidelines in the travel, tourism and entertainment industries, so that children are protected from sexual exploitation at all times.**
- 2. Prevent child exploitation of Left behind children and migrant children through strengthening national and sub-national child protection policies and systems and developing the capacity of specialised NGOs and government agencies who provide services to children to be inclusive of the most vulnerable children.**
- 3. Disseminate findings on broader identified child protection issues within the sector, and partner with key NGO and government stakeholders to reduce the risks of child exploitation for children living and working in the street and children (potentially) in conflict with the law. We will do this by promoting a rights-based approach by mainstreaming a trauma-informed care approach.**

CHILDREN ARE THE FUTURE



Introduction

This research report, is based on an exploratory field study in cities in six provinces and the national capital, selected after a robust literature study. It aims to describe the current situation of children and their risks to become victimised by travellers and tourists, or to become a child labourer or left behind when their parents migrate for work. A secondary aim is to identify gaps in addressing existing child exploitation in the forms listed above in Cambodia, with a particular focus on identifying the ways in which these gaps can be closed. The goal of this exploratory study is to provide information for a policy brief with recommendations to inform the commissioning agency Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) for the development of new project interventions during its next strategy cycle.

1.1 Study Approach and Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to assess

and present the current state of exploitation of children in Cambodia. TdH NL defines child exploitation as 'an individual, group or organisation taking advantage of an imbalance of power to get a child to engage in activities that are detrimental to the child's wellbeing and development, and from which the alleged perpetrator(s) and/or third party(ies) gain some advantage.' In particular, the study focussed on child exploitation, child sexual exploitation, child labour, child trafficking, child migration and children left behind when their parents migrated.

The research included a literature review of relevant reports or other material published after 2015 and a field study to collect primary data on by TdH selected priority themes. These 'areas of investigation' were the themes Sexual Exploitation of Children (SEC) & Child Trafficking and Migration (CTM). Each theme included sub-themes,

like:

- SEC: Sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT)
- CTM: Children left behind, children migrating with their families or alone (for work)

TdH NL originally included Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE) and child labour abroad in the assessment as well, but in consultation with the Consultant a deep assessment into these sub-themes was dropped, for the first because other initiatives are currently underway while time for the research was tight; and for the second because the scope of the research is limited to within the country.

1.2 Relevant Issues

Child exploitation is a significant and ongoing problem in Cambodia, with children being subjected to a range of abuses including sexual exploitation, labour, trafficking, neglect and more. While there have been many efforts to address these issues, there are still significant gaps in the way that child exploitation in all its forms is being addressed in Cambodia.

The issue of Sexual Exploitation of Children, in particular in travel and tourism (SECTT) has been a major concern in Cambodia. A report by the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons found that Cambodian children were being exploited within the country and abroad. The report also noted that children with disabilities were particularly vulnerable to exploitation (USA 2021).

Child abuse is also a significant problem in Cambodia. A recent study found that a majority of children in Cambodia had experienced some form of

abuse, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

The study also found that children who had experienced abuse were more likely to engage in risky behaviours, such as substance abuse and unsafe sex (Child Rights Now 2019).

Child neglect is noted as a major issue in Cambodia, in particular for children left behind when their parent(s) migrated for work. A report by World Vision found that many children in Cambodia were not receiving adequate nutrition, healthcare, and education due to poverty and a lack of access to services. This can have long-term consequences for children's physical and mental health, as well as their overall development (WV 2021).

Child labour is an ongoing problem in Cambodia, including children working in worst forms of child labour (WFCL). A recent publication characterised the efforts made in Cambodia to eliminate WFCL as 'minimal advancement' (Bureau of International Labor Affairs of the US Department of Labor 2020). According to the most recent national survey results, in 2012 an estimated 430 thousand children were engaged in child labour and 236 thousand children in hazardous work representing 11% respectively 6% or together 17% of all working or economically active children considered child labourers in the country.¹

The ILO found that children were working in a variety of sectors, including agriculture, construction, and the informal economy. Many children were also working in hazardous conditions, such as handling pesticides and working with machinery (ILO 2015).

Table 1: Economically active children per category (* 1,000)

Category	male	Female	5-11 y	12-14 y	15-17 y	total	%
Working children	372	383	77.8	199	479	755	19.1
Child labourers (CL)	214	216	77.8	151	201	429	10.8
Children in hazardous work (CL)	117	120	4	31	201	236	6.0
Total children in country	2,025	1,931	1,947	988	1,022	3,957	16.8 CL

Source: Cambodian Child Labour Survey 2012 (no more recent national statistical data publicly available)

¹ Cited Cambodian Child Labour Survey 2012.

1.3 Efforts by Government and Civil Society Organisations

The Cambodian government has made efforts to address the issue of child exploitation and abuse. It has also established a national plan of action on the reduction of Child Labor and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2016 – 2025) to combat child labour and established a National Committee for Children to coordinate efforts to protect children's rights.

NGOs and international organizations, such as Terre des Hommes, Save the Children, World Vision, UNICEF, and many others have, besides the above listed themes, been working to combat child exploitation, including addressing child abuse, child labour and child trafficking in Cambodia. These efforts have included prevention, protection and recovery activities, education and vocational training to children at risk, as well as supporting families with financial and other forms of assistance.

Despite these efforts, child exploitation, abuse, labour, and neglect remain significant problems in Cambodia. It will require sustained and coordinated efforts by the government, NGOs, and international organizations to address the root causes and provide effective protection and support to vulnerable children



Cambodia Overview

Before presenting the research findings some demographic and other data about the country is included, using as the main source IOM's recent 'Snapshot report' (accessed March 2023). Of the country's 16 million people, one-fifth lives in urban areas and more than half is younger than 25 years. About one in seven people lives below the poverty line. Ninety percent of the population is Khmer, 5 percent is of Vietnamese origin but often living for generations in the country, and 5 percent is of other nationalities. Three out of four people are literate, males a bit more than females. Many people, especially from provinces along the borders or from urban areas, migrate to abroad for work. Thailand is the main country for labour migration and trafficking as well. Other destination countries are in order of prevalence of migration:

Malaysia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Taiwan (IOM 2018). Cambodia has about 5.8 million children or about 36% of the total population is under 18 years of age (Baury 2018 p.6).

The country is placed on Tier 3 of the USA's Watch List, which means that the government doesn't meet the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act's minimum standards, although still making efforts to meet those standards. The country is also the 9th ranking on the Global Slavery Index and 3rd ranking in South Asia. Cambodia is a source but gradually also a destination or transit country for trafficking, especially for women and children from Vietnam and China. Domestic trafficking occurs from rural to urban tourist areas, like Phnom Penh, Siem Reap or Sihanoukville, for the sex in-

dustry, construction and other manual labour, and abroad for domestic work, seafaring fishing and agricultural work (Davis 2014, Ecpat 2018).

The in March 2023 published UNICEF report **'Analysis of the Situation of Children and Adolescents in Cambodia 2023'** cited the Cambodia Socioeconomic Survey 2019/20 which found that 34.8% of the population were children and that almost 18% of families lived below the poverty line. On the topic of the Right to Protection the UNICEF report found that instead of the 16,579 children in residential care in 2025 there were 5,440 children in such care in 2021 (a reduction to 33%). The report notes that 'Despite the progress, many children in Cambodia are at risk. Loopholes in civil and criminal laws relating to child labour, trafficking, early marriage and statelessness still leave thousands of children vulnerable.' (UNICEF 2023).

“Despite the progress, many children in Cambodia are at risk. Loopholes in civil and criminal laws relating to child labour, trafficking, early marriage and statelessness still leave thousands of children vulnerable.”

(UNICEF 2023)

Literature Review

Before presenting the exploratory research, the findings of the literature study are presented, which informed the commissioning organisation to select the themes and sub-themes and informed the design of the field research.

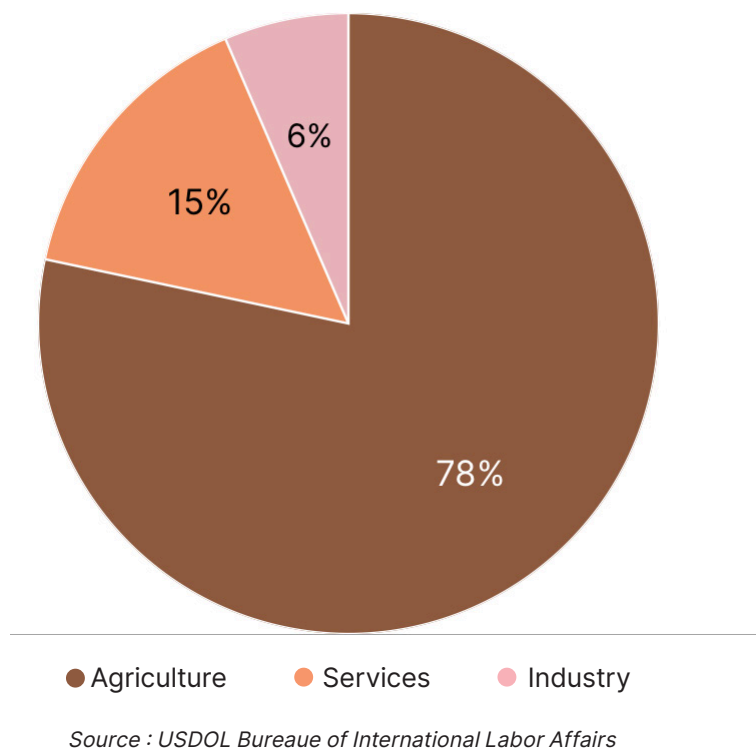
3.1 Child Labour (CL)

The main source for this section has been the recent USA Department of Labor's publication (USDOL 2020), but other publications have been cited as well. The Cambodian Socio-Economic Survey of 2017 provided the most recent public available statistics on the prevalence and sectoral distribution of working children in Cambodia. About 17% children between 5 and 17 years in Cambodia were counted to be involved in a form of work in 2017 while this was 23.6% in 2012; this represents a drop of 5% in 5 to 6 years. A percentage of 36.8 of these working children attended school (CSES 2017 p. 68 tables 19, 21 in NIS 2018). Most (78%) were working in the agricultural sector, 15% in the services sector and 6.5% in the industrial sector (USDOL Bureau of Int. Labor Affairs 2019 based on CSES 1016 Findings).

3.1.1 Working or economically active children

Prior to COVID-19, 17% of children aged between 5 and 17 years were involved in labour activities (at home or in informal or with falsified documents in formal employment), but this percentage now has likely risen dramatically due to the pandemic (Plan 2021 p. 29). A great majority of children work in the agricultural sector with most of them working on the farm or fields cultivated by their own family. These activities are not defined as child labour by the ILO, but might still be negative for a child if this work limits or prohibits going to school. Generally a child starts work at the age of 10 – 11 years, mainly helping out during harvest or other busy times. The ILO reports that exposure to extreme temperatures, high humidity or pesticides and using big cutting knives may be hazardous, resulting in skin infections reported by 65% of the surveyed children. In a majority of cases (67%), children continue going to primary school while working after school hours, during weekends or holidays but an important school drop-out point is the transition from primary to secondary school (ILO 2015; Vijghen 2021).

Working children by sector - Ages 5 to 14



Several of the interviewed experts pointed out that also under-aged children work in employed work at garment factories, after they dropped-out from school, pushed by their families to earn an income. They can do this with falsified identity papers. Other examples of children working is across the Thai border as seasonal agricultural labourer or at Cambodia's mountain areas to collect mushrooms or at rivers and lakes to catch fish.

3.1.2 Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL)

A more recent report mentioned that 261,000 people work in conditions of 'modern' slavery (Bendana 2019). Young boys are trafficked domestically and abroad for begging (Bryan 2018). A literature research study on Migration, Human Trafficking Prevention and Sexual Exploitation, commissioned by the Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (Senate Commission 8), listed that Cambodia is the third highest on the Slavery Index of Countries with 1.65% of the population or 256,800 people working in modern slavery conditions; over 40 per 100 persons are vulnerable to modern slavery². For example, an estimated 80% of child beggars in Thailand were identified

to originate from Cambodia (Ros 2017; Walk Free Foundation 2016)³.

Conditions of Working Children: Observations by Human Rights Watch, submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child Concerning Cambodia in 2015, were that some children were paid less than the minimum wage and that due to long hours work at factories this limited their education. However, December 2014 garment factories signed an agreement with the ILO-Better Factories Cambodia project to address child labour and to assure future workers under age 15 access to suitable vocational training⁴(HRW 2019 p.1). A study by the International Labor Organisation (ILO) found that among the 77% of working children in the agricultural sector some are working under WFCL conditions in the sugarcane agricultural sector. The study found that 82% of the surveyed children, especially boys, worked in commercial plantations in excess of permissible hours per Cambodian regulations and often using hazardous and dangerous tools.

²According to the Global Slavery Index in 2016, modern slavery refers to "situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, abuse of power or deception with treatment akin to a farm animal".

³Yong Charoen Chai, C: Young Lives for Sale, Bangkok Post, June 29, 2014.

⁴Y HRW, Cambodia - Work Faster or Get Out: Labor Rights Abuses in Cambodia's Garment Industry, 2015.

However, the study also found that the families of these children were dependent on their labour for their incomes, while not realising the health risks of this work for their children. The study recommends more research on the nature and extent of child labour in the sugarcane supply chain, improvement of the government policies without immediately banning the child labour practice, and sensitization of parents, families, duty-bearers and employers of the potential hazardous work conditions (ILO 2015). Research indicate child labour instances in other sectors as well, like at rubber plantations in north-eastern Cambodia or domestic work, with debt bondage conditions forcing children to work⁵.

Facilitating Child Labour: HRW also points to their recent research which showed a risk of facilitating child labour (HRW 2019 p.1). The 6% of working children in the industry sector includes children working in the brickmaking factories which is an example of a Worst Form of Child Labour (WFCL) and which is documented by various sources. The latest USA Trafficking in Persons publication reports that nearly 4,000 children work at brick kilns (USDOS 2021). However, the government claims that data from the 2019 census of all 486 operational kilns did not indicate child labour despite findings by many others. The NGO report Built on Slavery: debt bondage and child labour in Cambodia's Brick Factories describes how families in debt, often for medical emergencies, are forced to send their children to work – the debt bondage phenomenon. These children are a cheap work force which benefits both the factory owners and home builders, but not these children's families. The practice of debt bondage is illegal in the country with harsh penalties if prosecuted. However, law-enforcement is rare while authorities deny that this practice exists at all despite ample evidence to the contrary at all brick kilns (LICADHO 2016, USDOS 2021).

Recent Trends: The US Department of Labor reported that the pandemic has decreased the trafficking of children to neighbouring countries, like Thailand for forced labour in the fishing, agricultural or construction sectors. The pandemic also caused a decline in girls forced to work at Chinese casinos and other commercial enterprises in Sihanoukville (USDOL 2020)⁶.

A recent practice, identified by one interviewed

expert, relates to online scamming performed by in slavery held foreign workers (e.g. China, Indonesia, Malaysia). It is not known whether minors were among these forced labourers⁷. The Government has taken action, and banned and closed all such enterprises in 2021-22.

3.1.3 Domestic work in Cambodia

A study report by UN Women notes that domestic work and being a 'maid' in a relative well-off Cambodian household is a long-time practice in Cambodia for girls (88%) and being gardener, driver or guard is a typical domestic job for boys (12%). About 11% of all women who migrate mostly from rural to urban areas are in a form of domestic work. Among the 234 respondents in the study 18 were girls below 18 years and 7 were below 15 years. Six of these latter age group were unpaid; five were a relative. Only 3 of the 18 child domestic workers were attending school. Most of them had to work many hours, in average 12 hours per day and sometimes up to 20 hours. The report also notes that a study by IOM in 2007 found that 10% of the child domestic workers had been raped and 18% sexually assaulted. The report linked domestic work and sex work as 51% of the interviewed sex workers had previously worked as maid (Unicef 2015).

3.1.4 Migrant workers abroad

Migrant workers can be differentiated into workers abroad and domestic labourers. The first category is here briefly discussed as the main theme of this paper is on exploitation inside Cambodia. Nevertheless, labour migration to other countries is often accompanied with safety and health risks, and experiences of (sexual) abuse and violence is not rare. A literature study was commissioned by the Cambodian Parliamentary Institute to inform members of parliament about the background and situation of migration, human trafficking prevention and sexual exploitation. The study noted that of the circa 7 million strong Cambodian workforce 1 million people had migrated to Thailand alone by end of 2016. Among these migrants were an estimated 310,000 people undocumented, thus without the required formal documents needed to work in the destination country (Ros 2017). IOM's situation report lists that since March 2020 over a quarter of a million (actually 277,484) migrants returned to Cambodia, with 6,891 migrants returning in January 2022 alone⁸.

⁵ US Embassy Reporting January 30, 2020 ong Charoen Chai, C: Young Lives for Sale, Bangkok Post, June 29, 2014.

⁶See also US Embassy in Phnom Penh: Reporting January 30, 2020; February 26, 2021; Bloomberg, M.: Expose reveals child labour in Cambodian Brick kilns, Thomas Reuter Foundation, Feb. 17, 2020; Parsons, L & Long Ly Vouch: A survey of the Cambodian Brick Industry, Building Workers Trade Union of Cambodia, 2020. Brickel 2018 recounts the Licadho report in Blood and bricks, University of London.

⁷<https://vodenglish.news/en/slaved/> ⁸IOM 2022 Situation Report Cambodia.

In 2017, the country ranking second on the migration destination list was Malaysia with 46,541 migrants (up from 1,776 in 2005) and followed third by South Korea with circa 44,230 workers from Cambodia⁹. Among these migrants were many who migrated because of a micro-finance loan including from reputable lending NGOs like Vision Fund or ACLEDA or debt bondage financing schemes from factories. The micro-finance institution's (MFI) private lending partners are supported by European, Japan and USA banks (LICADHO 2019).

Studies show that migrant workers abroad have a higher risk of injuries and death than native workers, partly because they often get less adequate safety and occupational training (Polock 2016)¹⁰. Fortunately are children mostly exempt from the formal migrant labour category as employment regulations not allow minors. Exceptions are those child labourers who claim to be adults and sometimes did have falsified papers, like birth certificates, to proof this. Recruitment agencies played a large role in these practices, especially concerning under-aged domestic workers (Vijghen 2016). However, this was a phenomenon that occurred more in the past than now, partly because of better recruitment regulations but also because of the improvements in issuing birth certificates which makes falsification of identity documents more difficult but not impossible¹¹.

The situation for undocumented or irregular migrants is different in that there is no obstacle by being under-aged. They also frequently experience hazardous work conditions without having any legal options to object for fear to lose their job but also for lack of legal action in the destination country¹². A number of them are trafficked or forced into the labour; the young men, including minors who were found on fishing boats in Thai or Indonesian waters were an often mentioned victim category of trafficking in the Cambodian and world press, but also subject of research studies. A study conducted by researchers from two UK institutes among labour-trafficked men and boys from Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam found that most fishermen (80%) came from Cambodia. About 5% was younger than 18 years. The authors conclude that the study results confirm that not only women and girls, but that also men and boys experience extreme forms of exploitation (Pocock

2016). Another study found that boys aged between 8 and 15 year old take up peddling goods and fruits, while girls between 10 and 16 often work in retail (this study, conducted in 2013, included 24 children and its results are therefore anecdotally and not representative)¹³. Older girls often ended up in the sex industry (UNODC 2017).

3.2 Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA)

There are many forms of sexual exploitation and abuse of children; the Terminology Guidelines lists 'sexual assault' under the topic Sexual Violence, meaning forced sexual contact or without consent. Under Sexual Abuse are listed incest, rape, molestation, touching, harassment and online sexual abuse. Under Sexual Exploitation are listed commercial and online sexual exploitation, but the latter is also listed in the Guidelines under sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT). (To avoid confusion we list online child sexual exploitation (OCSE) in this paper under the theme 'child sexual abuse'). Other topics which more or less include the above listed forms are Prostitution, using children to produce Pornography, and Paedophilia, the latter form of sexual abuse of children called by the Guidelines Sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism (SECTT) or Child sex tourism (IWG 2016). All these forms are included in this section, to the extent we found empirical information in reliable publications from after 2014 about child exploitation and abuse in Cambodia.

“A number of them are trafficked or forced into the labour; the young men, including minors who were found on fishing boats in Thai or Indonesian waters were an often mentioned victim category of trafficking in the Cambodian and world press, but also subject of research studies. A study conducted by researchers from two UK institutes among labour-trafficked men and boys from Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam found that most fishermen (80%) came from Cambodia”

⁹Data obtained from the Cambodian Ministry of Labor ¹⁰See also Schenker MB: A global perspective of migration and occupational health, in: Am J Ind Med. 2010; 53: 329-337; Zimmerman C, Schenker MB: Human trafficking for forced labour and occupational health. Occup Environ Med. 2014; Schenker M: Work-related injuries among immigrants, in: Scand J Work Environ Health 2007, 33: 96-104. ¹¹Yamaguchi, Mariko: With birth registrations in hand, local families secure rights for their children, blog February 1, 2017; UNIAP: Recruitment Agencies and the Employment of Cambodian Domestic Workers in Malaysia, p.28, 2011. ¹²See also Zimmerman C, Schenker MB: Human trafficking for forced labour and occupational health. Occup Environ Med. 2014; Flynn MA, Eggerth DE, Jacobson CJ: Undocumented status as a social determinant of occupational safety and health, in: The workers' perspective, Am J Ind Med. 2015; 58 p. 1127-1137. ¹³Utit Sanharat: Cambodian Child Migrant Workers in the Rong Kuea Market Area in Thailand, 2013, 9 (11) Asian Social Science 24, 28, 30.

3.2.1 Sexual Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

A research in 2014 estimates that up to 100,000 people are involved in sex work in Cambodia, and UNICEF estimates that 30% to 35% are children¹⁴. An 8% prevalence rate was found for commercial sexual exploitation among children 17 years or younger in 332 establishments, like brothels, karaoke's, beer gardens, massage parlours, hostess bars etc., in Cambodia, with 0.75% being children aged 15 or younger. An often overlooked problem exploited children could encounter is that they not are viewed by law enforcement officers or social workers as a victim but as an illegal migrant or young criminal (Rafferty 2016).

An estimated 24,000 children who live and work on the streets are considered extremely vulnerable to sexual exploitation (Davy 2017, p.48). Girls are trafficked mostly for commercial sexual exploitation purposes (Bryan 2018). A significant proportion originates from Vietnam or from ethnic Vietnamese families living in Cambodia. One third of all those involved in commercial sexual exploitation in Cambodia are of Vietnamese origin¹⁵. An NGO assisting victims claims that half of their clients were sold to brokers or traffickers by their Vietnamese families who are living in Cambodia due to poverty and debts (Bendana 2019, Ros 2017). One study found that 8 out of 10 Vietnamese girls exploited in prostitution had been sold by a family member (Davy 2017; although this data is from 2006)¹⁶. Also girls from ethnic Khmer origin are trafficked to the sex industry in Thailand, often aged 14 to 18 years (UNODC 2017)¹⁷.

Cambodian girls are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse due to lack of education, inadequate public child protection, growing access to the Internet and online gaming¹⁸. However, a researcher noted that also boys are vulnerable, sometimes more than girls. In his research among 1314 school children aged 13 – 16 years across Cambodia he found that the gender differential is not as great as often assumed. In this study more boys than girls were raped by an adult (1.8% boys versus 0.6% girls) (Miles 2016 p.2). Children in Cambodia are exploited in prostitution usually in two ways, establishment-based or street-based sexual exploitation. The first is favoured by Cambodian and other Asian nationals and mostly affects girls¹⁹. Street-based sexual exploitation

“Children in Cambodia are exploited in prostitution usually in two ways, establishment-based or street-based sexual exploitation. The first is favoured by Cambodian and other Asian nationals and mostly affects girls. Street-based sexual exploitation happens by offenders directly in person or through intermediaries and mostly affects boys.”

happens by offenders directly in person or through intermediaries and mostly affects boys²⁰. An NGO estimated that 1,200 to 1,500 children were in 2015 living on the street without contact with their families, while 15,000 to 20,000 children were working on the street but evenings returned to their families (USDOS 2016 p.28; Baurly 2018). One study found that 31% of male and 4% of female street-involved children reported sexual violence incidents, compared with 5.6% of male and 4.4% of female school children²¹ (Davis 2017a).

Almost no publications were found on trafficking or exploitation of girls and boys with a disability, except for one which was undated. The learning paper noted that, based on primary and secondary data, half of violence cases – including sexual abuse – were identified to involved women and girls with intellectual or seeing and hearing impairments. It was assumed that offenders see these girls and women as too weak to protect themselves²².

An overview paper from the US government reports that while the COVID-19 pandemic decreased the trafficking of children to neighbouring countries, like Thailand for commercial sexual exploitation, the domestic trafficking for this purpose increased due to job and income loss in the hospitality and industry sectors, especially of rural girls (USDOL 2020). In this context, a relatively new phenomenon was reported, namely ‘compensated dating’ by adolescents and young women. This is a practice whereby men, often middle-aged or older, pay young women to join them on dates which could lead to sex (Davy 2017) p.47).

¹⁴Defence for Children & ECPAT Netherlands: Reducing Violence against Children, 2014, p. ¹⁵Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011: Consideration of reports submitted by States parties ...Concluding observations: Cambodia. ¹⁶ Childwise: Who are the Sex Tourists in Cambodia? 2006, p.8. ¹⁷ Deanna Davy: Understanding the complexities of responding to child sex trafficking in Thailand and Cambodia, 2014, 34 (11) International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 793, 799. ¹⁸ World Vision, 2014: Sex, Abuse and Childhood, 53. ¹⁹ Katja Dombrowski, 2015: Dubious reputation. ²⁰ Ibid. ²¹ CWC and UNICEF, 2017: Findings from Cambodia's Violence against Children survey 2013; and UNICEF, 2017: Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse. ²² CWC undated: Save Futures, ADD p.10

3.2.2 Solicitation of children for sexual purposes

This paragraph combines the sexual abuse of children by paedophiles (someone sexually attracted to young children, Collings English Dictionary) and in the context of travel and tourism; making a distinction is often not easy although generally in the latter case offenders are foreigners travelling to engage in commercial sex acts with children (IWG 2016 p. 55). Not only girls are being trafficked into the sex industry, also boys and young men. Six percent of boys were sexually abused before the age of 18 years; they often suffer from significant stigma and social shame, may be rejected by family and their community and receive little or no support²³. Especially male street-children but also young Vietnamese girls are reported to have been victim of sexual abuse by paedophiles from abroad and domestic. While Ros reports that the abuse occurred mostly by foreigners, a recent TiP report indicates that Cambodian men are the 'largest source of demand' for children exploited in sex trafficking (Ros 2017; USDOS 2021)²⁴. Hawke cites an ECPAT report from 2012 that estimates that 3 out of 4 offenders are of Cambodian nationality. This is also indicated as a phenomenon not only for Cambodia but for the Southeast Asian region as a whole (Hawke 2016 p.14, 42; Davy 2017 p.16).

The NGO APLE focusses on offenders belonging to the category of adults who engage in acts of 'solicitation of children for sexual purposes' (IWG 2016), also called '(travelling) child sex offenders' (APLE 2014 p.4). APLE notes that among the perpetrators of sexual abuse with children in their database covering a decade from 1st January 2003 till 31st December 2013 118 persons were of Cambodian nationality (41%) and 170 of foreign nationality (59%). The discrepancy between APLE's data and the Trafficking in Persons (TiP) 2021 report on the rate of domestic versus foreign perpetrators is explained by two possible factors. First, APLE operated mostly in tourist locations which were visited by large numbers of foreigners; secondly, local law-enforcement officers tend to focus more on foreign than domestic offenders²⁵. Nevertheless, foreigners are involved in the exploitation of children in Cambodia as demonstrated by arrests by police. These are not only perpetrators who stay temporary in the country; a UK national managing several orphanages in Siem Reap was arrested, like a USA

national who worked as a volunteer physician at a children's hospital in Phnom Penh²⁶.

Data reported by the National Commission for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) indicates that 298 children were rescued in 2016 (Ros 2017)²⁷; taking into account the 2014 tally of close to 500 children who were included in APLE's database over a 10-year period, this number seems to indicate an increase in rescued child victims compared to the previous years (APLE 2014).

3.2.3 Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism (SECTT)

Terre des Hommes in collaboration with APLE has produced a comprehensive report on sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT) in Siem Reap and Poipet, based on data from focus groups and in-depth discussions with government officers and community practitioners. Both groups seem to have quite different perspectives in assessing the issues, although the apparent split is gradually becoming smaller. The report describes in detail the risks, vulnerabilities and threats to children to become victimised for both cities. It starts to mention that the recent rapid growth in travel, tourism and business investment facilitated that Cambodia has become one of the most popular destinations in the region for travelling sex offenders. This was also reported by ECPAT in 2016²⁸. After describing several potential offender profiles the report continues to describe offenders' strategies to coerce children, like the 'situational' offender who abuse occasions to get sex, regardless if it is with children; or the 'lone wolf' who settles for some time in a village or neighbourhood and befriends families and their children. Acting as a volunteer at an organisation or as teacher is another strategy to get access to children. Before the COVID-19 pandemic the casino's and their entourages along the borders, attracting young often adolescent women for the job opportunities, were a risky place for children, in Sihanoukville in particular. Currently, with many of the casinos closed and/or gone, it seems that these risks have abated a little²⁹ (TdH 2019).

The report further cites a research which details the strategies of western offenders³⁰, but the report emphasises that such information of Asian offenders is lacking. To this end, the study's goal is the 'map critical dynamics of SECTT' in Siem

²³Can OSSC meet de gaps, Orha A., 2020, APLE

²⁴However, the TiP report does not made references to sources.

²⁵Personal communication of an interviewed expert.

²⁶Johnson, A: Protecting Children's Rights in Asian Tourism, in International Journal of Children's Rights, 22 (2014): 603.

²⁷NCCT: Summary report on Results of Counter Trafficking in 2016, 2016. ²⁸ECPAT International, 2016: Regional Report on SECTT, p.25 ²⁹Personal communication.

Reap and Poipet, and to 'understand the current practices of offenders'. The methods used for this study were qualitative, including key informant interviews, in-depth interviews focus group discussions with practitioners from civil society, government and the private sector. A literature review was conducted as well to serve as a comprehensive and nuanced backdrop for understanding the primary data. A main finding for Siem Reap was that there was an evolution of the issue ongoing, suggesting a growth in the use of online platforms and organised broker-recruiter systems to facilitate SECTT. While the context in Poipet as a border transfer town and by Chinese people frequented casinos, is rather different than the major tourist town of Siem Reap, also there was a broker-recruited system mentioned to facilitate the abuse of children, which reduces the need for foreign offenders to go themselves into communities to find children (TdH 2019; Vijghen 2011).

3.2.4 Trafficking for marriage

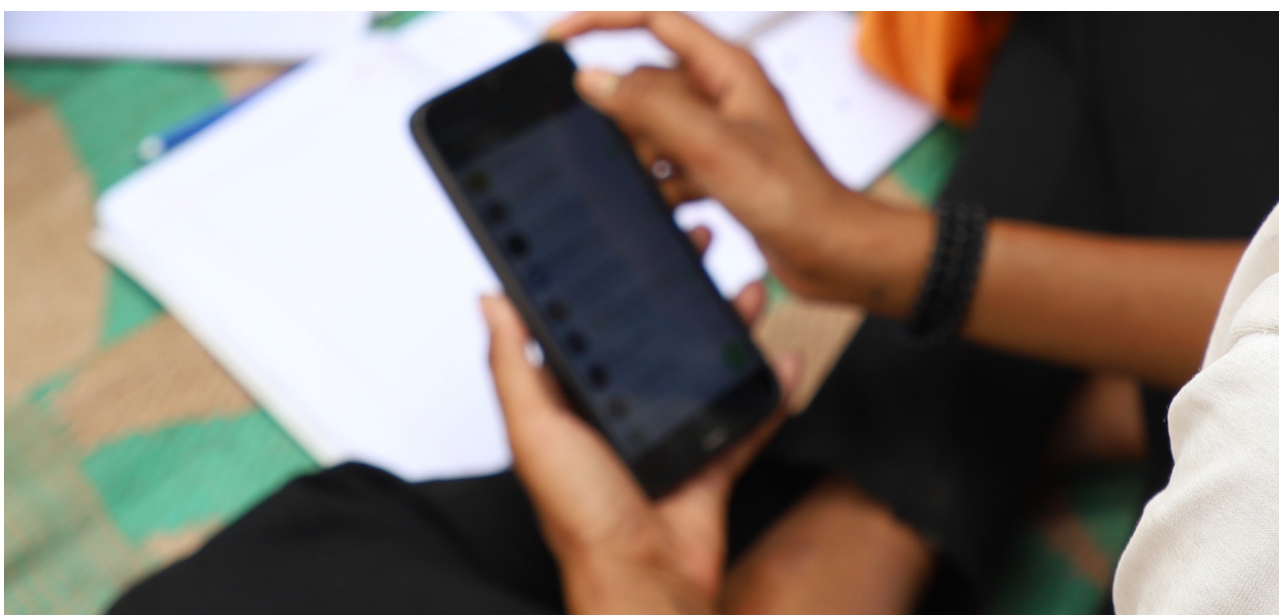
Since many years are girls trafficked to China as 'brides'. ILO reports that girls as young as 14 years are trafficked to China and that during the pandemic the number of cases doubled (USDOL 2020)³¹. ADHOC and other NGOs did report on many instances of kidnapping or coercion for the purpose of becoming a bride of a Chinese man (Vijghen 2016). Author of this paper has interviewed a girl, at the time 16 years old, who was kidnapped during a holiday trip to Vietnam together with other girls and sold to a Chinese man as a bride. When she became pregnant, she ran

away to the Cambodian Embassy in China which arranged for her return home assisted by IOM. The girl recounted stories of other girls who were send away after they delivered the baby, which indicated that getting offspring was the main purpose of these 'marriages'³².

An experienced researcher reported recently that the pandemic had caused an even higher vulnerability to become trafficked as bride to China than existed before. Government senior officials and NGOs reported an increase in girls and women being trafficked for marriage abroad, mainly to China. The NGO Chab Dai reported that the number of cases referred to them had doubled³³. One likely cause for the increase is the loss of jobs in the tourism sector for at least 10% of the work force. A conclusion by the researcher was that given the gender imbalance in China and lack of employment opportunities for women In Cambodia, supply of 'brides' will continue (Chhun 2022).

3.2.5 Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE)

The increase in cheap internet access has facilitated an increase in online sexual exploitation of children (OCSE), while a NGO survey found that during the closure of schools during the pandemic the number of reported OCSE cases increased; 15% of respondents were contacted by strangers on social media with 2% asked to share intimate pictures (USDOL 2020; USDOS 2021)³⁴. A document released by Terre des Hommes in 2022³⁵ experienced examples cited data from a government source (CNCC 2019): 60% of child respond-



³⁰Betini L.: Assessment of Vulnerabilities to SECTT in Siem Reap, 2019 APLE.

³¹See Blomberg, M: Pandemic seen fuelling Cambodian 'bride trafficking' to China. Phnom Penh Thomas Reuters Foundation, December 11, 2020; APLE Cambodia and EXPAT International supplementary report on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia, Bangkok July 1, 2019. ³²Personal communication. See also: A21: Impact report Cambodia, A21, 2021 p.6.

³³Newspaper reports ³⁴See also Plan International, Joint statement: Children's rights and COVID-19 response in Cambodia, June 1, 2020; ³⁵ToR for conducting a Baseline on OSEC, 21 January 2022, TdH p.2

ents in a nationwide survey experienced examples of online child sexual exploitation. 57% of these respondents have seen pornographic images on the internet, with 32% having seen material of children at their own or below their age. Other data cited by the same document was: 9% of children had created and shared sexualised images of themselves over the past year, and 3% (31% of the original percentage of 9%) had done so with someone they didn't know. The US-based National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received over four times more reports of child sexual abuse material found online in 2021 than in 2019 (ECPAT 2022).

“11% or potentially 160,000 children between 12 – 17 years using the internet experienced online sexual exploitation and abuse. About four out of five offenders were known to the child, like family, friends, and peers (ECPAT, UNICEF et al. 2020).”

The Royal Government of Cambodia's National Council for Children (CNCC) released in 2020 a situation study report on Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE). This report describes the study results including forms, materials and methods of OCSE in the Cambodian context³⁶, and national reporting mechanisms, capacities and gaps. The report notes that at present, little is known in Cambodia about the existence and magnitude of OCSE and that community awareness is minimal (CNCC 2019). Indeed, a Summary Paper on Online Child Sexual Exploitation, based on worldwide information including 129 references, is very informative about the issue but does not include any reference to Cambodia (ECPAT 2020).

On the other hand, a very recent publication *Disrupting Harm in Cambodia*, describes the results of a research project on online child sexual exploitation and abuse in Cambodia, which was conducted in five other South-east Asian and seven African countries as well. The study conducted a literature review and legal analysis, assessed data from online platforms, interviewed in Cambodia nine senior national government representatives, 50 frontline workers, six young people and ten criminal justice professionals, while also data was

obtained from law enforcement authorities, and a randomised household survey was conducted among 992 internet-using children in 2020. The study provides insight on the reporting mechanisms available in Cambodia, the law enforcement responses³⁷, court proceedings including legal aid and social support services available for child victims, coordination and collaboration on the issue, and recommends certain actions. In terms of the situation of victimised children by OCSE the study found that 11% or potentially 160,000 children between 12 – 17 years using the internet experienced online sexual exploitation and abuse. About four out of five offenders were known to the child, like family, friends, and peers (ECPAT, UNICEF et al. 2020).

3.2.6 Rape and Sexual Violence

One source publication on sexual harmful behaviour³⁸ among children describes a case whereby two young female tourists (aged 16 and 17 years) offered a 10-year old street boy US\$ 50 to come with them to their hotel where they had sex with him. Later the boy was considered to have raped the girls, despite the power³⁹ the two young females had over the boy. There exist no national data on the prevalence of sexual harmful behaviour (SHB) among children in Cambodia (First Step 2017).

Outside commercial sexual exploitation of children, solicitation children for sexual purposes or child marriage, incidences of forced intercourse with a minor by another individual, here called 'rape' is not mentioned in most of the source publications for this study, but some did provide relevant information on this violent abuse. The Violence against Children survey conducted in 2013 by UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Affairs found that 3% of girls and 0.1% of boys aged between 13 and 17 years reported to have experienced sexual violence. Average age for girls was 15 and for boys 10 year. Boys experienced the violence mostly at home while girls experienced it often with boy-friends, peers or teachers; school seem to be the most common place to experience sexual violence for the first time (UNICEF 2014; Child Rights Now 2019 p.19-20). An issue of importance for survivors of sexual abuse is the stigma attached by society and family to what happened to them. A survey found that 57% of trafficked girls who returned home were concerned and had feel-

ings of guilt and shame. The stigma might have a negative effect on finding a suitable marriage partner. It might also have a negative effect on seeking resources that might address their needs due to negative attitudes by public officers and staff of service providers (Morrison 2021).

Where it concerns data on adult perpetrators news media sources are referenced indicating that among 210 males who had committed rape, 37% reported that they committed their first rape when they were between 15 and 19 years old, with 16% committing their first rape below the age of 15 – thus 53% did commit a rape before they reached adulthood.

Also NGO data was referenced to, which indicated that the age of victims varied from 2 to 17 year (average 8 years; 75% female) and of offenders from 3 to 18 years (average 12 year; 89% male). The article noted a discrepancy between data from news media and from NGOs, but is vague to explain why, except that it points to a bias in public perception. Indeed, media reported on 1.8% of male victims compared to NGOs which reported on 24.1% male victims. The media noted offender's average age as 16 compared to NGOs as 12, and media noted victim's age as average 11 with NGOs noting 8 (First Step 2017).

3.3 Harmful Practices for Children

The assignment for this literature study was to make a review of written materials about 1) child exploitation in Cambodia, including about '2) sexual exploitation, 3) child labour, 4) child trafficking, 5) migration and 6) children left behind'. The definition used by Terre des Hommes of child exploitation is hereby an important factor: 'an individual, group or organisation taking advantage of an imbalance of power to get a child to engage in activities that are detrimental to the child's well-being and development, and from which the alleged perpetrator(s) and/or third party(ies) gain some advantage.' While some forms of exploitation are included in one to the six topics above, like trafficking for marriage or online abuse, some other forms are not included, like exploitation for donations, migration or other harmful practices. When information about some of these latter issues are presented in the selected written materials, I have included relevant information in this section. This also includes child marriage al-

though I do not consider that practice per se as exploitation, especially if the initiative is taken by the girl or boy concerned, not only by parents or other relatives; however, it remains at least a harmful practice for the girls' health and development. Neither is neglect or corporal punishment considered by me as a form of exploitation, but it falls surely under harmful practices if not abuse and violence against children.

3.3.1 Migration, Left Behind and Neglect

There is very little data on children affected by migration, domestic or abroad. More than 20% of migrants with children do not take them with them, thus 80% of the children stay behind (UN 2017)⁴¹. The 2013 Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey estimated that 3.2% of all migrants were between 10 and 14 year and 5.1% were between 16 to 19 years (UNICEF 2017). Children staying behind are more likely to drop out of school than other children (15.6%), girls more than boys, while they are more likely have to work longer hours too (UN 2017)⁴².

Up to 2019, more than 20% of all Cambodians had been a migrant, domestic more than abroad. Around 1,260,000 people had migrated in the period 2014 – 2019, with 34% of total internal from rural to urban and 30% from urban to another urban area. Many children of migrants, and especially migrants abroad, leave their younger children home with a relative, most often a grandparent (JSR 2021). However, there are still migrants and more often female migrants travelling abroad who take their children along (fathers 7% and mothers 16%). Boys constituted 7.4% and girls 15.5% of the companions travelling with one or both of their parents (Koenig 2016). No national representative information could be found on the situation of these children, although some small sample studies have been conducted.

There are indications that when both parents are working abroad or even domestically far away from home that their children have an higher incidence of injury, illness and/or malnourishment (Ros 2017)⁴³. The fifth year progress report of the CTIP program sponsored by USAID includes an annex on a study among 250 households about children's alternative care when their parents migrated. None of the study cases was without a caregiver, in 3 out 4 households the grandmother

⁴¹ citing Ministry of Planning 2012

⁴² CDRI 2014: The Impacts of Adult Migration on Children's Well-being – The case of Cambodia.

⁴³ Vutha H, Pide L, Dalis P: The Impacts of Adult Migration on Children's Well-being; the case of Cambodia, Phnom Penh CDRI 2014

was the caregiver (75.6%) and in 7.6% the grandfather; in these cases mainly because both parents did migrate, 98% of them to Thailand. The parents stayed abroad between 1 month to 20 years, but with a mean of 4 years. 12.4% of the households caring for migrant children reported to have experienced rice shortages during the past 30 days. About 90% of these household received remittances from the migrated parents, 46% of these every month. The mean amount for the whole migration period of the parents reported was US\$ 1,500 in total per household, but for most households this was not enough to cover all costs of the house hold and/or the living and education expenses for the children left behind (Winrock 2020).

A relative small study in Siem Reap area among children left behind while their parents worked abroad concluded that due to lack of parental presence, boys seem to struggle with authority of their caregivers and with motivation to go to school, while girls are observed to have less such problems (Laidler 2018). A publication on sexual harmful behaviour among children and the interventions they received reported that in 18 of 21 cases of in-depth assessments evidence was found that parents or carers were neglecting the child. In 17 cases the neglect was lack of supervision, in 11 cases the child did not get food, shelter or other basic needs, and in 9 cases was a lack of love or emotional support (First Step 2017 p.18).

“A publication on sexual harmful behaviour among children and the interventions they received reported that in 18 of 21 cases of in-depth assessments evidence was found that parents or carers were neglecting the child.”

3.3.2 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, + Minors

A relative small number of publications, but of recent dates, have been available for this literature review with some information on the situation of children belonging to the LGBTI+ community. Key findings of a small study focussing on violence perpetrated by family members among 61 respondents with a diverse (meaning non-main-

stream) sexual orientation were that 81% faced emotional violence; 7% was seriously beaten by family members ‘to fix them’; 10% were coerced or forced into a marriage with a male ‘to conform to traditional gender roles’; 35% considered at some point in their lives to commit suicide; and depression and stigmatisation were common among them. However, many respondents reported that their conditions have improved in recent years, but more so in larger cities like Phnom Penh and Siem Reap than in rural areas⁴⁴, although they still experience public discrimination, including during their childhood years often by their own family. School-going children with a diverse sexual orientation experienced bullying by peers and/or negative attitudes by teachers (RoCK 2019)⁴⁵.

3.3.3 Street-children

The National Institute of Statistics (NIS) counted in a survey conducted in 2015 more than 3,545 homeless boys and girls under the age of 18 in seven Cambodian provinces (UNICEF 2018 p.25)⁴⁶. These so-called street-involved children working most often in tourist places could experience neglect besides being vulnerable to sexual abuse as a relative large proportion has no contact with their families or only return home at evening times (see above the SECTT section).

Boys of this latter category are reported to have less protection or supervision by their parents, while the former category is obviously left alone to fend for themselves (Davis 2021). Researchers concluded that, based on three studies, one in Phnom Penh in 2021, one in Poipet in 2017 and one in Sihanoukville in 2021, street boys are more vulnerable to sexual violence than girls, in addition to being vulnerable to physical and emotional violence. Substances are used by many of the street-children, like alcohol (38%), glue (27%) and ‘ice’ (Methamphetamine; 29%), but much higher percentages by boys than girls. This dependency on these substances makes them extra vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (Davis 2017a; Davis 2021a).

In urban centres street-children are less visible than in the past, and an expert mentioned that, while homeless children still exist, their numbers are less because of more extensive family support. Also, improvements in the state education

⁴⁴ No Child Left Behind, First Step Cambodia 2022.

⁴⁵ STC 2021 Live & Learn – children with SOGIE, the study reports on the stigma and negative behaviour by family and community.

⁴⁶ The UNICEF report however questions the accuracy of this survey because various forms of homeless and street-involved children were included without clear differentiation.



provision has led to a reduction over the past ten years. The infra-structural development of Phnom Penh's city centre caused that very poor families and their children are pushed out and far less visible than before. Street children is a suburban phenomenon now, out of sight of foreign visitors, concluded the expert.

3.3.4 Residential care

One study estimated that in 2015 about 36,000 to 49,000 children lived in residential care facilities.⁴⁷ However, a mapping survey covering the whole country in the same year measured that 27,187 children lived in 639 residential care institutions and other shelter facilities. About 80% of these children had at least one living parent. The study indicated also that among these institutions were those which relied on 'voluntourism' and street theatre performances by the resident children to 'lure' donations from foreigners (USDOL 2020)⁴⁸. However, the report did not very well substantiate this last insinuation, but other sources like the Family Care Network mentioned it as well.

3.3.5 Child, Early and/or Forced Marriage (CEFM)

There is a large body of literature available on these practices in many regions in the world, like South Asia, but much less for the South-east Asian countries including Cambodia⁴⁹. In the latter cases the target populations are very often minor-

ity groups with an ethnic origin different from the mainstream population, like in the north-east of Cambodia⁵⁰. It was reported that programme implementers tend to suggest incorrectly that CEFM takes place ONLY among ethnic minorities (Plan 2018 p.7). But indeed, child marriage is most prevalent in rural, remote areas with high ethnic minority populations, including the Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri provinces. The median age for marriage in Mondulakiri is 15 year, where a majority of the population is of non-Khmer ethnic origin⁵¹ (Child Rights Now 2019 p.20). Plan International, which prioritises the main ethnic populated provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri, found that sexual reproductive health for adolescent girls in those provinces, but also elsewhere in the country, is a concern; 95% of sexual active 15 – 19 year old girls reported not to use any forms of contraception. Teen pregnancy increased to 12% (data from 2014). In Ratanakiri province, 16% of girls giving birth were between 12 and 17 years old (Plan 2021 p.30).

A most often overlooked category for forced marriage are girls or young women with a diverse sexual orientation, like lesbian, bisexual or transgender (LBT) people. One study found that 10% of the study population or 6 girls experienced sexual violence including forced marriage, the latter enforced by their own family (RoCK 2019). Also

⁴⁷ UNICEF and Columbia University joint research 2018, reported in Human Rights Practices 2020

⁴⁸ Anderson 2019; US Embassy, Phnom Penh, Reporting February 2, 2020; UN Human Rights Council: Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia, Universal Periodic Review of the human rights situation in Cambodia, July 9, 2018; US Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2020: Cambodia, March 11, 2021.

⁴⁹ Vijghen J., Jannat S.: Analysis of Factors and Key Interventions to Prevent Child Marriage in Bangladesh, UNICEF 2015; Jordana A.D.: Situational Analysis on Child, Early and Forced Marriage in Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia, World Vision, undated.

⁵⁰ Care 2018: Adolescent Fertility & Early Marriage. The report describes how young people of ethnic minorities in north-east. Cambodia interact and sometimes get pregnant before marriage.

⁵¹ Partnering to Save Lives, 2018: Learning package: Adolescent pregnancy in Cambodia's northeast

Plan International reports in their current strategy plan that children with a diverse sexual orientation or gender identity and gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) are challenged and will get the organisations' attention (Plan 2021 p. 29). A recent released report on SOGIESC school children describes the bullying they experience, but also that their family and teachers want 'to fix' them. Generally they try to hide their sexual orientation to avoid problems, such as being mocked or even being assaulted (StC 2020).

World Health statistics show that 18% of girls in Cambodia are married before they reached 18 years of age with 2% before they reached the age of 15 years; 4% of boys in Cambodia are married before their 18th Birthday (Jordana AD., 2017; website GirlsNotBrides assessed 30-12-2020).

Child marriage is driven by gender inequality and the belief that girls are somehow inferior to boys. In Cambodia, child marriage is also driven by gender norms⁵², traditional practices, level of education and poverty⁵³. If a girl is sexually abused or raped, some parents arrange a marriage with the rapist to avoid the shame for the family, also when the girl is a minor. Such parents do not see this practice as a forced marriage (Baury 2018 p.14; Jordana 2017).

Citing project data of Terre des Hommes' End Child Marriage project in Monduliri, as of 2014, 12% of Cambodian women between 15 and 19 years old were pregnant or had born a child. The CVACS research (2014) found 5.5% of children between 13 and 17 years are married, in a union or living together with a partner (Vijghen 2020). The Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey of 2014 found that one in four females and 1 in 15 males aged between 18 - 49 years reported that they had married before the age of 18 years⁵⁴ (Child Rights Now 2019 p.20).

3.3.6 Violence against Children & Corporal Punishment

This is an issue which is not included in the terms for this paper, but in light of recent developments and media attention some information from sources after 2015 is here presented as it concerns a harmful practice. Several studies found evidence for the general accepted notion that corporal punishment in Cambodia is an accepted form of disci-

pline, at home or at school, for children aged from 6 till 14 years. Teachers especially are reported to use their hand or a small stick for this form of discipline while in class; 63% of teachers acknowledged to have hit a student during the past year⁵⁵. Also primary school aged students reported that their teachers used such disciplinary measures⁵⁶ (Child Rights Now 2019 p.20). Plan International reports that more than half of all Cambodian children experienced some form of violence before the age of 18 years, usually at home but also often at school (Plan 2021 p.29).

“A most often overlooked category for forced marriage are girls or young women with a diverse sexual orientation, like lesbian, bisexual or transgender (LBT) people.”

3.4 Prevention, Protection and Law-enforcement

3.4.1 Government Responses

Cambodia has ratified the Child Rights and all child labour conventions and established laws and regulations to protect children and prohibit the child labour practice in the country. However, actions taken by labour law enforcement agencies in 2020 were less than in 2019: 1,309 labour inspections in 2020 against 7,123 in 2019. The number of labour inspectors reduced from 649 in 2019 to 602 in 2020. There is agreement among the Government, ILO and NGOs that the Labour Inspectorate is insufficiently funded and capacitated. The Government announced to address this problem in 2021 through a new ministerial regulation (prakas) whereby factories have to pay annual fees to an inspection fund (USDOL 2020).

Suggestions have been reported by ILO and others to improve the legal framework, to enable better enforcement by more funding, training and data collection. Victims of trafficking need to be better protected against intimidation while their court process is ongoing or pending. At commune levels the Committees for Women and Children need to get more funding to carry out their mandate. Government policies that are implemented should be publicised. Social programmes relevant to addressing child labour should be provided with sufficient resources (USDOL 2020).

⁵² Chbab srey (a traditional code of conduct) teaches that girls should remain pure "like cotton wool", and the role of girls is seen to be that of housekeeper, reproducer and wife, and encourages the early marriage of girls to fulfil such roles.

⁵³ website GirlsNotBrides assessed 30-12-2020.

⁵⁴ NIS 2015: Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2014

⁵⁵ MUNICEF, 2018: KAP survey on Disciplinary Methods in Cambodian Primary Schools.

⁵⁶ World Vision Cambodia, 2018: Hurting our Future.

In terms of government protection and law-enforcement response, prosecutions of trafficking and/or exploitation cases remain low and increase gradually: 53 cases were prosecuted in 2014 and 69 cases in 2015 (USDOS 2017). The most recent US Trafficking in Persons (TiP) report concludes that the ‘Government does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so, even considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic’.

Cambodia is therefore downgraded to the lowest rank, tier 3, continuing on a downward trend since 2018, which not only indicates the Government’s responses to trafficking issues, but also to other areas of child exploitation⁵⁷. This obviously declining trend in taking action and addressing the hindrances to meet the standards is shown in the table below.

But in terms of government assistance to victims the release of the Victim Identification Guidelines by the NCCT is called ‘a huge improvement’ in the victim identification and referral process. However, the application of the guidelines by one major entry point, the Transit Centre at Poipet, which receives presumed victims of trafficking is doubted because there is no report on its actual use. NGOs which assists victims experience constraints caused by government practises, like barring NGOs to get custody of or represent victims (Bendana 2019).

The TiP report noted several positive steps taken to respond to the trafficking problem, such as a continuation of arrests, prosecutions and convictions of traffickers (albeit with less results than before) or the assistance in repatriation of Cam-

bodian trafficking victims from abroad. But problems remain, like the endemic corruption, lack of investigation of officials and powerful business owners in the brick kilns, online scamming or entertainment sectors. Further is the Government not fulfilling its mandate to provide adequate protection and reintegration services to victims, but leaves this to civil society organisations (USDOS 2022).

However, a positive development is noted, by interviewed experts too, with the increasingly effective coordination between the NCCT and civil society organisations, despite the reduction of its annual budget from \$1.33 million in 2020 to \$543,000⁵⁸(USDOS 2021). Also was noted by an interviewed expert that the Government has plans to address the homeless problem which might have positive effects on homeless children as well.

3.4.2 Civil Society Responses

A recent Trafficking in Persons (TiP) report states that human trafficking for forced and child labour and/or sexual exploitation of adults and children is ongoing virtually unabated with a low level of prosecutions in Cambodia, partly due to lack of sufficient resources but also due to ‘endemic corruption’ among public servants and law-enforcement officers ‘at many levels of government’ (USDOS 2021). Experts interviewed for this study indicated that the focus of donors and therewith implementing organisations have shifted from child sexual exploitation to other areas of interest, like online abuse and exploitation. In the past successful programmes to prevent CSEC or SECTT or assist survivors have diminished or terminated because of lack of funding and political sensibilities.

Table 2: Ranking of Cambodia on the USA’ Tier List

Tier Ranking History								
1								
2		x	x	x				
2WL	x				x	x	x	
3								x
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022

⁵⁷ Expert interviews indicate an ongoing decline of upholding human rights, respecting land rights, imprisonment of whistle-blowers, obstruction to represent legally victims, etc.
⁵⁸ This was in response to an overall budget cut due to the COVID-19 measures.

3.5 Information Gaps

Publications referencing data from after 2014 on child slavery – as defined in the Terminology Guidelines (IWG 2016 p.71) - or home-based child labour (sometimes referred to as ‘working children’ or ‘informal child labour’) are not found or did include these issues more as a by-line than as a topic. Also publications on research conducted after 2014 about child domestic workers or neglect were few or when found not relevant to this paper.

UNICEF reports in its Statistical Profile publication of 2018 that ‘the lack of comprehensive data on trafficking makes it impossible to know the precise number of people, including children, affected’ (p.19). Similarly, there is no reliable information or recent survey data of children living or working on the streets (p.25).

Abuse of children within institutions, families and communities or by indigenous populations has received relative little attention in the literature compared to other forms of sexual abuse or exploitation. Similar, harmful and sexually abusive behaviour among children and young people at home, in the community or at institutions was up to 2017 and likely beyond not studied in Cambodia. Research in the UK which found that 2/3rd of sexual abuse against children was committed by minors (thus under the age of 18) suggest that this is happening in Cambodia as well (First Step 2017 p.3, 8).

Another gap in the literature is the (sexual) exploitation of children with a disability or intellectual, hearing or seeing impairment. Similarly, studies are lacking on offenders of sexual abuse of national and/or Asian nationalities despite that they form the majority of abusers. While globally studies are conducted on the occurrence of online commercial sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSE), and recent reports cover this theme as well, only a few small studies have been conducted in Cambodia. The same is the case for children left behind or being neglected, although the World Vision programme “Grandmothers’ Care” was mentioned as a good source by one expert.

Although before 2015 many reports and papers were published about establishment and/or “street

prostitution”⁵⁹, including of minors, in Cambodia there seems to be a lack of research and hence publications during the past seven years.

Studies and literature about the situation of children with a diverse sexual orientation, especially lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender persons (LGBT) are few, without information on any child exploitation, and of a very recent date indicating that this subject did not yet get much attention in research and literature.

“Abuse of children within institutions, families and communities or by indigenous populations has received relative little attention in the literature compared to other forms of sexual abuse or exploitation.”

⁵⁹The Terminology Guidelines (2017) uses the term ‘prostitution’ 130 times in its publication and under chapter E. Exploitation of children in/for prostitution, but in its Foreword noted that the term have been ‘more and more’ criticized. In this paper we will use the term ‘prostitution’ only as a quote or when the alternative term ‘commercial sexual exploitation’ would be confusing.

Exploratory Research

The research aimed to provide first-hand empirical data to inform Terre des Hommes Netherlands in Cambodia to decide on new project interventions during their next strategy cycle. The exploratory research is designed based on the results of a robust literature study. References to the literature review are made in each of the following sections when empirical findings differ from what was published. The following specific questions have been answered by the research and the deeper dive analysis except for #5 due to the lack of a national level statistical survey:

#	Questions	Methods & (Limits)
1	Is child sex tourism a big issue of off-line child sexual exploitation? Emerging trends? How and to what extent are children with disabilities and/or ethnic minorities likely to be the victims of sexual exploitation offline and online?	Interviews with professionals of NGOs and Government agencies; talks with local people. (Limit: Data requests from NGOs working with ethnic minorities were not answered).
2	Trends and characteristics of the themes, their root causes, consequences for children, communities, local and national government. Any sub-population characteristics in relation to the two themes - including known heightened risks to, for example, children with disabilities, LGBT children.	Interviews with professionals of NGOs and Government agencies; talks with local people. (Limit: There is no knowledge among respondents about sub-population characteristics).
3	Existing policies, guidelines, mechanisms, system, government structure. Challenges that government and NGOs face in addressing the two themes in a sustainable way. Identified gaps in relation to government policies, services. Are there any new policy guidelines, laws developed to address sexual exploitation of children?	Interviews with professionals of NGOs and Government agencies. Check of government data bases of NCCT, NCCC, MoSAVY. (Limit: Websites or Libraries were not accessible; requests for documents through personal visits or email were not responded to).
4	NGO interventions working on the two themes and in which target areas/ provinces.	Mapping and online survey (latter too low response rate).
5	Is there a high usage of the internet among children? Rural or urban?	All respondents (Limit: this is subjective information).

Table 3: Questions and Methods

4.1 Methodology & Limitations

4.1.1 Methodology

The research methods were mainly qualitative, key informant interviews with selected respondents of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) or Government Agencies, using a non-structured format; street interviews or informal conversations with by chance met entertainment workers, vendors at markets or people and local authorities during community visits; they were asked about topics like commercial sexual exploitation of children, working children, child trafficking or migration, children left behind by migrated parents, etc. Although a list was developed for each category of respondents with the topics of interest, it was mainly the actual knowledge of or the level of cooperation by the respondent what decided which questions were asked⁶⁰. A dynamic data collection approach was used with topic lists being updated during the mission with newly emerged questions or deleting obsolete questions.

Further, researchers made observations at border points and tourist locations to see whether children are working and how, or at several communities to enquire about the situation of children left behind by their parents. The research team met in one village along the Thai border three grand-

mothers who were caring for their grandchildren while the parents were working across the border. Two focus group discussions were conducted with Youth (16 – 18 year, 50% male) on the issue of effective interventions for ending sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism, and on child labour.

Estimations of the number of each respondent category were included in the inception report and agreed upon, and overall these 'sample sizes' have been reached or even exceeded. Interviews were conducted with 26 NGO staff, 11 Government Officials or Officers, 28 workers in the entertainment or tourist sector and/or common people with knowledge of this sector, and 25 persons, including local authorities, during community visits who were briefly talked to at 5 tourist locations in Phnom Penh (See for a detailed list the Fieldwork Report attached).

4.1.2 Limitations

The research is exploratory and the data collection was conducted in a relative brief period (3 weeks). The exploratory nature of the study approach was emphasised by the choice to rely heavily on the expertise of professionals of Civil

⁶⁰While respondents of the NGO and people categories were very cooperative, a small minority of the respondents of the government agency categories deflected answers to certain questions. The lack of a formal permission letter from the respective Ministries might have been an issue (the Research Team received such a letter on the LAST day of the field mission unfortunately despite efforts of TdH NL's to get them timely).

Field Method	Category of Respondents	Tools	Number
Key Informant Interview	UNICEF and NGO staff	Topic list	26 persons
Key Informant Interview	DoSVY staff, Police & Immigration Officers	Topic list	11 persons
Informal conversation	Entertainment & Tourism workers	Instruction guide	28 persons
'Street' interviews	Vendors, <i>tuktuk</i> drivers, local leaders, elected officials, people	Instruction guide	25 persons
Focus Group Discussion	Child/Youth club members	Questionnaire	6 (50% male)

Table 4: Methods, Respondents and Tools



Society Organisations (CSO) and staff or officers of Provincial Governmental agencies. However, these professionals were the best available sources in the absence of more recent and relevant qualitative and quantitative studies. Another limitation was the relative short period of the data collection phase (about 15 days) in view of the also relative large number of study locations and the associated travel time (the capital and six provincial cities plus three border points). In addition, the broad range of study topics (2 themes and 4 sub-themes) made it necessary to limit interview time with each respondent to about 1 to 1.5 hour. Unfortunately this made in-depth case studies impossible in the available time.

While a sufficient number of experts have been interviewed to provide a 'snapshot' of the situation of children in terms of SECTT, Child Labour and Children Left Behind by migrated parents, the respondents possessed only knowledge that is limited to their work area and activities. The obtained information is therefore not representative for the province or country as a whole. The respondents were also in majority not knowledgeable about how many children are affected, sometimes not even in their target areas. Therefore, the 'snapshot' comes short in providing statistical reliable data on the number of affected children per exploitation category; unfortunately such data could not be included for lack of national or provincial surveys.

A constraint was finding information about Child Trafficking or Child Migration. The latter topics are mostly outside the purview and mandate of the respondents as it concerns children who were or still are on the other side of the border or remain invisible for other reasons.

4.1.3 Fieldwork mission

The fieldwork mission itself consisted of four components, namely

- A) interviews with representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or International Organisations (IOs) with proven experience in child protection and/or addressing child exploitation issues;
- B) Officials of Provincial Departments of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth (DoSVY) and police or immigration agencies;
- C) Informal conversations with market vendors

or customers, staff of tourist entertainment enterprises like bars, Karaoke Televisions, massage parlours, and during community visits with local authorities, leaders and informed people;

D) two focus group discussions (FGD) with Youth (16 – 18 y, 50% male) in Phnom Penh; E) mapping and online survey among NGOs addressing child exploitation in Cambodia of existing interventions. The Mission took place in Phnom Penh and six provincial cities (Pursat, Battambang, Poipet, Siem Reap, Oddar Meanchey and Sihanoukville). These provinces were selected because they are tourist destinations and/or are also bordering Thailand and thus a source for cross-border migration. Sihanoukville is besides a tourist destination a destination for domestic labour migration⁶¹.

After one week of interviews in Phnom Penh a field trip was undertaken for 11 days starting in Pursat and ending in Sihanoukville (See for methodological details annex D). Consequently the collected data was entered in a spreadsheet organised by topics which was used for the 'deeper dive' analysis and reporting during the next three weeks.

The study collected and analysed mostly limited to information, as per study objectives, on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia, including on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism (SECTT)⁶², and Child Trafficking⁶³ and Migration, Children Left behind by migrating parents and Children migrating for work.

4.2 General Situation of Children

The sources of the information in this and following chapters are the respondents of the field mission unless other sources are listed. **The largest category of children who are at risk of exploitation and (sexual) abuse are street-children and among these the children without a home and/or parents or guardians to supervise and protect them (the street-living children)**⁶⁴. Such children were before the COVID-19 pandemic often seen at city centres or near the temple complex in Siem Reap, or at beaches in Sihanoukville, begging or selling flowers, books, souvenirs etc. Now they are rarely seen at the city centres⁶⁵, partly because of city's 'smart' policies which aim at a 'clean' city without dirt but also without beggars, but mainly because during the COVID-19 period people avoided city centres and other public places. Therefore, these children moved to local markets at the outskirts of the cities where they could

⁶¹These selection criteria are based on the researcher's own extensive experience in Cambodia, which are confirmed by publications consulted during the literature review (see bibliography).

⁶²SECTT is defined as any 'acts of sexual exploitation embedded in a context of travel, tourism, or both', Offenders on the Move: Global Study on SECTT, Expat 2016. ⁶³Trafficking in Persons and thus also Child Trafficking is defined as 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation', United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, Annex 2 (or Palermo Protocol), UN General Assembly 2000. ⁶⁴Personal communication of Friends International and Damnoek Toek staff. ⁶⁵Davis, J.: '636 children between the ages of 13 and 17 [were found] to be sleeping directly on streets in Poipet' citing Stark, et al., 2017) p.8.

As a consequence, NGOs like Mith Samlanh in Phnom Penh or Kalyanmith in Siem Reap, which support these children have also moved following the children. Mith Samlanh operates now five zone offices in Phnom Penh's slum areas.

Another category of children at risk are children from parents who migrate for work, the 'left behind' children who in most cases are young and cared for by grandparents or other kin. The main risk they encounter is dropping out of school, especially if the local school is far away. The older children, if they join their parents, are at risk to be involved in child labour activities. This is also the case for domestic migrants who often bring their whole family during seasonal or temporary work. Three professionals in Battambang and Siem Reap mentioned spontaneously that sexual and domestic violence increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, with occasional observations that raped girls being forced to marry their sex offender (to avoid shame for the family). Two respondents added that this was a practice which existed for a long time. It was also mentioned that boys were sexually abused, including by 'religious men' but that this is not something that most people are aware of or believe.

Two of these respondents noted that watching online pornography or sexual violence resulted in copying behaviour by young men, and that rapes by minors of minors had increased. At all provincial cities respondents mentioned, often staff of government agencies, that the sexual abuse and rape of girls and sometimes boys in local communities by neighbours or local strangers had increased during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents of two government agencies in Sihanoukville noted that they currently got more reports of sexual abuse by locals of boys than girls, but very rarely by foreigners.

One respondent mentioned the plight of pregnant women or young mothers who are serving sentences in prison with their young children. He said: 'These children are often malnourished, have no schooling and they have never seen the outside world (or trees!), but only the prison grounds'. According to this NGO representative there are about 20 mothers with young children in the Siem Reap prison and an estimated 900 of such innocent children in prisons in the country. Only

a few organisations care for these children or for the increasing numbers of children convicted of small crimes who have to spend years in prisons throughout the country. The law which offers alternative punishments in communities (the 'diversion' measure) is still rarely applied, but where it was done the local authorities are satisfied with the results (e.g. police in Sihanoukville).

4.3 Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism

The literature study found the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT) to be among the most concerning problems for children in Cambodia, with many civil and governmental organisations addressing the consequences or taking preventive actions. However, the literature sources were almost all from before the COVID-19 period and as the exploratory research has proved, quite outdated. The current situation of children shows a radical different picture because of the travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which virtually stopped sexual offenders from abroad. Although since a year borders reopened and travellers are welcomed, their number is still low compared to the pre-pandemic period which obviously has an effect on the sexual exploitation of children by travellers.

“One respondent mentioned the plight of pregnant women or young mothers who are serving sentences in prison with their young children. He said: ‘These children are often malnourished, have no schooling and they have never seen the outside world (or trees!), but only the prison grounds’. According to this NGO representative there are about 20 mothers with young children in the Siem Reap prison and an estimated 900 of such innocent children in prisons in the country”

4.3.1 Prevalence data sources

In the absence of statistical nationwide surveys, few sources are available to measure trends in prevalence of child exploitation issues. One relative objective source are the number of calls of a

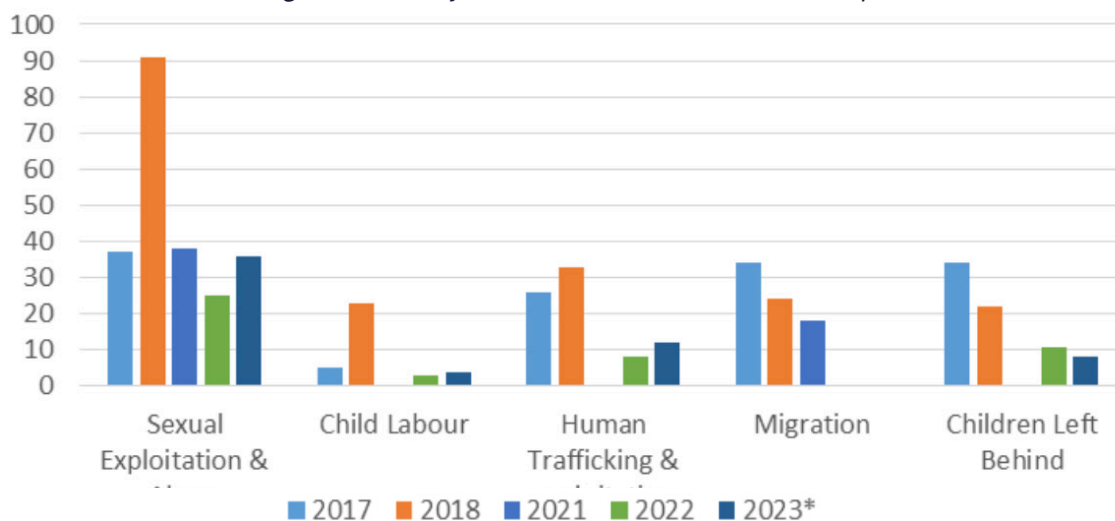
specific theme to the Child Helpline. While before COVID-19 the number of calls on sexual abuse by travellers were high, in the period from January 2022 up to April 2023 there were very few calls, and still lower post-pandemic than before the pandemic (See the graph below for details). The same is the case about child labour, human trafficking and children left behind by (migrating) parents. Migration shows a steady declining trend. Except for the issue of Children left behind by (migrating) parents these data are in line with the findings of the exploratory research.

The Child Helpline database’s category Sexual Exploitation and Abuse includes all types of sexual exploitation and abuse, with SECTT being just one among them. The number of calls on the latter type and on child labour have been too low throughout the 2017 to March 2023 period to show a trend. Numbers of calls on migration involving children show a steady decline over the 2017 – 2021 period (no calls on migration during the years 2022 – 2023). Also calls on Human Trafficking & Exploitation, involving a child, and on children left behind, decreased in the post-pandemic years.

The number of calls made to the Child Helpline Cambodia indicate some interesting trends as shown in the graph above (the COVID-19 years 2019 – 20 are not included as the data was not consistently collected). While the number of calls offer of course not an objective and statistical valid proof of a trend, it indicates at least a trend in number of children and adults who did talk about these issues.

Another source is the APLE database, with 72 cases sent to prosecution, 135 victims supported and 580 calls received on their hotline for the year 2022. These cases include all reported child sexual abuses. The annual data reports on rescued children show a small decline over the period 2017 - 2020, but an increase in the years after the COVID-19 pandemic with a high increase in 1st Quarter of 2023.

Figure 1 Calls by children and adults to Child Helpline



Note: The years of the COVID-19 pandemic have not been included in the graph as data at those times were not considered systematic by CCH. Also, this data should not be considered representing in- or decrease of sexual abuse and exploitation cases – it represents only calls to the hotline on these issues. In 2018 there was special donor support on issues of sexual exploitation and abuse, child labour, human trafficking & exploitation, migration and children left behind which increased calls on these issues. However, since 2019 donors supported these issues no longer which issues influenced the number of calls.

* first quarter of 2023 data; to match the graph this data has been extrapolated for the whole year (times 4).

Table 5: Cases of or Calls on child sexual abuse and exploitation reported by APLE

APLE reporting	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	1st Q of 2023
rescued exploited/abused children	58	42	31	31	34	42	22
Child sexual exploited/abused calls	63	113	120	103	72	57	21

Respondents in Battambang, Poipet, and Oddar Meanchey said that there are no sex offender cases reported since mid-2022, also not via the local hotlines, and in Siem Reap and Sihanoukville were one or two cases reported of sexual abuse by travellers since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Phnom Penh none of the respondents or informants mentioned that they knew of a report of sexual exploitation of children by travellers or tourists in 2022. Most respondents who were asked about this said that this is due to the closure of the borders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Without open borders no travellers with an intent to exploit sexually children could enter the country, they said.

Informants at the entertainment places in Phnom Penh were thinking that it still was likely that abuse cases existed, but that these were hidden and not reported. They pointed to the use of drugs by children, some who are not even 14 – 15 year old, and their need to get money for this addiction; therefore they might ‘trade sex’, said one informant.

There recently was a case of a boy being raped by a traveller, but because the family and the boy benefited from the perpetrator, the family did not cooperate with the authority and police did not file a report (DoSVY staff in Siem Reap).



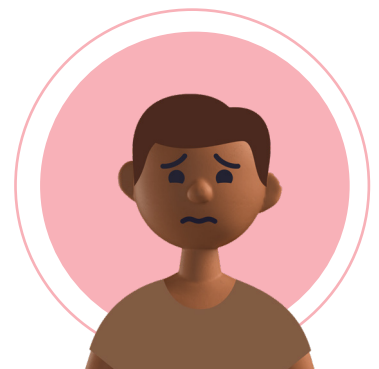
Mostly, professionals heard about cases via social media but not by direct experience. This was also the case of the informants at markets or in the communities. No-one of the latter category had any direct experience with or heard in their direct environment about a case of child exploitation by a traveller or tourist. Some of these informants, who did not know about any case of sexual exploitation by travellers, were local authorities and teachers who generally are well informed about problems concerning children in their communities.

4.3.2 OCSE related to SECTT

In Battambang and Sihanoukville several respondents spontaneously mentioned a connection between online contact and abuse by strangers, although a government staff in Battambang said that it is a rare occurrence happening in remote districts. He recalled the following case: ‘A 16-year-old girl when she was out of school, she always hid in her room and she was in love. Her boyfriend persuaded her to take nude photos and pornographic videos to send to him. Later, the video was leaked to the girl’s mother, who decided to move the family to another area’.

Government sources in Sihanoukville said that perpetrators are mainly relatives or community people the victims know. There are 7 cases of OCSE on children less than 18 years old, this last year. They know about these cases because the victims reported it themselves. Out of these cases, 3 perpetrators were arrested in 2022. Another case is about a grandmother taking care:

The grandmother was busy, allowing her grandchildren using her phone to watch together with their siblings. The six kids were watching a pornographic video. The parents when found out reported this to police and filed a law suit, but this was not prosecuted as all children were relatives (Police in Sihanoukville).



4.4 Left Behind by Migrated Parents

Information about this topic was provided by 18 of the 50 interviewed professionals. In most cases they confirmed the information from other informants and in no case they contradicted the obtained information. There is thus a common acknowledgment among officials, civil society organisations and community members about the situation of children left behind due to the migration for work of their parents.

The picture is as follows and not different from what the literature presents, indicating that there has not much changed since before the COVID-19 pandemic:

“Parents who migrate for a longer-term and/or on a temporary basis or as seasonal labourers, often leave young children with the grandmother (mostly the maternal grandmother) behind. The grandmother has little authority over these children when they reach puberty. They dropout from school, work on the street, end-up as a street child. Parents leave their children behind because they need money and migrate for work. The caretakers often are too old to care for them and/or to bring them to school”.

4.4.1 From Phnom Penh to Oddar Meanchey to Sihanoukville

A Phnom Penh key informant estimated that about a hundred children currently are ‘left behind’ in the slum areas by their parents who are looking for work at factories. The smaller children stay with grandparents or older siblings. A respondent in Battambang said that most migrants are living near the border or coming from poor provinces and stay only for shorter periods in the city, but

that there are indeed some local cases; for example:

Recently, we have a case of 6 children, including 3 boys, 9 years old, 3 girls, 7 years old, their parents have migrated to Thailand and sent their children to stay with their grandmother to take care of them. Now it happens more than ever, their parents have to migrate because of the debt (DoSVY staff in Battambang).



Sources in Siem Reap observed that not many children migrate with their parents to work abroad, but that they often are left with grandparents or other relatives. These children are at risk of malnourishment because the caretakers are poor and they do not have enough food. But some families who work at the big plantations take all their children with them to stay.

Oddar Meanchey

Oddar Meanchey is the province most often mentioned having the largest rate of children left behind by migrated parents. A recent press conference by a provincial official – coincidentally during the research team’s visit – confirmed this when he spoke about one of the consequences, namely the highest school drop-out rates in the country.

Speaking at Royal Government Spokesperson Unit in Phnom Penh yesterday, Pech Ratana, director of Oddar Meanchey Provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sport, said:

“The dropout rate is at 7%, at lower class levels in Oddar Meanchey province every year due to

to migration of parents, especially in remote areas. When parents shift to places for work away from their house, children find it difficult to attend school. Some parents migrate to Thailand for one or more years which causes their children to miss the school.

Parents are constantly migrating for jobs, and also there is a lack of schools in remote areas as well. These factors cause the high drop-out rate in the province. The province sees a fluctuating rate of 7 to 8% every year because children are forced to accompany their parents wherever they go.

Then, there are plantation workers who bring their children to stay with them. The plantations are mostly in remote areas which do not provide kindergarten and primary schools for workers' children. The workers also cannot take their children to schools in urban areas," added Rathana.

Besides, when children cannot join primary schools on time due to their parents' migration, they feel ashamed of studying with younger students."

(Source: Chhun Sunly / Khmer Times 27-3-2023)

Other sources in the province not only confirmed this but estimated that twenty to thirty percent of parents migrate to work in Thailand and leave their children with relatives at home. That was also the case before COVID-19 and only stopped during the closure of the border during the pandemic. They work in construction or in the agriculture sector, picking fruit or other activities. Although children living with their grandparents could go to school, in many cases the school is far away – too far for elderly to walk – and nearby schools most often do not offer classes beyond grade 6. Schools which provide higher grades are rare in most rural districts in Oddar Meanchey province. The research team visited the border crossing-point where local vendors confirmed that many people daily, but more often for longer periods, crossed the border for work in Thailand. The research team also visited a remote village and questioned local people about the left behind children. The village was virtually empty and many houses were closed; it was difficult to find people. The few local people met said that many families went to Thailand with all their children, or that their children were brought elsewhere to stay with relatives. The research team met after a long time searching three households with grandmoth-

ers who were taking care of grandchildren:

“Most of the children are 2 to 3 year old. Older children, especially over 14 years, are not going to school as there are no schools nearby. They follow their parents to work in Thailand, and this was always so, also before the COVID-19 pandemic”.

Sihanoukville

Sihanoukville was the last city to be visited by the research team, originally intended to obtain information on sexual abuse of children, as before the COVID-19 pandemic this was one major destination for child sex offenders (Davis 2014, Ecpat 2018). However, the city is also a major destination area for domestic migrants wanting to find work in the construction sites. They brought their children with them, the older who join their parents at the work place, while the younger ones often engage in begging, scavenging and other typical street-children's activities. A local NGO has consequently extended their support to include this target group.

The re-opening of the business sector after the pandemic attracts workers from other provinces (Koh Kong, Kampot or further away) who come to work in construction sites and benefit from the free shelter options in the many abandoned buildings. They take their children with them, but not being registered in the city the children cannot attend school. The before mentioned NGO takes the younger children in their shelter and in collaboration with the provincial Department of Social Affairs registers them at local primary schools where they can get an education, while their parents are working.

However, the living conditions are not good for the health and development of young children, while the temporary shelter in abandoned buildings without proper sanitary conditions is not ideal; however, the free of charge shelter is attractive to workers who need to save money.

4.4.2 Effects of migration on children

A NGO staff in Pursat said that children who are left behind by their parents not always get the love and care they need, because the caretakers often need to work to earn an income. This can cause

trauma for a young child, she said. Respondents who in their work come into contact with children whose parents have or are migrated all indicate that those children often do not get enough and healthy food or parental care and supervision. This is also mentioned in a recent report (UNICEF 2023). These children are often behind in their education (due to missing classes or lack of education options) and after the age of ten they are used to do work in the household, on the farm or even for earning money. Young children are sad and miss their mother, the Pursat respondent said. However, beside these also by most other respondents mentioned effects, they did not cite other impacts of migration on children.

A qualitative study by UNICEF (2017) conducted before the pandemic on the effects of migration on children in the for the research selected cities, except Sihanoukville, found that lack of money and fear of losing their land, which was put as collateral for loans, forced parents living in provinces bordering Thailand to send their working-age children (15 and above) to work across the border. Eighty-two percent of migrating parents left their younger children with grand-parents, who themselves lived in often difficult circumstances, had bad health and were overwhelmed by the burden of taking care of their grandchildren. However, faced with the financial problems of their own children they have to do it. One grandmother said: "The little one is so active, I can never leave her alone. I am too old to watch her properly".

Lack of time to look permanently after the children was a major concern for the caretakers of left behind children and for migrated parents who took their older children with them. In both cases they could not supervise the children properly. In some cases older children decide themselves to go to work and leave their village and parents. One 16 year old garment worker in Phnom Penh said: *"My family is poor, my parents supported my study but I couldn't stand seeing them working so hard. I decided to go to Phnom Penh without telling them. They were very angry with me."*

4.5 Child Labour & Child Trafficking

Some information on the sub-theme of child labour was provided by 21 of the 50 professionals, but no-one had substantial information about children being trafficked. This does not mean that

no child trafficking occurs, but it is not reported either visible or obvious to NGO or government staff or the public.

The general consensus among the respondents was (although each contributed different points) that adolescent children work part- or fulltime at car garages, restaurants, brick factories (there with their families) or sell souvenirs at Angkor Wat or goods at markets and beaches. In Phnom Penh respondents said that children sell vegetables and flowers at slum areas and that some children work at small workshops. Respondents in Pursat province expressed that families often migrate for seasonal work to Phnom Penh or Sihanoukville for a few months, sometimes for a year or longer. They take their adolescent children with them considering them too old for school but not too young for work to earn an income.

The next two paragraphs describe the effects of migration on children found by the research. There are two major types of migration, international (across the border) or internal (domestic). The first migration type includes migration to countries like Thailand, Malaysia or South-Korea with Thailand being the major destination country. The latter type includes migration in the same province, to other provinces, to urban areas or for seasonal work (UNICEF 2017). In this report only the two major migration types are distinguished.

4.5.1 International migration

In Battambang, the staff of DoSVY reported that many children work; 14 – 16 year olds work at fruit plantations, and somewhat older children (15 – 17 year) work at night at restaurants, often to earn money to buy a smartphone.

In this area, the challenge is for young children between the ages of 7 and 9, who are forced by their parents to sell food or things and are begging on the streets at night. But all of these cases are not handled by the police, except in cases involving criminal offenses (Police staff in Battambang).



In Poipet no working children were seen by the research team at the border crossing, and local people said that since the reopening of the border only few children tried to earn money in the way they did before the pandemic, like pulling carts or carrying suitcases for tourists. Instead, local people said, 14 to 16 year olds go to work across the border in Thailand.

In Siem Reap, respondents of NGOs and Government agencies noted that some children under 18 years of age work at restaurants or at factories, but they did not mention to know of any kind of work by children that is defined as Worst Forms of Child labour (WFCL). A government respondent said that also at brick factories there is less child labour because of an agreement between the authorities and factory owners not to employ children. He said that some owners hired teachers to teach children who are with their parents who work at the brick factory (mainly at Banteay Srey district). The provincial Department of Labour conducts inspections regularly, and therefore, according to this source, there are no children working in factories. However, some children are living with their parents at the factory and sometimes they help their parents to carry bricks after school. This government respondent said that the government is now very strict about prohibiting child labour.

Observations made during several night-times at the tourist market area ('Pub street') showed that no adult or child beggars were active with police security nearby. However, during one evening when no police was in sight, a young mother with her two very young children was begging. A waitress of the nearby restaurant said that this mother sometimes came for begging with her two small daughters sitting next to her.

BEGGING CHILDREN - A STORY WE ALL KNOW! REALLY? Case Story 1

Halfway our mission, in Siem Reap town which is the ultimate holiday destination for tourists from over the world, I was sitting on a sidewalk in the middle of the nightlife bazaar. I looked out on a road crossing and saw a young wom-

an with two small children on either side of her sitting in the middle of this crossing. For about half an hour I observed what happened, happy tourists with cameras passed the family on all sides.

We all have seen this before, desperate households begging for money. This family was different, it was around nine when I noticed them first, sitting there quiet with a small basket in front of the 3-year old. Now and then someone dropped some money in the basket, but most people looked around them and almost stepped on the children, having noticed them at the last moment.

After about a quarter of an hour, suddenly the mother went away, leaving the two small children sitting alone in the middle of the street. A large group of tourists arrived led by a guide and they stopped at the crossing to find their way. They had no inkling that they were almost trampling the two small children! They went their way, seemingly unaware of the small children at their feet.

After about five minutes the mother came back and the begging resumed. I was looking out for the police which customary guards the crossing but they were nowhere to be seen. That must have been the reason the young mother could continue to beg as it is the government policy to chase beggars away. That was why we were informed if we wanted to observe begging children to look out for them after midnight when the police has gone home. Not so, this family.

I noticed a young tourist lady bending down and talking to the children and woman, after which she put some money in the basket. I left the restaurant and observed the mother and her young children from across the street. While passing her I checked the content of the basket which was full with 1000 Riel notes, perhaps in total 20,000 Riel (or ca. \$5). A lot of money for one hour sitting! Soon the small family went their way, the 3-year old girl grasping the basket with the money in such a way that she must have done this many times. I asked the waitress, who was also watching,

if she saw this family more often. 'Yes', she said: 'They come here often. But what can the mother do if she has no money? She has to bring the children with her! Better than leaving them alone at home'.

In Oddar Meanchey, there are few if any opportunities to beg for money from tourists, but families can allow their children to contribute to the family income in other ways. Local authorities said not having observed many cases of child labour at the moment. There are some children over 15 years old working at car garages. In the whole province, a police respondent estimated that there are up to 20 to 30 percent of people migrating to work abroad in Thailand. He said that migration is nothing new in this province, people are moving back and forth to Thailand to earn an income which they not can at home. However, he said, this is not a matter to deal with for the police as it not is a crime. One NGO staff said that the Banteay Ampil district is thought to have the most people migrating. Many 14 – 15 year old children drop out of school to follow their parents to work in Thailand. The three grandmothers who are caring for their grandchildren, met during the field mission, said that in general, in their area, most of the children who are 15 – 16 years old, always went to work with their parents; this was so before and remained the same after the COVID-19 pandemic.

15-17 year olds dropped out of school to work in Poipet and Thailand due to family debt. After COVID's problem was alleviated, 15-16 year olds dropped out of school, with brokers advising them to work in the online casino area (information from several local vendors; paraphrased).



4.5.2 Internal migration

In Sihanoukville, casinos used to hire 14 – 15 year old girls at good wages who had stopped schooling or consequently dropped out of school. The provincial Department of Labour concluded that such environments were not appropriate for these children as they were at risk of exploitation and abuse, and stopped the practice. A police source said that nowadays no child labour cases are reported in her city. Also provincial Department of Social Affairs spokesmen said the same, they only found children selling souvenirs on the beaches because parents need them to earn money to support the family.

Despite these official disclaimers, a reliable NGO recorded around 167 children in 2022 as child labour cases⁶⁶. Their parents want them to earn money for themselves; the children sell small things, beg, scavenge or even steal to get money. A number of local informants said that after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, more and more children are migrating with their parents to Sihanoukville for work, as jobs in the area have become available again.

DOMESTIC MIGRANT Case Story 2

A mother, aged around 40, migrated from Kampong Cham province with her whole family to Sihanoukville, to work to earn an income. She lives in a shelter at a construction site. She decided to come here because she needed money to pay a debt, and at her home village she can only seasonally work on her small plot of land. Her husband is a construction worker, while she is selling small groceries from her front-yard room. Her husband earns 60.000 Riels or around 15\$ per day, plus some bonus if he has to work overtime. She cares for two children and she sells groceries what earns her around 30,000 Riels or 7.5\$ per day. Her daughter is around 6 years old and has now started her education at the M'Lop Tapang's kindergarten school. The mother said that without the NGO her young daughter would be sent to find money to add to the family income.

⁶⁶The discrepancy with the information from the government sources might be an issue of definition (working children versus WFCL).

4.6 Trends & Causes

4.6.1 Trends

During the exploratory research, respondents did not mention to know of many new trends on the concerned issues and related people's or others' behaviour and practices, but four emerging trends were mentioned:

- A new trend is reported for Phnom Penh, namely that brokers use Telegram to offer young girls, showing pictures of 14 – 15 year olds and with \$/ per hour prices listed! Apps like Badoo, Tinder or Vchat are increasingly used to make connections for getting sex with children.

- Respondents in Pursat mentioned a new practice among high school students from different schools who 'gang-up' and engage in fighting each other.

- A NGO staff was worried about a recent practice whereby pushers or sometimes parents force children to trade drugs.

- One staff of a Phnom Penh based NGO said that a recent new trend has emerged. Middle and high school children, often from well-to-do families, are having emotional stress due to feelings of neglect and loneliness. Their schools called the hotline to get support for these children – seven cases in the last two months, he said.

4.6.2 Causes and factors

There is a great consensus among all respondents, regardless if they are from NGOs, Government agencies or selling at the market, that debt, including and especially from micro finance lending agencies, is the main cause for labour migration and in some cases for child labour and drop-out of school. It is also mentioned as the driving factor for leaving children behind with relatives.

But one respondent mentioned that migration could happen because of going for a study abroad or for pursuing a life dream which could not be realised at home.

In one case of SECTT, the obvious factor mentioned by the government respondent was materialism of the family of the abused boy⁶⁷. Another factor mentioned was that if a parent was ad-

dicted to drugs, gambling or alcohol and needed money for his addictions he could force a child to engage in sex with a traveller.

One NGO respondent mentioned as a factor contributing to sexual assault of children that young men easily can view online sexual violence, which might incite copycat behaviour.

Research Findings

After a robust literature review followed by a three-week field assessment in Phnom Penh, the north-west region and Sihanoukville, where interviews were conducted with staff from 26 NGOs and 11 provincial or District Government Agencies (Police and/or Department of Social Affairs), and where was talked with 25 private sector staff and 28 street-talks (market vendors, market customers, tuktuk drivers, and 3 grandmothers), the following findings were found in regard of the two main research questions.

However, no substantial information could be obtained whether sub-population groups, like children with disabilities, with a different sexual orientation or from ethnic minority groups are more at risk of SECTT, trafficking or child labour than children of the main population group. What could be established is that no-one of the expert informants considered that there is a need for additional specific programmes in the North-Western region, Phnom Penh or Sihanoukville to protect

these sub-population groups from sexual or other exploitation and abuse. The existing programmes will include already any of such cases, two NGO respondents said. However, two Government sources in Oddar Meanchey province observed that there are no civil society organisations operating child protection programmes in their area, like before the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus in their area are no programmes to prevent harm to or assist children, from mainstream or sub-population groups, which are at risk or victims of sexual abuse in their home environment, nor prevent child labour in a systematic way.

Before providing the main conclusions on the two main themes for this study, **a few topics are listed which are outside the research scope, but nevertheless should get some attention. These are: a) the care for street-working and particularly street-living children in the major cities, although they are pushed out the city centres to the outskirts; b) the concern with young**

staying with their mothers in prisons; c) and the attention that need to be given to juveniles who serve time in prisons for minor crimes – sometimes for years, instead of being sentenced to an alternative punishment which fits better for juveniles.

5.1 Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism

The pandemic and its measures have halted cross-border travel for foreigners and therewith criminal activities associated with travel. However, it was a surprise for the research team that the phenomenon after almost nine months of re-opening the borders for tourists, still was virtually non-existent. The measures and attention to prevent SECTT by the Government and civil society organisations, introduced before the pandemic, might have had a deterring effect on travelling perpetrators. Some respondents worried that this would not stop foreign perpetrators in the near future, especially in view of the withdrawal of many in this field specialised civil organisations in the provinces. Several government agency staff acknowledged that they do not have the capacity or the resources to replace these specialised civil organisations.

Main findings of the exploratory research are:

1. There is no indication that child abuse and exploitation by travellers and tourists is currently happening systematically or at scale along the Thai-Cambodian border, in Phnom Penh or in Sihanoukville at the moment. There might have been a few cases which are not reported and therefore might have escaped attention by authorities and local operating NGOs. The lack of cases seems a logical result of the still low flow of travellers and individual tourists.

2. Although commercial sexual exploitation in bars, massage parlours, Karaoke-Television locations and other entertainment places in Phnom Penh is banned and illegal, there are indications that it still happens; but there are no indications found that there are minors 'employed' to offer sexual services (However, it is very difficult to assess whether under-aged girls or boys work in the sex sector as after the ban on prostitution this practice has gone underground).

5.2 Children Left Behind & Child Labour

Like for the first sub-theme, the pandemic and its measures have halted cross-border travel and therewith criminal activities, including child trafficking which was not reported in any of the visited locations. The issue of children left behind and child labour are so much intertwined that they are presented together in this conclusive paragraph.

In all locations visited by the research team evidence was found that children were left behind and cared for by grandparents or other relatives when their parents migrated abroad to find work, but they form a relative small proportion of the population (although no estimated percentages could be obtained) except for the border provinces of Oddar Meanchey and most likely also the neighbouring province of Banteay Meanchey. In Oddar Meanchey very large proportions of parents with school-aged children migrate. In one village, visited by the research team, local people estimated that both parents of three out of every ten families were working in Thailand. Also, NGO and Government staff estimated that parents of one-fifth up to one-third of households for shorter or longer periods migrated to Thailand for work.

They migrate for work during weeks or months to Thailand, and most leave their younger children at home with grandparents, older siblings or other care takers, while older children (12 to 18) are often joining their parents or migrate individually.

Similarly, forms of child labour were found in all visited locations, but work for wage was done mostly by adolescent children, or they joined their parents and migrate abroad for work. Younger children engage in begging, scavenging or helping out at small shops. In no area actual prevalence rates could be obtained, but at slum areas in the major cities more small children were observed engaging in some form of income earning than in the city centres – perhaps the main change after the pandemic.

Figure 2: Border point in Oddar Meanchey province.



Domestic migration for labour purposes from rural poor areas is a long-standing practice, which halted during the pandemic, but has taken up since the re-opening of borders, factories and construction sites, although not yet reaching the high rates of before. However, Sihanoukville is a case apart – since the construction boom in 2016 workers from other provinces came to Sihanoukville to find work. This was partly halted during the COVID-19 period but has resumed since mid-2022, and even increased drastically as work at construction sites restarted again. The situation is now dire with an estimated 500 migrant families and thousands of their children having moved to the city to work in the construction sites. They find free-of-charge shelter in the many abandoned buildings which is an extra attraction to draw families from nearby and sometimes far away provinces. However, their school-aged children cannot go to school without registration as a citizen, and small children are often left behind and alone during the hours that the parents are working. They might stay at home but more often they venture out to the beach or other locations where they can find some money.

turn to earn an income, because at home they could not harvest enough rice from their land for her family year-round. Her husband is now working as a security guard in this construction site with a monthly flat salary of 250\$. She does not work as she needs to prepare meals and take care of her two children after school, but she sells local cakes that earns her around 25,000 riels or 6.25 \$ daily. She said that the family's incomes together with the support from M'Lop Tapang allows her to buy food and basic stuff for her family. She also can pay-off her debt with a private money lender at her home village. The two children are currently studying at the NGO's school, and their support her children couldn't get an education.

DOMESTIC MIGRANT Case Story 3

A middle-aged mother from Prey Veng province has two children, 8 years and 10 years old. Her family used to work as construction workers before the COVID-19 pandemic, but left during the pandemic. Now they decided to re-

Conclusions of the Literature Review and Exploratory Research

In this section, conclusions are drawn from facts and findings found in the literature review and the exploratory research. The literature review covers a much broader range of themes and topics about child exploitation than the exploratory research, which study themes were limited to Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism (SECTT), Children left behind and Working Children (including Children working at home or migrated for work domestically and in Worst Forms of Child Labour). Important overall conclusion is

that the findings of the literature study regarding Child Labour and Migration or Children Left Behind by migrated parents are not contradicted by the exploratory research. In other words, children fitting under these themes are as much affected before as after the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, while the literature study finds strong evidences for a relative high prevalence of children affected in terms of SECTT and Child Trafficking, the research did not find indications that

the prevalence is as high nowadays as before the pandemic. In fact, respondents expressed that the numbers of children, who are victimised by traveling sex offenders or trafficked for sexual or labour purpose, currently are very low. They were the opinion that these numbers are low enough to be handled by current programmes implemented by government agencies and civil society organisations in the visited areas⁶⁸.

Because the literature review presents data mostly from sources before the COVID-19 pandemic while the exploratory research was done recently, comparisons have been made to show changes over time and upcoming trends for each of the three study themes. The findings or conclusions resulting from the exploratory research are presented in italic font to designate the study method of each text.

6.1 Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism

UNICEF estimated that around a decade ago 100,000 persons were involved in commercial sex work in the country (Defence for Children, Ecpat 2014). Another study in 2016 among 332 establishments found that 8 out of 100 sex workers were younger than 18 years, and slightly less than 10% of these were younger than 15 years (Rafferty 2016). This amounts to 8,000 children working in the commercial sex industry, among which 750 children below the age of 15 years at the time. This concerns girls as well as boys, more of the latter affected by travelling sex offenders (Miles 2016). Male street children are eight times more at risk than girls (Davis 2017a).

Reports on the main sex offenders indicate that Cambodian men are the 'largest source of demand' for children exploited in sex trafficking, with 3 out of 4 offenders having the Cambodian nationality (Ros 2017; ECPAT 2012). However, such figures apply to the Southeast Asian region as a whole too (Hawke 2016 p.14, 42; Davy 2017 p.16). Terre des Hommes NL and APLE reported that the rapid growth in travel, tourism and business investment in the years up to 2019 facilitated Cambodia becoming one of the most popular destinations in the region for travelling sex offenders (TdH NL 2019). This was also reported by ECPAT in 2016⁶⁹.

A conclusion of the current exploratory research is contradicting the literature findings: there is no indication that nowadays child abuse and exploitation by travellers and tourists is happening systematically or at scale (there might have been a few cases which are not reported and therefore might have escaped attention by authorities and local operating NGOs) along the Thai-Cambodian border or in Sihanoukville at the moment, which seems a logical result of the still low flow of travellers and individual tourists.

Further, although commercial sexual exploitation in bars, massage parlours, Karaoke Television locations and other entertainment places in Phnom Penh is banned and illegal, there still are indications that it sometimes happens; but there are no indications found that there are minors 'employed' who offer sexual services (However, it is very difficult to assess whether under-aged girls or boys work in the sex sector as after the ban on 'prostitution' this practice has gone underground).

6.2 Children Left Behind (by migrated parents)

Literature sources inform that 80% of the children whose parents migrate stay behind (UN 2017)⁷⁰. The 2013 Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey estimated that 3.2% of all migrants were between 10 and 14 year and 5.1% were between 16 to 19 years (UNICEF 2017). Migrant parents and more often mothers travelling abroad take their children along (fathers 7% and mothers 16%). Boys constituted 7.4% and girls 15.5% of the companions travelling with one or both of their par-

⁶⁸The research findings only are representative for the study target areas, to know the national capital and the six provincial capitals, and these findings are not per se representative for the country as a whole. However, as these target areas are the major tourist destinations there is a high likelihood that also in other areas in the country at least a similar situation exist in terms of children affected by the negative consequences of the travel and tourism sector.

⁶⁹ECPAT International, 2016: Regional Report on SECTT, p.25

⁷⁰citing Ministry of Planning 2012

ents (Koenig 2016).

Many children of migrants, and especially migrants abroad, leave their younger children home with a relative, most often a grandparent (JSR 2021). Children staying behind are more likely to drop out of school than other children (15.6%), girls more than boys, while they are more likely have to work longer hours too (UN 2017)⁷¹. There are indications that when both parents are working abroad or even domestically far away from home that their children have an higher incidence of injury, illness and/or malnourishment (Ros 2017)⁷².

The exploratory research found working children at all visited locations⁷³, according to respondents, but none did mention to know of any report of serious child labour (too low age, not attending school, dangerous work or in WFCL).

Government sources did point to the strict labour inspections and one respondent said that a recent initiative to reach an agreement with company owners (e.g. brick factories) not to use child workers and the strict law enforcement had reduced child labour in his work area. **All interviewed provincial NGO experts and Government agency officers did not think that there are in their work areas large proportions of school-aged children who are involved as fulltime child labourer, or in WFCL, and they considered existing cases an exception.**

Further, interviewed Civil Society Organisation's (CSO) experts in Phnom Penh pointed out that while formal employment for minors is prohibited by law, and **Government and Labour Unions have been successful in reducing child labour in many enterprises**, an undetermined number of children still are full- or part-time working for a wage. **The experts knew of many cases of legally employed child labourers, enabled by falsified birth certificates making these children seem to be adults.**

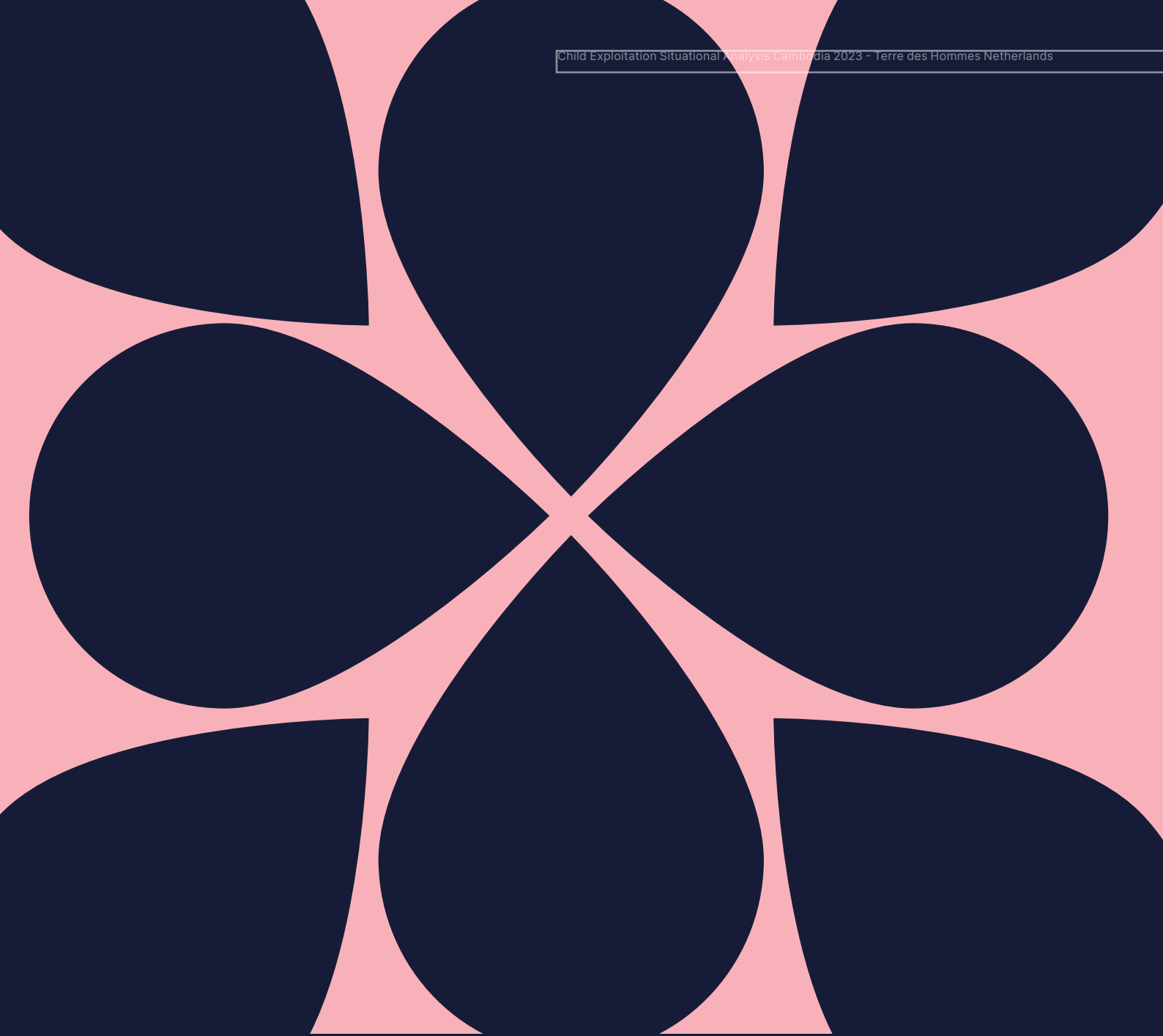
The situation of migrants in Sihanoukville is special because the large number of unfinished buildings in the city provide shelter for whole

families, while they easily can find work at construction sites. But these shelters do not offer sanitary or healthy and safe environments for the many young and school-aged children accompanying their parents. These children also cannot get education at local public schools too, because they lack residence registration. A local NGO in collaboration with the city's Department of Social Affairs provide temporary shelter and enlist these children at local primary schools. Material and social support is also provided to the families to assist them in their care for their children, but the numbers are overwhelming and resources scarce.

⁷¹See also CDRI 2014: The impacts of Adult Migration on Children's Well-being – The case of Cambodia.

⁷² See also Vutha H, Pide L, Dalis P: The Impacts of Adult Migration on Children's Well-being; The case of Cambodia, Phnom Penh CDRI 2014.

⁷³ II forms of economic activity (ILO Convention No.138); ILO defines 'Light work' for children aged 13 to 15 years as unlikely to be harmful for health or development, and no hindrance for attending school or vocational training (Defining Child Labour, E. Edmonds, ILO 2009).



Annexures

ANNEX A: Bibliography of Literature Study

ID in Summary	Publisher(s)	Title
Anderson 2019	MoSVY	Good Practices in Family Preservation and Prevention of Family Separation Programming in Cambodia
APPLE 2014	APPLE	Investigating Traveling Child Sex Offenders
Baury 2018	ECPAT	Country overview: a report on the scale, scope and context of the sexual exploitation of children
Bendana 2019	JRS	The Human Trafficking Situation in Cambodia
Bryan 2018	California Maritime Academy	The Effects of Human Trafficking in the Southeast Asian Region
Chhun 2022	Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime	Cambodia's Trafficked Bride
Child Rights Now 2019	Joining Forces	Unlocking Cambodia's Future
CNCC 2019	Cambodia national Council for Children	Initial situation analysis on Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE) in Cambodia
Davis 2017a		On the Border – Exploring the Perspective & Experiences of Street-Involved Children on the Thai-Cambodian Border
Davis 2017		An Initial Exploration of Sexually Harmful Behaviours Among Cambodian Children
Davis 2021	"Slave free today	
volume 6, 1"	"Boys Are Like Gold": The Gendered Differences in Sexual Violence Against Street-Involved Children in Southwest Cambodia	
Davis 2021a	Dignity	Going it alone
Davy 2017	Ecpat	Regional Overview: Sexual Exploitation of Children in Southeast Asia
DOL 2020	Department of Labor, USA	Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Cambodia
Eastmond 2016	in Femina Politica – eitschrift fur feministische Politikwissenschaft, 25 (1), 66-78	The Trafficking of Men in Cambodia: how masculinities challenge notions of victimhood
Ecpat 2020	Ecpat International	Child, early and forced marriages as a form of, or pathway to sexual exploitation of children
Ecpat 2020	Ecpat	Online Child Sexual Exploitation
Ecpat 2020a	Ecpat	Sale and trafficking of children for sexual purposes
Ecpat 2022	Ecpat, Interpol and Unicef	Disrupting Harm in Cambodia
First Step 2017	First Step Cambodia	An Initial Exploration of Sexually Harmful Behaviors Among Cambodian Children
Hawke 2016	ECPAT	Offenders on the Move: Global study on sexual exploitation of children in Travel and Tourism
HRW 2019	HRW	Submission by HRW to the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning Cambodia
IJM 2016	IJM	Labor Trafficking in Cambodia
ILO 2015	ILO	Rapid assessment on child labour in the sugarcane sector in selected areas in Cambodia
IOM 2018	IOM	Human Trafficking Snapshot Cambodia
IOM 2021	IOM	Migration Governance Indicators, Profile 2021 Cambodia
Jordana 2017	World Vision	Situational Analysis on Child, Early and Forced Marriage in Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia
JRS 2021	Migrants & Refugees	Migrant Profile Cambodia

ANNEX A: Bibliography of Literature Study

ID in Summary	Publisher(s)	Title
Koenig 2016	IOM	Assessment Report: Profile of Returned Cambodia Migrant Worker
Laidler 2018	JRS	The Left Behind
Licadho 2016	LICADHO	Built on Slavery: Debt Bondage and Child Labour in Cambodia's Brick Factories
Licadho 2019	LICADHO	Collateral Damage
Miles 2016	International J of Holistic Mission Studies, 33(3), 185-196	Where are the boys? Where are the Men?
Morrison 2021	Dignity	You have to be strong and struggle
Nexus 2020	Winrock	Trafficking Victim Protection Frameworks in Cambodia ...
Plan 2018	Plan International	Time to Act!
Pocock 2016		Labour Trafficking among Men and Boys in the Greater Mekong Sub-region
Rafferty, Y.	Child & Abuse 52 (2016) 158-168	Challenges to the rapid identification of children who have been trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation
RoCK 2019	Rainbow Community Kampuchea (Rock)	Family Violence towards Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (LBT) people in Cambodia
Ros 2017	Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia	Migration, Human Trafficking Prevention and Sexual Exploitation
StC 2020	Save the Children	Live and Learn, qualitative research on SOIGESC
TdH 2020	TdH	The Evolution of SECTT in Northwest Cambodia
Tsai 2020	Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung Social Research, FQS 21, 1 16 – January 2020	"I Feel Like We Are People Who Have Never Known Each Other Before": The Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Transitioning From Shelters to Life in the Community
UN 2017	UN agencies	Overview of Internal Migration in Cambodia
UN 2021	United Nations	Outcome Report, National Launch of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty in Cambodia
UN-ACT 2016	UN-ACT	A Study on Forced Marriage between Cambodia and China
Unicef 2017	Unicef	The impact of migration on children
Unicef 2017a	UNICEF	A Familiar Face: violence in the Lives of Children and Adolescents
Unicef 2018	UNICEF	Statistical Profile of Child Protection in Cambodia
UNODC 2017	UNODC	Trafficking in persons from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar to Thailand
USDOS 2021	USA Dpt of State	Trafficking in Persons Report: Cambodia
USDOS 2022	USA Dpt of State	Trafficking in Persons Report: Cambodia
UN Women 2015	UN Women	Out behind closed doors' reveals workers' exposure to emotional, physical and sexual violence.
Vijghen 2011	World Vision Australia	Child Safe Tourism in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region
Vijghen 2020	Terre des Hommes	Final Evaluation of Contribute to reduction of prevalence of child marriage in Mondulkiri project

ANNEX A: Bibliography of Literature Study

ID in Summary	Publisher(s)	Title
Vijghen 2021	Plan International	School Dropout Survey
Walk Free Foundation 2016	Walk Free Foundation	Cambodia country study – Global Slavery Index 2016
Winrock 2020	Winrock	Year Five Annual Progress Report CTIP program

In addition

55 Other publications have been reviewed through the internal search tools using string terms like ‘Cambodian children, child exploitation, child abuse’ etcetera to identify relevant pieces of information, which when found are included in this paper and referred to by footnote. The complete set of source and background documents will be submitted electronically to TdH NL on request.

ANNEX B: Bibliography of Empirical Research

ID in Summary	Publisher(s)	Title
Borgstrom, J.; Larsson C., 2020	World Childhood Foundation & ECPAT Sweden	Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism, The Cambodian Case.
Davis, Jarrett -2017	UPI To end violence	On the Border. Exploring the Perspectives & Experiences of Street-involved Children on the Thai-Cambodian Border
Ecpat, 2018	Ecpat	Cambodia country overview
Ecpat 2020	Ecpat	Summary paper on the Sale and Trafficking of children for Sexual Purposes
Ecpat 2020	Ecpat	Summary paper on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Prostitution
Ecpat 2020	Ecpat	Summary paper on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism
Ecpat, 2021	Ecpat	Cambodia Legal Checklist
Ecpat 2022	Ecpat	South-East Asia Summary of Recommendations
Friends Int. 2014	Cyti and Friends Int.	Street Children Profile 2014: Profile Questionnaire Results.
UNICEF 2017	UNICEF	Executive Summary Study on the Impact of Migration on Children in the Capital and Target provinces, Cambodia,
UNICEF 2023	UNICEF	An Analysis of the Situation of Children and Adolescents in Cambodia 2023

ANNEX C: Fieldwork Report with Methodology

FIELDWORK REPORT

Training for researchers

A half day orientation was organized on 13 March 2023 to the two field researchers (one lead field consultant and one female researcher) who had previous experience in conducting similar field data collection, including KII with NGOs, DB and community, and facilitating focus group discussion. During the orientation, the team leader, Mr. John Vijghen briefly introduced background of the second phase deeper dive analysis and the rationale for conducting the study on the two themes selected by TdH NL.

During the training, all topic lists/tools were reviewed and explained and the researchers got chance to understand each point in the topic list/questionnaires. At the end of the orientation session, the team leader clarified on points and questions raised by the researchers, and ensured that important issues were understood clearly.

Field Data collection

The research team conducted a field-based assessment in six provinces and the capital to be able to inform Terre des Homme about the current situation in regard of Sexual Exploitation of Children and on Child Trafficking and Migration. A visit schedule was prepared, originally ten days to the five provincial cities of Pursat, Battambang, Poipet, Siem Reap and Oddor Meanchey, followed with a one-week assessment in Phnom Penh – using the provincial findings to discuss with NGO and Government representatives the state of the themes. However, this schedule had to be changed as permission to start work (and thus to make appointments in the provincial cities) was one week before commencement not yet given due to delayed signing of the contract. Time for making appointments was gained by conducting the Phnom Penh assessment first, but this had the disadvantage that provincial findings could not be discussed with the Phnom Penh-based respondents.

The Phnom Penh interviews were conducted from 13 till 17 March. The provincial data collection was conducted by a team of three researchers (an international researcher, a senior researcher and a field researcher) and started on 18 March till 31 March 2023 in six provincial cities, namely Pursat, Battambang, Poipet, Siem Reap, Oddor Meanchey, and Sihanoukville. In Phnom Penh and the six provincial cities a total of 26 NGOs and 11 Government agency representatives (e.g. Police, Department of Social Affairs) were interviewed; brief talks were held with a total of 19 community people and/or private actors at border points, local markets or entertainment places; during one remote village visit in Oddar Meanchey talks were held with 3 grandmothers who cared for 'left behind' grandchildren; and 2 focus group discussions were conducted with 6 youth in Phnom Penh. Major tourist locations in Phnom Penh and two border areas were observed (Poipet and Oddar Meanchey). (See the table of people/respondents met below for the details).

Street Observations

In addition, an assessment was conducted by another researcher in entertainment workplaces in the Phnom Penh central city areas during 5 days in the period from 20 to 31 March 2023 to obtain information on sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism sectors (SECTT), by talking informally with workers at bars, beer gardens, disco's, and massage parlors which are frequented by foreign visitors from western and eastern countries, such as Phsa Chas, Phsa Kandal, Wat Phnom, Beung Kok, Tuol Tumpoung. The researcher also talked with people who do business surrounding these places, such as Tuk-tuk drivers, street vendors or with local authorities in the areas. In total, 25 people (two females) were questioned.

Online Survey

An online short survey was conducted through email to 35 NGOs with child exploitation interventions to get an accurate picture of who is doing what and where. Non-responders were twice reminded, but only 3 NGOs did respond before the extended deadlines.

Mapping

A mapping was conducted of NGO child protection interventions through a website search.

Challenges at the Field

- Request to issue a letter from NCCT to get permission to interview subnational level stakeholders, such as police or social affairs officers, as well as local authorities was not received in time, except for the SHV visit. Informal approaches were used to meet with relevant authorities, often outside their office as they

did not have permission from their line managers.

- An informal approach was used to meet with workers at bars, beer gardens, disco's, massage parlours which are frequented by foreign visitors from western and eastern countries as they normally don't provide such information to reporter/or researchers. The accuracy of the information is not verifiable and answers could have been untrue.
- Some NGOs were not available for an interview during the field visit (e.g. Plan International, CCT, A21, Child Fund, FSC).
- Some NGOs who are in the contact list were closed or not active anymore in the location (e.g. CWCC, APLE in Siem Reap).
- A planned community visit in Phnom Penh to a zone office of Mith Samlanh, requested by staff of Friends International, could not be made because of no response from the zone office manager (even after repeated follow-up emails/phone calls).

Profile of the Field Researchers and Assistants

Lead Researcher – John Vijghen, Cultural Anthropologist

30 year in Asia, 38 studies & 102 evaluation missions. Excellent interview, focus group discussion and observation skills (Founder of Cambodian Researchers for Development). Demonstrated skills in literature and research studies. Excellent knowledge of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Proven excellent analysis and reporting skills. My specialty field is child protection, including on child marriage, child victims of human trafficking and neglect, women empowerment, etc.

Field Team Leader – Mr. OK Amry, MD

More 15 years of consultancy experience with more than 60 different research/M&E assignments, including 28 evaluation missions, 13 baseline studies, 4 midterm reviews. Team Leader of 16 assignments: responsible for designing research methodology (both quantitative and qualitative), developing research tools, training data collectors/ researchers, facilitating field data collection, managing and monitoring for quality assurance, performing data analysis and interpretation, writing research report and presenting the findings. For this assignments, he was responsible for managing the field data collection, facilitate KII with relevant stakeholders, supervising field staff for quality assurance, making field arrangements, check quality of field staff's works, writing field notes and support team leader in conducting data analysis, reporting and validation workshop.

Field Researcher – Mrs Sin Somala

Holding a BA in Marketing from National Institute of Management with 5-year fieldwork and data collection experience, including facilitating FGDs and KIIs with various stakeholders. Her role together was to conduct observation and interviews with various targets in market, in community, on the street, at school, local authorities and government official at subnational levels. She was also responsible for conducting interview with private actors, facilitating FGDs with youth groups who have experienced discussing social issues, particularly on child labour, migration and child exploitation.

Researcher – Mr. Khiev Dara

Former teacher, education inspector and journalist, Dara is well placed for the collection of information from informal sources. His responsibility was to conduct an assessment in the Phnom Penh central city areas to obtain information on sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism sectors (SECTT), by talking informally with workers at bars, beer gardens, disco's, massage parlours and other entertainment facilities which are frequented by foreign visitors from western and eastern countries.

Junior Researcher – Mr. Va Chanveasna

Holding dual degrees, BA in English Literature form Pannasastra University of Cambodia (PUC) and BA in Agricultural Economics and Rural Development with more than 3-year fieldwork experience, supporting field arrangements and data collection experience, including supporting in facilitating FGDs and

and conducting HH survey. His role for this assignment was to coordinate in updating field schedule, making phone call/or email to make appointment, checking NGO's websites to get relevant documents and making NGO's intervention mapping.

List of NGOs/Duty Bearers/Private Actors and Community People contacted

No. or Places"	Provinces or Location	"Institutions or Places	Respondents	Date/time	# of People
1	Phnom Penh	COCD	Staff	31/01/2023	1 (M)
2	Phnom Penh	Anonymous	Staff	01/02/2023	4 (4F)
3	Phnom Penh	UNICEF	Staff	02/02/2023	1 (M)
4	Phnom Penh	WVI	Staff	03/02/2023	4 (M)
5	Phnom Penh	Save the Children	Staff	07/02/2023	1 (M)
6	Phnom Penh	LAC	Staff	14/03/2023	1 (M)
7	Phnom Penh	Friends International	Staff	14/03/2023	1 (M)
8	Phnom Penh	Private Actor	Worker	14/03/2023	1 (F)
9	Phnom Penh	Winrock	Staff	15/03/2023	1 (M)
10	Phnom Penh	Community	Broker	15/03/2023	1 (F)
11	Phnom Penh	Community	Village Chief	15/03/2023	1 (F)
12	Phnom Penh	CODO	Social worker	15/03/2023	1 (F)
13	Phnom Penh	Community	School Teacher	15/03/2023	1 (F)
14	Phnom Penh	Private Actor	Guesthouse Manager	16/03/2023	1 (M)
15	Phnom Penh	APLE	Coordinator	17/03/2023	1 (M)
16	Phnom Penh	CRC-C	Staff	17/03/2023	1 (M)
17	Phnom Penh	Private Actor	Club Manager	17/03/2023	1 (F)
18	Pursat	COCD	"Coordinator and volunteer"	19/03/2023	2 (1F1M)
19	Battambang	Don Bosco	Manager	20/03/2023	1 (F)
20	Battambang	CFI	Director	20/03/2023	1 (M)
21	Battambang	KMR Komar Rikreay	Director and her staff	20/03/2023	2 (F)
22	Battambang	Local Market	Psar Nat Market	21/03/2023	4 (3F1M)
23	Battambang	Local DB	CCWC of O's Cha Sangkat	21/03/2023	1 (F)
24	Battambang	Night time on tourist sites	Vendors	21/03/2023	2 (1F1M)
25	Battambang	Banteay Srey Organization	Project Manager	21/03/2023	1 (F)
26	Battambang	Anti-Trafficking Police Unit	Chief of Trafficking Police	21/03/2023	1 (M)
27	Battambang	Department social Affairs	Staff	21/03/2023	1 (F)
28	Battambang	CAD Children's Action for Development	Executive Director	21/03/2023	1 (M)
29	Poipet	Damnork Toek	Executive Director	22/03/2023	1 (M)
30	Poipet	LWB	Staff	22/03/2023	1 (M)
31	Poipet	Trafficking Police Unit	Migration police	22/03/2023	1 (M)
32	Siem Reap	Local Market	Local Vendors	23/03/2023	5 (3F2M)
33	Siem Reap	ChildHelpLine.	Staff	23/03/2023	1 (M)
34	Siem Reap	Mitsamlanh	Provincial Social worker	23/03/2023	1 (M)

List of NGOs/Duty Bearers/Private Actors and Community People contacted

35	Siem Reap	The REACH.	Social worker	24/03/2023	1 (M)
36	Siem Reap	LICHADO	Investigators	24/03/2023	2 (1F1M)
37	Siem Reap	Caritas Cambodia	Staff	24/03/2023	3 (2F1M)
38	Siem Reap	Department social Affairs	Chief and Deputy chief of bureaus	24/03/2023	2 (1F1M)
39	Siem Reap	Anti-human trafficking police	Staff	24/03/2023	1 (M)
40	Oddor Meanchey	ADHOC	Provincial co-ordinators and investigator	27/03/2023	2 (M)
41	Oddor Meanchey	Community O'Smach Border checkpoint	people	27/03/2023	3 (2F1M)
42	Oddor Meanchey	Anti-human trafficking office	Chief	27/03/2023	1 (M)
43	Oddor Meanchey	Local primary school	Teachers	27/03/2023	1 (1F)
44	Oddor Meanchey	Local market	Vendor	27/03/2023	2 (F)
45	Oddor Meanchey	Local Community	Grandmothers	27/03/2023	3 (F)
46	Sihanouk Ville	Mloptapang	Chief of Social worker	29/03/2023	1 (M)
47	Sihanouk Ville	Mloptapang	ED	29/03/2023	1 (F)
48	Sihanouk Ville	Local Market	Vendors	29/03/2023	2 (F)
49	Sihanouk Ville	Construction sites	Construction workers	29/03/2023	2 (F)
50	Sihanouk Ville	DoSVY	Director, and his staff	29/03/2023	4 (M)
51	Sihanouk Ville	Anti-human trafficking police	Staff	29/03/2023	2 (F)
52	Phnom Penh	YCC youth council of cambodia	Youth members	30/03/2023	6 (3F3M)
53	Phnom Penh	Chab Dai	Senor Child Protection manager	31/03/2023	1 (M)
Total 53 interviews or contacts with 90 persons; 26 NGOs, 11 DB, 28 PA & People. Also 25 people, including local authorities, were talked to at 5 tourist locations in PHN, during a visit to a community in PHN and in Oddar Meanchey. Two FGD were held with 6 Youth (16-20 years) – 3 F, 3 M.					M=44; F=46

ANNEX D: Terms of Reference for Empirical Research

Phase 2: Empirical Research

1. Background

Stichting Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) aims to prevent child exploitation, to remove children from exploitative situations and to ensure that these children can continue their development in a safe environment. Terre des Hommes focuses on sexual exploitation of children, the worst forms of child labour, child trafficking and migration, sexual and reproductive health and rights and on child protection in humanitarian crises. For each of these forms of child exploitation, Terre des Hommes is developing and implementing projects and programmes through local partners, mainly in Asia and East Africa. In Asia, TdH NL works in Cambodia, the Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, India, and Nepal.

As in other Asian countries, Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism is a growing problem in Cambodia. The TdH NL Cambodia office has been operational since 2007 to support the development

and implementation of a number of projects, with a focus on stopping child sexual exploitation and abuse, and trafficking. In Cambodia, TdH NL is working in partnership with relevant stakeholders, in the Government and civil society governments, with the Cambodia National Council for Children (CNCC), National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT), the Joining Forces (JF) Alliance, Family Care First (FCF) and with Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE Cambodia) and Media for Education and Development in Action (Media One).

How We Define Child Exploitation

Although there are many references to the term ‘child exploitation’ by the UN and the INGO community, there is no specific definition of the term in any international or regional standards. In the absence of an internationally agreed definition of the term ‘child exploitation’, different organisations have developed their own definitions.

TdH NL defines child exploitation as ‘an individual, group or organisation taking advantage of an imbalance of power to get a child to engage in activities that are detrimental to the child’s wellbeing and development, and from which the alleged perpetrator(s) and/or third party(ies) gain some advantage.’

Child exploitation includes sexual exploitation, the recruitment and involvement of children in armed conflict, the use of children for criminal activities, the involvement of children in harmful or hazardous work, child marriage, child organ harvesting, sale of children, female genital mutilation and using children for radicalisation purposes.

Child exploitation is a form of gender-based violence. Gender norms shape the manifestation of violence and the risks of victimisation. Girls are socialised to be submissive and accepting of the dominance of men, making them particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Meanwhile, the expectation that boys display dominant masculinity can be perceived as incompatible with victimisation. Boy victims can be shamed and emasculated for their experience with sexual exploitation.

Children constitute a diverse group. Therefore, all potential intersecting factors of vulnerability need to be accounted for as they compound the risk of child exploitation. Intersecting factors include age, sexuality, disability, economic background, and religious beliefs in addition to gender.

Our Commitment to Diversity, Integrity and Child Safeguarding

We are committed to ensuring diversity and gender equality within our organisation. Therefore, people of all gender identities, sexes, sexual orientations, races, colours, religions, cultures, abilities, etc. are encouraged to apply.

2. Consultancy Purpose and Use

The consultant will lead in conducting situational analysis of child exploitation in Cambodia and provide recommendations for future project design.

3. Specific Objectives of the Consultancy

The overall objective of the research is to assess and present the current situation in Cambodia focusing on child exploitation, child sexual exploitation, child labour, child trafficking, child migration and children left behind and provide recommendations for TdH NL in Cambodia to develop new project interventions. The research will include two phases:

Phase 2 (Deeper Dive Analysis of Priority Themes):

1. Undertake primary data collection, into the agreed sub-theme(s) identified in Phase 1 to critically analyse the situation of child exploitation, generate new insights and provide recommendations for future programme interventions.

2. Time Period and Geographical Areas:

Phase 2 should be completed in quarter one of 2023.

Phase 2 respondent groups, sample size and representation will be based on the recommendations from the Phase 1 analysis.

4. Scope of work

Phase 2 (Deeper Dive Analysis of Priority Themes - The Consultant will conduct primary data collection (qualitative and potentially quantitative) to examine priority topics, their causes, prevalence trends, stakeholder perceptions, to inform TdH NL strategic prioritisation. Phase 2 will conclude with the development of a policy brief by the consultant.

The research is envisaged to be completed in two phases as described in section 2 above. This consultancy is designed to inform TdH NL Cambodia Country Office programmatic focus aligned to the new organisational strategy 2023-2030. The research findings will be used to determine the country's strategic focus in addressing child exploitation. The scope of work includes:

1. Undertake primary data collection to augment desk review findings where there are gaps in any of the thematic areas of focus for this study.
2. Informed by the findings of both the desk review and primary data collection, develop a policy brief with recommendations for policy advocacy to address CE in Cambodia.

Research Methodology and Approach

The consultant is expected to use a mixed methods approach to collect both qualitative and potentially quantitative data. These should include but are not limited to:

- Conduct key informant interviews with relevant government officials, UN agencies representatives, NGO representatives, service providers and other relevant stakeholders.
- Focus group discussions with children, selected community members (where possible).
- Possible survey (based on the recommendations from Phase 1)

Roles and Responsibilities Consultant:

Phase 2:

Informed by the outcomes of phase 1: undertake primary data collection taking into account:

1. Representative sample size of respondents.(tentative)
2. Ethical considerations - gain relevant ethical clearances and put in place safeguarding measures especially where we will be interviewing children and community members.
3. In consultation with the Coordination Committee , the consultant will be expected to design the study protocol including tools and finalise the methodology for the collection of qualitative and potentially quantitative data for the research.
4. Develop data collection tools in English and Khmer (piloting tools and finalisation).
5. The lead consultant is required to recruit qualified field researchers with relevant educational background and experience with positive conduct history (in case field data collection is needed).
6. Train field researchers on the study plan, data collection tools, processes, how to conduct research, ethical conduct when researching with human subjects and safeguarding.
7. Confirm the data management approach.
8. Ensure all research processes are conducted to high standards.
10. Conduct data collection, processing, cleaning, analysis.
11. Prepare draft research report including recommendations to TdH NL for future project design and submit to TdH NL for inputs.
12. In a consultation workshop with key relevant stakeholder, the consultant will provide a presentation of preliminary findings.
13. Finalise the research report based on inputs in the consultation workshop and from Coordination

Committee.

14. Submit final research report according to the agreed deadline
15. Produce a Policy brief including recommendations informed by research and/or data for policy advocacy in addressing CE in Cambodia.
16. Provide presentation in dissemination workshop at national level and/ regional level
17. Communicate progress to the TdH NL designated contact throughout the research process

Coordination Committee (TdH NL and NCCT):

1. Provide all required documents to the consultant
2. Review, provide feedback and approve research proposal/ inception report/ study plan, tools, draft/ final research report, etc.
3. Approve payment based on the agreed steps
4. Provide technical assistance/ support including safeguarding during research
5. Oversee the service provider by managing the consultancy contract; monitor adherence to specified deadlines; facilitating access to required information.

Deliverables

The consultant will deliver the following, but not limited:

1. Research proposal/ study plan/ inception report
2. Provide presentation of research proposal/ study plan to TdH for inputs
3. Final data collection tools in English and Khmer
4. Data collection, quality assurance mechanisms/ instruction/ guidelines/ protocol
5. Raw quantitative data (if collected)
6. Raw qualitative data (transcript, data entry in Excel) if exist
7. Final clean dataset used for data analysis in software programs such as SPSS/ STATA... and syntax for data preparation and analysis.
8. Final data analysis outputs (in table, graph...) that used for report and slide presentation
9. Final completed report in English addressing all comments/ feedbacks from TdH
10. Final comprehensive slide presentation
11. Policy brief

5. Intellectual Property

All information pertaining to this project (documentary, audio, digital, cyber, project documents, etc) belonging to the client, which the consultant may come into contact with in the performance of their duties under this consultancy shall remain the property of TdH NL who shall maintain exclusive rights over their use. Except for purposes of this assignment, the information shall not be disclosed to the public nor used in whatever form without written permission of TdH NL.

6. Ethics and Child Safeguarding Policy

The consultant shall sign and abide by the TdH NL Child Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct against corruption, bribery and fraud and its related procedures and will be required to disclose any prior convictions and undergo or present an up to date and valid criminal background check.

7. Supervision/ Management of the Assignment

The consultant will report to the Management and Coordination Committee including TdH NL, Cambodia Country Manager and National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT). The consultant will work closely with the Country Project Coordinator, Program Manager for an Online Child Sexual Exploitation, the Regional Programme Development and Quality Manager and the Regional PMEL Coordinator.



Terre des Hommes Netherlands is a global child protection organisation which facilitates the stopping of child exploitation. We work in Asia, Africa and Europe, addressing worst forms of child labour, child abuse, sexual exploitation of children (online and offline). We tackle and ensure humanitarian assistance.

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