



Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism



CHILD AND YOUTH VERSION

ECPAT International is a global network of organisations and individuals working together to eliminate child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. It seeks to encourage the world community to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights free and secure from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism

CHILD AND YOUTH VERSION

November 2009

Copyright © ECPAT International



ECPAT International

328/1 Phayathai Road Ratchathewi
Bangkok 10400 THAILAND
Tel: +662 215 3388, +662 611 0972 Fax: +662 215 8272
Email: info@ecpat.net Website: www.ecpat.net

The writing and research for this thematic paper have been made possible through the generous grants from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, Groupe Développement, ECPAT Luxembourg, Irish Aid, OAK Foundation, International Child Support (ICS), World Vision, Church of Sweden, Bread for the World, and AusAID.

This publication has been printed with the generous support of:



Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism

CHILD AND YOUTH VERSION

This document is based on the thematic paper of the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. The original paper, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in Tourism, written by Muireann O'Briain in collaboration with Milena Grillo and Helia Barbosa, contains many references, examples and studies that are not included here. Readers are encouraged to consult the original thematic paper for more detailed information at: <http://www.ecpat.net/WorldCongressIII/index.php>. This document was prepared by Alana Kapell.

Table of Contents

Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts	5
Introduction	7
Understanding child-sex tourism	9
Tools and resources	10
Actions and recommendations	11
What have we achieved?	13
The future	15

Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts

Private sector

The private sector includes companies that are not owned by the government (government-owned companies are known as the 'public sector'). The private sector includes all types of businesses, such as credit card companies, computer companies, travel agents, hotels, banks, media and manufacturing.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

When a company takes responsibility for its decisions and activities, and the impact that these actions have on people and the environment.

Exploitation

To exploit someone means to take undue advantage of that person for another's benefit. In this paper, the term will be used to refer to all forms of exploitation, including: sexual exploitation (tricking, deceiving, forcing someone to perform sexual acts against their will), forced labour, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, and the removal of organs.

Sexual exploitation of children

Mistreating, abusing and/or taking advantage of a child for personal gain by involving them in sex work or sexual activity (including sexual images on the Internet), which is illegal or inappropriate.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children

Commercial sexual exploitation of children happens when a child is used sexually by an adult and the adult pays to do this with money, gifts or favours. A gift could be food or clothes. A favour could be a promise of good grades, shelter or protection. Commercial sexual exploitation is different

from sexual abuse of a child because it involves some kind of payment.

Child-sex tourism

Child-sex tourism is the commercial sexual exploitation of children by people who travel from one location to another and engage in sexual acts with minors. Often they travel from a richer country to one that is less developed, but child sex tourists may also be travellers within their own countries or regions.

Child pornography

Child pornography includes images, sound recordings or written words of children being sexually abused. The images, sound recordings and words are used by adults for sexual purposes. Most child pornography is in the form of photographs or films of children's private parts, adults doing sexual things to children, or children doing sexual things to each other.

Human trafficking

Stealing people, kidnapping people or asking people to come with you by using threats, promises, force, lies and/or power to trade them (buying and selling), recruit them, move them from one location to another (for example across borders) or to keep them against their will – all for the purpose of exploitation.

United Nations

Also called the UN – it was created after the Second World War to provide a place for the countries of the world to deal with issues that affect them all. It has a key role in trying to maintain international peace and security. The UN is based in New York and Geneva, but also has offices in other countries.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

The International Labour Organization was founded in 1919 to advance social justice and better living conditions throughout the world. In 1946, it became the first specialised agency related to the United Nations. Child labour is a key focus of the organisation's work.

ECPAT International

A global network of organisations and individuals working together for the elimination of child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. Their website provides many useful details about sexual exploitation of children, including publications, research and definitions. Visit: www.ecpat.net.

Policy

Policy can be both formal and informal. Formal policy involves laws, legislation and most government decision making processes. Informal policy can include rules (such as rules in the home or school) and ways of working.

Poverty

Not having enough resources (such as money or land) to get the basic things needed to live (such as food, clothes and housing).

Voluntary

Doing something by choice, rather than being forced to do something.

Treaties and conventions

The words 'treaty' and 'convention' mean the same thing. They are legal agreements between governments. They highlight the promises governments have made on an issue (for example, trafficking, child labour or child rights). There are many different treaties and conventions, dealing with many different issues.

Ratification

When a government 'ratifies' a treaty or convention, they are saying that they agree with it, and it becomes a legal duty for that country. In other words, by ratifying a treaty/convention, a government is saying that they promise to do the things outlined in the treaty/convention.

Signing

Signing is the step before 'ratification'. If a government 'signs' a treaty or convention, they are saying that they agree with it, but it is not yet a legal duty for them.

Codes and standards

Codes and standards often outline what is good behaviour and what behaviour should be avoided. They may deal with a single industry (such as tourism), or they may apply to many different groups (such as all businesses and corporations).

Introduction

Child-sex tourism is the commercial sexual exploitation of children by people who travel from one location to another and take part in sexual acts with children and young people. Often they travel from a richer country to one that is less developed, but child-sex tourists may also be travellers within their own countries or regions.

People first started to look seriously at the issue of the exploitation of children in tourism and to try and identify suitable counteractions about 30 years ago.

One key event in that direction was the First World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1996.

The First World Congress was a very important event. It was the first time that governments admitted that sexual exploitation exists in every nation, no matter the geographic location or culture. The promises they made during the First World Congress were captured in a global *Declaration and Agenda for Action*.

Countries promised to change relevant laws, policies, programmes and practices to stop the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in all its forms, while protecting the rights of child victims and not further harming them.

Governments also committed themselves to actively involve children and adolescents in this process.

In the *Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action*, countries promised to focus on:

- Coordination and cooperation at regional and international levels;

- Giving education and information to girls and boys, their families and society to prevent commercial sexual exploitation of children;
- Creating new laws and strengthening old ones, where they exist, to protect children;
- Helping child victims and their families to recover, and helping them to live safely and comfortably again in their communities; and
- Encouraging the participation of children, including child victims, young people, their families, peers and others who are potential helpers of children.

The *Agenda for Action* also calls on businesses and companies to play a role in ending the sexual exploitation of children, including businesses related to travel and tourism.

At the Second World Congress, which took place in Yokohama in 2001, participants looked at the progress already made by businesses and companies, including the travel and tourism industry, and their role in protecting children.

Preparations for the 2008 World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents included many different actions, activities, campaigns and legal developments to end sexual exploitation of children and young people in tourism settings. This work was supported by three important international legal documents:

1. ***Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*** (2002) prohibits the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and is

the first international tool to define these terms. The Protocol requires that these types of offences should be treated as criminal acts and that governments must work together to find and punish abusers. The Protocol also states that governments must provide support to the victims of these crimes.

2. *International Labour Organization*

Convention No. 182 (2000) aims to stop the worst forms of child labour. It gives definitions for the worst forms of child labour, including all forms of slavery, trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography.

3. *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (also called the *Trafficking Protocol*) (2000) is the first legal document to provide an internationally agreed-upon definition for 'trafficking in human beings'. The Protocol identifies ways to protect and help people who have been trafficked. The Protocol also identifies ways to prevent trafficking, especially involving the most common victims, women and children.

In this paper we will look at child-sex tourism and what is being done to stop it. We will also look at what needs to be done and what is not working.

Understanding child-sex tourism

Child-sex tourism:

- Is the sexual exploitation of children and young people by persons who do not normally live in the location where the abuse takes place;
- Includes abuse by both leisure and business travellers; and
- Includes persons that go to other countries – or other parts of their own countries – for work purposes, including teachers, workers for non-governmental organisations, care workers and others.

Abuse of children by foreigners may also occur when members of a foreign army are stationed in another country, often as members of a multilateral peacekeeping operation. This is a serious form of sexual exploitation, but is usually not considered to be a form of child-sex tourism.

People that abuse children through child-sex tourism believe that everything is for sale, including young bodies. In this market, the human person has no value.

The younger the victim, the greater the risks incurred by pimps, and the more money that can be made. There is absolutely no respect for children's rights in child-sex tourism. Child-sex tourism and prostitution are often organised by illegal or criminal groups and networks, and are often connected to the drug trade and human trafficking.

The following areas have traditionally seen the most conspicuous flows of abusers:

- Southeast Asia
- Central America and Brazil

More and more abusers are starting to visit these areas as well:

- Other countries in South America
- Southern Africa
- North West Africa
- East Africa

- India
- Mongolia

Abusers come from all over the world, but many come from richer countries, such as:

- European countries
- North American countries
- Russia
- Japan
- Taiwan
- Australia
- New Zealand

Child-sex tourism exists because there are children and young people in difficult situations.

Poverty and other social problems, such as lack of education, can create conditions of vulnerability in which young people are at risk of being exploited. For example, small children may be convinced to go with an abuser in return for food and shelter, while teenagers may be induced to have contacts with an exploiter in the hopes of obtaining things that their friends have, such as clothes and other gifts.

In child-sex tourism, children become playthings for the visitor, and exploitation becomes a way to make money for themselves or for their families. Two things must be looked at in order to fight child-sex tourism:

1. Demand: demand for the sexual exploitation of children in tourism settings tends to be directed towards communities that are comparatively poor, with little or no access to education and limited options for the future (jobs).
2. Attitudes: There are people and places that still do not recognise children's rights. In these places, children are belittled and viewed as objects.

Unless these things change and people open their eyes and change their attitudes, most

efforts to fight commercial sexual exploitation of children will fail.

Some of the challenges that organisations and governments face:

- Sometimes abuse happens in one country and then a different country tries to punish the abuser. This can be a challenge because the laws in the two countries are different, but a possible solution is for the governments involved to reach agreements that allow differing law systems to communicate and to collaborate effectively.
- Sometimes a witness is needed to punish an abuser, but it is often difficult to find the child victim because many of them live on the street or move around a lot.
- If victims are found, there often is no safe place for them to live while they wait to go to court.
- Many abuses are never reported.

Many different actions have been taken to end child-sex tourism, including:

- **Awareness:** Organisations have done many things to increase awareness and understanding about commercial sexual exploitation in general, and the risks and realities of child-sex tourism in particular. For example, one airline company shows

a video about child-sex tourism on all of its flights.

- **Training:** Different companies and businesses have adopted specific policies and are training their employees and partners so that they understand the issue and know what to do if they see something that looks suspicious. For example, employees in some hotels receive training so that if they see an adult with a child, and suspect abuse, they know how to get help.
- **Codes and standards:** Many different codes and standards have been developed to guide tourism and travel businesses in the actions they need to take to stop child-sex tourism.

Codes and standards often outline what is good behaviour and what behaviour should be avoided (see the next section for more details).

Have any of these actions made a difference?

We can say that more people are aware of the problem and awareness has improved. Exploitation in some countries may have decreased, but child-sex tourism still exists and abusers are travelling to more and more countries – much more needs to be done.

Tools and resources

The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (also known as The Code of Conduct or The Code)

The Code was developed by ECPAT Sweden, a member group in the ECPAT network, in collaboration with Swedish tour operators. It is considered to be one of the most important tools for fighting child-sex tourism. The Code of Conduct consists of six important principles:

1. Creating a policy that deals with child-sex tourism;
2. Training people in both the country of origin (where people are from) and the travel destination (where they go);
3. Making sure that every company involved agrees to fight commercial sexual exploitation of children;
4. Making sure travellers are aware of the issue through catalogues, brochures, in-flight films, ticket slips and Internet home pages;

5. Informing key people at the local level; and
6. Reporting every year about how the application of the Code of Conduct is working.

More than 600 companies have signed on to The Code in 38 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, and Central and Latin America.

The Code is now an organisation in itself. Members of the organisation include people from the tourism industry, governments and non-governmental organisations.

Responsible and sustainable tourism

Responsible and sustainable tourism is a way for companies in travel and tourism to think about their responsibilities and the way they do business. It is the idea that tourism companies need to take care of travellers and tourists, but at the same time, protect and improve the future of the people and the environment in the countries where they work.

There are five parts to responsible and sustainable tourism:

1. Culture needs to be protected;
2. Tourism is done in a way that does not harm society or cause environmental problems;
3. The environment is not only protected, but also improved;

4. Travellers are treated well and countries benefit financially; and
5. The entire community equally benefits from tourism.

Responsible and sustainable tourism has helped tourism companies better understand their role in protecting human rights and helping communities.

Corporate social responsibility

Broadly speaking, corporate social responsibility is when a company takes responsibility for its decisions and activities, and the impact these actions have on people and the environment.

Corporate social responsibility is about how a company does its work, and also how it helps people and the environment (thus playing, in other words, its good citizen's role). A company's social actions and policies should:

- Help people and support the well-being of society;
- Follow local and international laws and guidelines for behaviour; and
- Apply to all levels of the company, including its partners and other relationships.

Corporate social responsibility may include efforts to address climate change, working conditions and human rights issues.

Actions and recommendations

Commercial sexual exploitation of children, in all of its forms, including sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, is seen as an abuse of human rights. It victimises children in two ways: children are treated as sex objects and children are seen as things that can be bought or sold.

Many different groups and organisations need to act together to end child-sex tourism. In this section, we will explore some of the specific actions that need to be taken.

Groups, companies and organisations

All groups, companies and organisations should:

- Support legal change that will help countries to prevent and control commercial sexual exploitation of children and punish abusers.
- Support the development of national action plans for ending commercial sexual exploitation of children, making sure the rights of the child are taken into account and that different groups work in partnership.
- Get the public involved and talk about the issue. If the public is asking for change, governments and decision makers will have to take action.
- Raise awareness and educate people about commercial sexual exploitation of children.
- Get the media involved and draw attention to the issue.
- Help protect communities and improve the future for families and individuals. Companies can create jobs, provide training and improve access to health care and education, as well as provide daycare services.
- Sign on to The Code of Conduct and improve the way they do business.

Governments

Every government has a special responsibility to take action and protect children from sexual exploitation.

Within each country, governments must work at different levels and with many different partners.

Each government will need to coordinate activities among the different ministries (or departments), including ministries of health,

education, culture, child protection, security and tourism.

Governments also need to support international efforts to stop child-sex tourism and to protect children in their own countries, as well as those in other countries.

Other actions governments should take include:

- Offering special protections for girl children, children with no family, street children, and children who have been exploited. When it comes to tourism, governments have the responsibility to protect children and adolescents from any activity that would harm them and to protect their rights.
- Using international tools (such as the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child*) to create or improve national laws and policies that protect children.
- Improving values and the way that adults view children. Rules will not work if adults do not respect or believe in them.
- Providing for harsh penalties to punish abusers.
- Ensuring that any child victim that has to go to court or deal with police is treated fairly and with respect, and not as a criminal.
- Training police and people in the courts so they know how to work with child victims and they understand the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children.
- Providing support and helping children who have suffered abuse so that they can recover. Ending commercial sexual exploitation of children needs to be a top priority for governments.

What have we achieved?

There have been some important and positive developments around the world to end child-sex tourism.

Legally

There are many different legal actions that have been taken to end child-sex tourism and to punish abusers. These examples may not apply to every country, but it is helpful to see what some countries are doing and the possibilities that exist.

- All governments have laws to punish anyone who sexually abuses a child.
- Forty-four countries have laws that allow them to punish their own citizens for crimes committed abroad.
- Some countries have set up laws that stop tour companies from supporting or advertising travel for the purpose of sexually exploiting children.
- Laws can punish owners of hotels or guesthouses if they allow their customers to sexually abuse children in the hotel or guesthouse.
- If an adult is a known sexual abuser, some countries may stop them from travelling to other countries and possibly abusing more children.
- Through the legal process in some countries, it is possible for victims of sexual exploitation to receive money by way of damage compensation.
- Most countries have made the sexual exploitation of children a crime and a number of them have provided for accordingly severe punishment.
- Countries normally use existing international agreements (such as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*) to develop their laws to protect children.

Internationally

Many different groups have taken action at the international level to end child-sex tourism. A few of these groups include:

United Nations – Created after the Second World War to provide a place for the countries of the world to deal with issues that affect them all. It has a key role in trying to maintain international peace and security.

International Labour Organization (ILO) – Founded in 1919 to advance social justice and better living conditions throughout the world. In 1946, it became the first specialised agency related to the United Nations. Child labour is a key focus of the organisation's work.

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO/OMT) – This United Nations agency is the leading international organisation in the field of tourism. It serves as a place where global issues relating to tourism can be explored.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) – The main organisation in the United Nations working for the protection, survival and development of children. It works closely with governments around the world to provide services to children, such as medicines, vaccines, water, food and schooling.

ECPAT is a global network of organisations and individuals working together for the elimination of child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes.

International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) works with police departments in different countries to end child-sex tourism.

They have supported training for police officers in many different countries.

The following international tools have already been mentioned:

- *Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*
- The International Labour Organization Convention No.182
- *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Trafficking Protocol)*
- *The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (The Code)*

These are all examples of how the international community has come together to fight child-sex tourism. Other examples include:

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a United Nations document that sets out the human rights that all children have. As of November 2008, every country, except for the United States and Somalia, had said that they would use the Convention as the basis for the way they treat children. The Convention is made up of different sections called 'articles'. In regard to commercial sexual exploitation, the Convention includes promises made by governments to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation, including child prostitution, child pornography and trafficking, which are addressed in Articles 34 and 35.

Regionally

Several different organisations and networks have been set up at the regional level, especially in Europe and Asia.

1. The European Union includes 27 countries and has been actively fighting child-sex tourism since 1996.
2. The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific (UNESCAP) has played a strong role in fighting child-sex tourism in the region. It supports non-governmental

organisations in their efforts to support child victims of sexual exploitation.

3. The UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Mekong Sub-Region (UNIAP) has developed a regional plan of action to fight human trafficking and to identify ways of working with tourism companies to end child-sex tourism.

There are regions in the world, including the Pacific Islands and parts of Africa, where child-sex tourism is still addressed fairly superficially and where the leadership of international organisations is weak.

Partnerships

Many governments and organisations are working together to end child-sex tourism. For example, training programmes have been designed by non-governmental organisations and shared with hotels and their employees. Other examples include:

The Youth Career Initiative (YCI)

The Youth Career Initiative is an education programme through which hotels provide disadvantaged young people with training and learning opportunities. The programme now operates in ten countries and is continuing to grow.

Weaving Networks against Exploitation Project

Various groups are working together to set up an information centre with resources on the exploitation of children and adolescents in Latin America. It will be used as a way to share information and to help develop policies.

Conclusions

There have been many successes and positive developments aimed at ending child-sex tourism.

In summary, a few of them include:

- The general public now understands that children and adolescents are exploited

- sexually in tourism. This is a problem that affects us all and we all have a role to play to protect children and their rights.
- Many businesses and companies, including tourism businesses, are starting to understand the problem and their responsibility to help fight child-sex tourism.
 - Many different groups at the national, regional and international levels are taking action and working together to fight child-sex tourism.

- Governments see the role they have to play, and many are taking strong action towards ending child-sex tourism.
- Codes, standards and agreements have been written that provide strong guidance and will help to end child-sex tourism.

Even if the situation has improved a little, there are still major challenges and much work ahead for years to come.

The future

Sustaining existing efforts

We need to make sure all existing projects and initiatives are supported towards the future.

Their benefits will mean nothing if they are not maintained and properly resourced. Governments need to see ending child-sex tourism as an ongoing priority and sustain it properly. Existing projects need to be shared across all levels, so that even more can be achieved through a multiplicity of players.

Addressing 'demand'

More needs to be done to show the public, tourists and employees that sexual exploitation of young people is unacceptable and will result in criminal punishment. We need to encourage people to report the sexual exploitation of children. Countries need to do their part to punish abusers and track their whereabouts so that they cannot abuse again.

Demand for children as sexual partners will not end until attitudes towards children change, and there is zero tolerance of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. Personal safety programmes should be part of educational systems, helping children to

understand their own rights, and to speak out if harmed.

Addressing the new avenues of child exploitation

As technology changes and advancements are made, we are provided with more opportunities and the needed resources to end sexual exploitation of children. At the same time, abusers are also able to access many of these resources and use them to avoid being caught or to get around many of the protective systems that are already in place. Some of the new technological developments may also provide abusers with new ways of exploiting children and of sharing their images with other abusers (for example, Internet access on mobile phones). The private sector and governments need to be leading, at all times, on how technology can be used to end child-sex tourism.

Moving from volunteerism to corporate responsibility

Businesses and companies need to realise that their role in fighting child-sex tourism is a moral duty, not a choice. We need to see improved policies, at the corporate level, for taking action to end child-sex tourism. Partnerships between different players will

remain the priority approach through which the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism will have to be combatted over the coming years.

NOTES

ECPAT International is a global network of organisations and individuals working together to eliminate child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. It seeks to encourage the world community to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights free and secure from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.



ECPAT International

328/1 Phayathai Road
Ratchathewi, Bangkok
10400 THAILAND

Tel: +662 215 3388, +662 611 0972

Fax: +662 215 8272

Email: info@ecpat.net | media@ecpat.net

Website: www.ecpat.net