

# STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST US !



# 2

## SUMMARY REPORT

A Preliminary National Research Study into the  
Prevalence & Perceptions of Cambodian Children  
to Violence Against and By Children in Cambodia

# GLOSSARY



## **Trafficking:**

Trafficking can be understood in a number of ways. The US Government defines trafficking in terms of 'knowingly obtaining by any means often by force or coercion- any person for involuntary servitude or forced labour'.

## **Sexual Exploitation:**

Child Trafficking for sexual exploitation in the (US) Victims of Trafficking & Violence Protection Act of 2000 is defined as 'trafficking in which a commercial sexual act is induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age. (Dept of State, 2001)

## **Bullying:**

Bullying can involve physical violence and/or psychological or emotional abuse. It can be from child to child, adult to child, child to adult or adult to adult but is usually referred to in the context of child to child.

## **Physical Violence:**

Acts that cause actual physical harm or the potential for harm - beating, hitting, slapping, kicking, pulling hair, burning and corporal punishment.

## **Psychological/Emotional Abuse:**

Non-physical acts that have an adverse effect on the emotional health and development of the child (denigration, constant belittling, humiliation, ridicule, threat and intimidation, rejection and other non-violent forms of hostility)

## **Rape and Sexual Abuse:**

Forced intercourse and other forms of sexual assault and coercion. Where an adult sexually abuses a child (under 18 years), it is considered abuse whether or not the child consents.



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# PREFACE



If this report looks familiar, or when you start to read it you feel like you have read it before, it is because it is the second report of the same research project 'Stop Violence Against Us!' which was published earlier this year. Some of the information has been repeated for those who have not yet read the first report but most of it has been updated.

In some ways it would have made more sense to have put trafficking and sexual abuse in the same report and corporal punishment and bullying in the same report as they are of different interest to different audiences. However, various time and financial constraints have led to the contents being divided into 2 parts: the first report covered sexual abuse, domestic violence and corporal punishment. this second report covers trafficking, bullying and violence from children towards adults.

This report also includes a brief overview of the history of childhood, in order to provide the additional context of structural violence.

**Glenn Miles, Researcher**



# ORGANIZATIONS

who have commissioned  
or funded this report



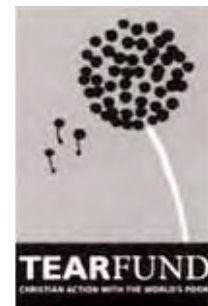
## Child Welfare Group

The Child Welfare Group, started by UNICEF in 1993, is a network of 30-40 NGOs and IOs committed to meeting monthly on the 20th of each month to share information, learn from each other and advocate on behalf of children. Its advocacy efforts have also included research and lobbying against the access of pornography to youth in 2003 and stopping child rape and trafficking in 2004.



## Tearfund

Tearfund have been involved in funding and capacity building Christian organizations in Cambodia since 1990 working with children at risk and bringing 'good news' to the poor. Apart from this research, Tearfund has facilitated with Resource Development International and a range of NGOs the development of a karaoke video training pack for children and another for youth that will address child safety issues including protection from child sexual abuse. A TV slot and 2 comics have been developed simultaneously. Tearfund has supported the Child Welfare Group since 2000 and helped set up the EFC Children's Commission since 2002. It also helped coordinate the 'Cambodia Speaks Out on Violence Against Children!' conference in 2005.



## World Hope International

World Hope International is a Christian relief and development organization with a mission to alleviate suffering and injustice through education, enterprise and community health. WHI works in over 25 countries. Over the past five years, WHI has been helping to provide financial and human resources to a variety of NGOs operating in Cambodia. WHI has assisted organizations in Cambodia to create opportunities through primary and secondary education, and economic development in rural areas. WHI's newest project is the establishment of an Assessment Centre





which will be the first step in the rehabilitation of child victims of human trafficking. The centre will provide quality and loving care as they conduct a medical and mental health evaluation and family assessment for each child. Based on this information and input from WHI partners, the child will either be returned to their family or placed in a foster home or other home where they can receive quality after-care.



## World Vision International - Cambodia

Child protection and participation has been an integral part of World Vision in its program and advocacy efforts for the last 25 years in Cambodia. With projects focusing on reducing child sexual exploitation, child labor, street children, and child rights, it has shown a deep commitment to working against all forms of violence, exploitation, and marginalization of children. Among other projects, World Vision Cambodia has helped to build capacity and commitment to promote a greater response from Cambodian Police on prosecution, a 24-hour hotline for child exploitation and abuse; partners with the Ministry of Tourism to combat child sex tourism; it has developed children's clubs with over 8500 members in 6 districts which focus on child participation and violence reduction, and a child labor project assisting child scrap collectors and their families. Partnership and collaboration are important features in working to promote the best interests of children. World Vision partners with ministries of the Royal Government of Cambodia, United Nations, International Organizations, the Church and local organizations to build capacity in child protection, development and participation. All of World Vision Cambodia's 23 integrated development programs are designed with the impact on children as a primary factor.

## Justice for Children International

Justice for Children International works toward the abolition of child sex trafficking and exploitation through advocacy, prevention and aftercare. JFCI trains and places caregivers, multiplies safe homes, aids socioeconomic development programs in high-risk communities and provides a voice for the victims of modern-day slavery.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## the history of Childhood in Cambodia over the past 40 years?



### We are grateful to so many people who have made this project possible

In the first phase a number of partner NGOs arranged for us to meet focus groups of children - CRM Innerchange in Kompong Cham, Cambodian Association of Farmers and the Poor in Kampot, Cambodian Hope Organization in Poipet, Servants to Asia's Urban Poor in Mean Chey, Phnom Penh and International Cooperation Committee in Ratanakiri.

In the second phase, the Ministry of Education especially Khin Sokhum and the Provincial Education Offices and 125 heads and teachers of schools throughout Cambodia all worked very hard to enable us to do this research with the children in schools.

ADHOC and LICADHO also provided valuable support to us in the provinces. We also appreciated the logistical support of **Thong Romanea** and **Phang Sophany** of Tearfund.

**Winston Usher** of the Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) flew us to Ratanakiri and Mondoukiri for a subsidised amount.

We are grateful to technical support from **Dr. Nigel Thomas** of the University of Wales, Swansea. We are grateful to **Sheila Reid**, **Maren Heiberg** and **Siobhan Miles** for editing.

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Financial support came from the British Embassy, First Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, Justice for Children International, Tearfund UK, World Hope and World Vision.

We are also grateful to **Helen Sworn** of Chab Dai network for facilitating the publication and distribution of this publication.

Most of all we are grateful to the children who trusted us with information and took the time to respond. We hope and pray that this information will be used to improve their situation.

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# FOREWORD BY

**British Ambassador  
His Excellency, David Reader**



**T**hrough the Directorate Programme Budget of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office the British Embassy, Phnom Penh is pleased to have been able to support the preparation of this report as well as the Safe Children karaoke video training project which was one of the outcomes of this report.

No society in the world can prosper without healthy children; therefore children are the most valuable assets of any nation. The children of Cambodia are the future of the country and their well-being ultimately the well-being of the entire nation.

Yet paradoxically children are among some of the most vulnerable members of society and are often unable to stand up for their rights on their own, the girl child faces particular disadvantage. Children can be damaged so easily. Violations of their rights produce some of the most horrific and lasting consequences. Maltreatment of children takes many forms including violence, deprivation of schooling, exploitative child labour and trafficking. In particular the sexual exploitation and the selling of children is an abhorrent and despicable phenomenon.

The first summary report looked at sexual abuse, domestic violence and corporal punishment in schools. This second summary report looks at trafficking of children, bullying in schools and violence from children to adults. Violence that occurs in the community is a health, legal, economic, educational, developmental and, above all, a human rights issue. It cuts across boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity and age. The cycle of violence can only be broken through early intervention.

Changing the power dynamics between men and women and giving dignity to children bodes especially well for children.

Addressing family and community attitudes and behaviour towards violence may rescue children from a situation where violence and discrimination are normal.

There is a long British tradition of standing up for the weak against unfettered abuse by the strong. Upholding human rights -including the rights of the child - throughout the world is firmly in this tradition. It is at the core of the UK's national interest, and one of the strategic priorities of our foreign policy.

However, we can only achieve this objective by backing diplomacy with practical action on the ground; and by engaging with the widest range of people and organisations at all levels from the international to the local. This takes our support for projects an increasingly important part of the work of the Embassy. I do not expect the challenges we face in Cambodia to lessen in the years ahead.

Among the problems to be addressed - as this report makes clear - is that of violence against children. We look forward to working with our partners across civil society on this and other issues. In closing, I would highlight the dedication and expertise of the members of the projects and Programmes Team in the Embassy and their colleagues in London whose hard work makes many of the projects we support possible.

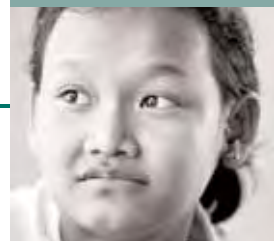
**David Reader**





# FOREWORD BY

**International Director for  
Tearfund, UK**



**V**iolence against children is perhaps the greatest of the evils that mankind can commit. Children offer the world hope. Our investment in their lives produces long-term fruit that can break cycles of violence and poverty. This study reveals the sad reality that children in Cambodia have come to accept unacceptable levels of violence in their families and schools. The children's own voices paint a terrible picture of acquiescence to adult violence. They face a daily reality where physical punishment and sexual violence is the norm and to be expected. Without serious attention being paid to this situation, today's children can become the violent offenders of tomorrow.

Cultural practices that violate a child's right to safety and protection from abuse are difficult to address. This study clearly shows the validity of listening to children's views. In Khmer culture, children do not commonly speak out. They play an important but silent role in the family and community. But their silence does not condone the violence that they experience and witness. The children show not only remarkable resilience in coping with such abuse, but contribute practical suggestions as to how to deal with it. Their ideas should be given due weight and respect.

This research is part of Tearfund's commitment to listening to children and enabling them to play a meaningful role in development work. Children are not only the ones who know the most about their lives, but also are the building blocks for sustainable, just and equitable development in their communities and society. This research is part of our commitment to ensuring a child's right to

participate, as well as recognising that families, communities and governments play a vital role in protecting and nurturing children.

The research reveals that Cambodian children still have faith in adults to address the violence that is perpetrated against them. That faith can be fulfilled if their concerns are taken up by all of us who work to improve children's well being. Should we fail in this call, nations such as Cambodia will continually struggle to build a strong civil society where violence is a mere historical footnote.

**Peter Grant**



# FOREWORD BY

## Chairperson, Child Welfare Group



### *Colleagues,*

**T**he Child Welfare Group (CWG) is an open forum network for all organizations working with children in Cambodia. Since its inception in 1993 by UNICEF we have been committed to children's rights. As a network we are strongly supportive of collaborative advocacy on children's issues.

The Child Welfare Group have appreciated opportunities to work together as a network to raise up the awareness of children's issues to key stakeholders and the public.

On behalf of Child Welfare Group, I support this important research which gives us an understanding of the disturbingly high level of child abuse in Cambodia.

In the research, children from every province in Cambodia speak out about the concerns that they have. As organizations working with children, we are committed to listen to what children say and to involve them in the things that affect them and are important to them.

This research also enables these children's voices to be heard by representatives of the Royal Government of Cambodia. This is an important contribution, as the Government consider their responses to the UN Study on Violence and the report of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

As organizations committed to the rights of the children we want to explore what is happening to ordinary children and not just children in extremely difficult circumstances. This research begins to reveal some of the violence these children are subjected to.

As NGOs we are also committed to ensuring that children are protected from violence in our organizations through the ongoing development and review of our child protection policies.

It is time for all of us concerned for children's welfare to work together to address this problem. The future of Cambodia is at stake.

**Ung Meng Sreng**



# EXECUTIVE

## Summary



**L**ittle research has been done to explore how violence affects children in Cambodia from their perspective or even the prevalence of the problem.

This year Cambodia must respond to the UN with two significant reports.

1. A response to The 'UN Study on Violence Against Children' which has been mandated by the General Assembly "to draw together existing research and relevant information about the forms, causes and impact of violence which affects children."<sup>1</sup>
2. A response to how Cambodia is moving further towards achieving the rights of the child as proposed in the 'United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child' (UNCRC)<sup>2</sup>.

The first summary report focused on three aspects of the problem of violence against children - sexual abuse, domestic violence against children and corporal punishment.

This second report is an attempt to get information about the prevalence of three other aspects of the problem of violence against children - trafficking of children, bullying and gang violence against adults. Both reports are an attempt to listen to children's own perceptions and to continue to explore their ideas on how violence could be addressed.

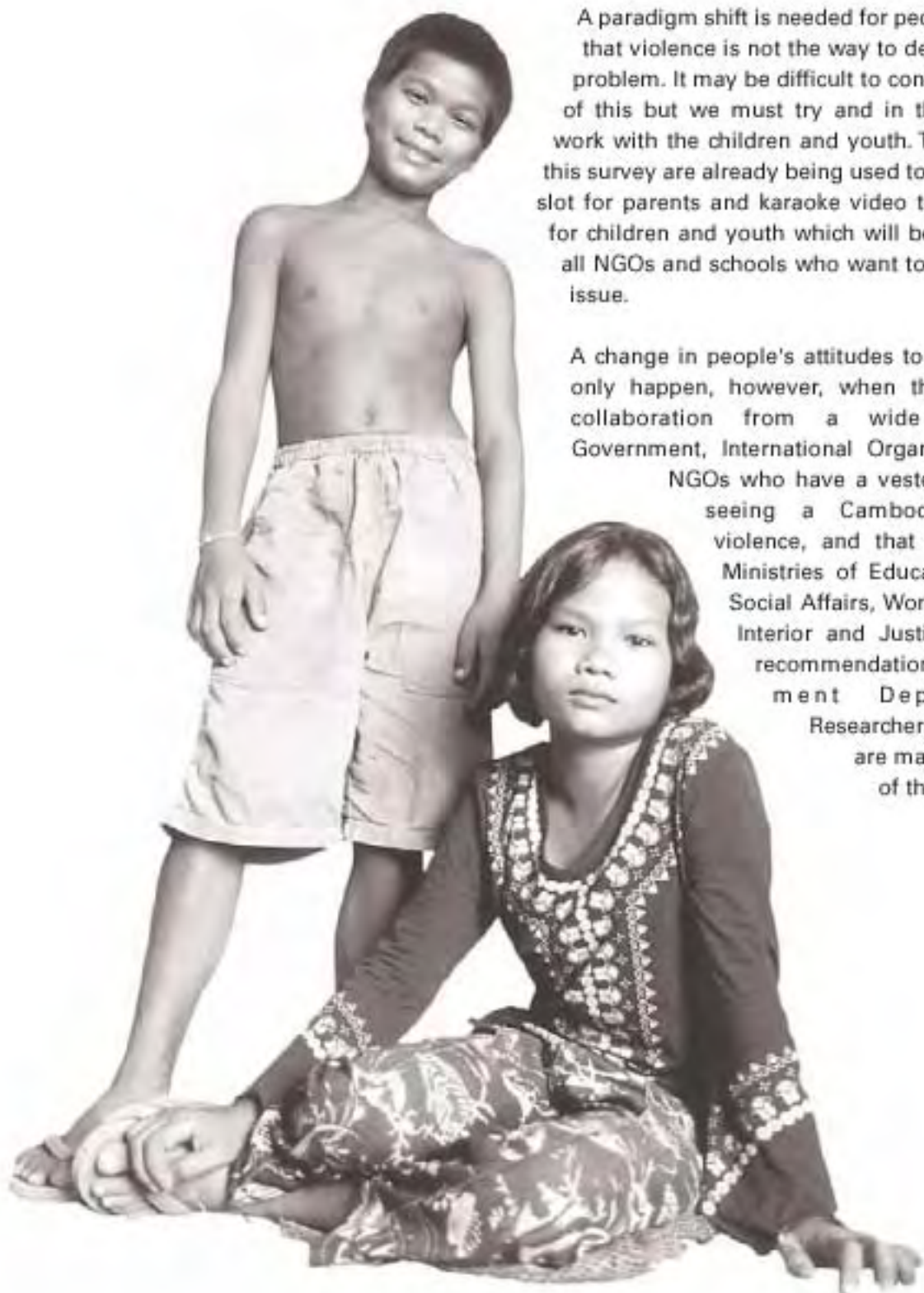
This report gives children an opportunity to express themselves through samples of some of their quotes in a format that is acceptable to policy makers and politicians.

The sample was of 1,314 children, 671 girls and 639 boys (4 children did not respond). Originally the survey was of 13 and 14 year olds but 100, 12 year olds (7.6%) and 119, 15 year olds (9.1%) were also included (as they showed up for the survey and we did not want to turn them away or waste the information they had for us).

Nearly half the children (47%) said they knew other children who had been sold but 92% of them said it was extremely serious for adults to sell children. A third (34.5%) of girls and 40.6% of boys said they had been bullied and 44.9% said it was extremely serious. Two thirds (66.9%) of children said they had heard of a teenager robbing an adult and 33.4% of girls and 45.2% of boys said they had seen an adult being robbed. A small number (3.4% of girls and 5% of boys) admitted to having robbed an adult themselves.

1. <http://www.violencestudy.org/r25>

2. <http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/80256404004ff315c125638800542a65?OpenDocument>



A paradigm shift is needed for people to realise that violence is not the way to deal with every problem. It may be difficult to convince parents of this but we must try and in the meantime work with the children and youth. The results of this survey are already being used to develop a TV slot for parents and karaoke video training packs for children and youth which will be available to all NGOs and schools who want to work on this issue.

A change in people's attitudes to violence will only happen, however, when there is good collaboration from a wide range of Government, International Organizations and NGOs who have a vested interest in seeing a Cambodia free of violence, and that includes the Ministries of Education, Health, Social Affairs, Women's Affairs, Interior and Justice. A list of recommendations to Government Departments, Researchers and NGOs are made at the end of the report.





# INTRODUCTION



Cambodia was once known as the 'Gentle Kingdom' but the genocidal regime in the late 1970's shattered that reputation. Instead of being gentle, Cambodia gained the reputation as a violent country. As Cambodia struggles to gain a positive reputation once again, it has had to come to terms with some of these labels and try to address them. In recent years the issue of trafficking has reared its ugly head and Cambodia has been seen as an epicentre for foreign paedophiles seeking young children.

But is it true, 25 years after the genocide, that Cambodia is any more violent than neighbouring countries? Has the violence that parents and grandparents experienced in the 1970's been passed onto their children from generation to generation? One of the problems has been the lack of even basic data. Apart from some significant exceptions, very little data is available about violence towards, against and by children, one of the most vulnerable groups in society.

Children do what they see. Violence leads to more violence. If children see or experience violence they will imitate it with their peers now and with their own children when they grow up. They will consider it an acceptable means of resolving problems. If however, children see adults using alternatives they can and will learn a different way.

The effect of violence on children is also significant. Violence in childhood can affect children's ability to learn. It can cause physical and emotional illness both in childhood and on into adulthood. It can lead to isolation, depression and/or suicidal behaviour. It can lead to criminal and risk taking behaviour including drug and alcohol abuse. Trafficking of children has additional effects on children as they have to adjust to a life of slavery, sometimes as a result of being betrayed by parents, relatives or neighbours. Preventive strategies are therefore of interest to the Ministries of Education, Health, Social Affairs, Women's Affairs, Interior and Justice.

Children are surprisingly articulate. They understand the causes and effects of violence and realistic solutions. They understand their contexts better than adults because they are living them and adults are only observers. Listening to children is not an optional extra, it must be integral to policy and programme development. When children feel heard it builds their self esteem and encourages them to become contributory citizens.

It is hoped that this study will make a significant contribution to the UN Study on Violence against Children which has been mandated by the General Assembly "to draw together existing research and relevant information about the forms, causes and impact of violence which affects children" ([www.violencestudy.org](http://www.violencestudy.org)). The Royal Government of Cambodia has responded to this with what they are doing to address the problem of violence against children. IOs and NGOs will monitor progress and also be involved in finding solutions.

Research on its own does not always effect change but the idea of the UN study is that it "will promote ideas for action to prevent and reduce such violence and to suggest ways in which this might be strengthened at local, national and international levels". So, part of the objectives of this study is to provide understanding of children's views so that materials can be developed that take these views into consideration. A karaoke video training pack has therefore been developed by several NGOs facilitated by Tearfund and funding from the British Embassy with input from children that can be used by NGOs and schools to help children to learn how to protect themselves against violence where it is possible.

It is also hoped that the current legal and policy framework of the Royal Government of Cambodia that protects children will also be strengthened. This is especially important this year (2005) as the Government have to report to the United Nations on how Cambodia is moving further towards achieving the rights of the child as proposed in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

An integral part of the UN study is that children's views and experiences must inform every aspect of the UN study and we are pleased to say that child participation has been a major element of this research.

This research is part of a larger research project on Cambodian children's perceptions of violence which also includes child rape, domestic violence and corporal punishment in schools. This can be found on [www.kone-kmeng.org](http://www.kone-kmeng.org)

His Royal Highness, King Norodom Sihanouk has expressed his concern in an open letter that decried the high level of violence in Cambodian society and asked people to 'mend their ways'. Among violent crimes listed by King Sihanouk was the 'rape of children' (Cambodia Daily, April 24-25 2004 p.3.).





# WHAT IS

## the history of Childhood in Cambodia over the past 40 years?



In the past 40 years, Cambodia has experienced a plethora of influences and ideologies, all of which have impacted children and the family. Different 'models' have been enforced or presented; Folk Buddhism, French colonialism, the encroachment of the Vietnam war, the Maoism of the Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese communist era, the 'humanitarian' UN era and the influence of the multinationals and capitalism. Some have had more influence than others but each has left a mark.

### Angkor

The famous Angkor Wat and surrounding temple complex is all that remains of a time when Cambodia dominated the region in the 8th century. Little is known of the position of children at that time except that a Chinese visitor (Chou Ta-kuan in 1296) reported the deflowering of young girls in a religious ceremony in the city of Angkor. Girls as young as 4 years old were also groomed to take part in 'apsara' (angelic) dancing.

The 'apsara' are prominent on the walls of the infamous Angkor Wat and symbolize femininity, as well as the virtue and purity of serenity and control (Tarr, 1996). These attributes are still valued in girls today.

Originally Angkor Wat had Hindu origins and later became Buddhist and both of these religions still have an effect on the current belief structure of the Khmer.

### Traditional belief influences

In traditional Cambodian culture "all relations are hierarchically ordered along the elder-younger dimension" (Ovensen et al., 1996). Elders are understood to hold influence and power over children. The power differential between adults and children is marked.

Traditionally girls at menstruation participated in a ceremony called 'choul malup' which literally meant going into the 'shade' for 3-6 months to be initiated into a woman. Young men would traditionally become buos neak, a novice monk for varying lengths of time from one week to six months. The former ceremony no longer exists but the latter is being revived, to some extent, at village level.

Cambodians still prefer that after marriage the husband stays with the parents of the bride (known as 'uxorilocal residence') at least until another daughter is married, if there are any other daughters in the household. 50 years ago 'bride-service' was still practiced where a potential groom would live with his fiancée a year or two before the wedding, performing labour service to demonstrate his suitability for marriage. This has been replaced by offering bride-wealth which may or may not be paid before the wedding (Tarr, 1996). In this context the sexual status of the unmarried girl was considered extremely important.

The oldest male in the household was/is considered head of the household. At that time multi-generational households ensured that women had elders and younger siblings to help with child care and household tasks. (Ledgerwood, 1996:4-5)

## Folk Buddhism

Child's development was/is seen as non-linear, circular development where the child's current life is linked to past lives. This has implications to local understandings of illness, genetics and how disease is understood to have been attained or spread.

## Birth/infancy

In Cambodia, Folk Buddhism is practiced by the majority of people but a combination of previous ancient Hindu influence and animism/spirit worship (influenced by Indian culture since the 3rd/4th century) is prominent especially in rural areas which constitute the majority of the country's population.

A key belief is that the mother of a child's previous incarnation can heavily influence the current life of the child. The child's preceding mother who through violence, starvation or war lost her child, in her anguish brings illness upon the child. This perceived spiritual 'cycle of violence' can cause tremendous fear in the present day mother that she could lose her child.

It is believed that from the moment the Cambodian infant takes its first breath, links with this previous mother must be severed. The traditional birth attendant places above the child's head a white cotton cord and a betel leaf cutter/pair of scissors to symbolically cut those ties. The mother is then guided to wipe some meconium, which represents the preceding mother, into the mouth of the child and to place incense sticks by the baby's head and declare "This baby is now the property of this mother. Not you! Go back!" (Eisenbruch, 1998:510)

The likelihood of the preceding mother attacking becomes less as the developmental milestones are reached and various associated rites of passage such as the naming ceremony, closure of the fontanelles, cutting the hair and weaning are completed. The child can then forget its life in the previous incarnation and therefore becomes more safely embedded in its new life (Eisenbruch, 1998:514).

Mothers have a heavy spiritual responsibility to carry. They can be held accountable for their children's illness for one reason or another. If a baby is failing to thrive (aarih koon) it can be blamed on incompatibility between the body elements of the blood of the mother or bad actions or wrong doing by the mother in taking care of the child. (TPO, 1997)



Stillbirths and neonatal deaths are seen to be caused by the spirit world but also a defect in the mother such as a 'crooked uterus' (sboon viec), as well as disharmony between the child and parent or between the parents. (Eisenbruch, 1998) Once again the spiritually violent act of taking the child might be seen as a result of violence between children and parents or between parents.

Their supplies of 'good mothering' can also be contaminated by a deficit in their physical make-up (e.g. mis-shaped or wrong size breasts), in their capacity to make good milk (bad milk comes from bad blood which comes from a bad mother), in their social or moral conduct or maybe for some reason outside of their control. (Eisenbruch, 1998:507).

Breastfeeding is the Cambodian cultural norm although most new-borns are not fed colostrum as this is considered inappropriate. Traditional healers emphasise how bad breast-milk can make the child sick. If the astrological month and year of the parents was out of harmony or the mother had an accident this could make the breast-milk 'sour'. Alternatively the mother may have eaten sour, bitter, mouldy or salty foods which made her breast milk 'hot' which blocked the child's intestines. Weaning tends to take place late and weaning practices are poor so this begins a cycle of child malnutrition.

As the woman is blamed for miscarriages, neonatal deaths or sickly children, the father can justify that he must leave the wife to find another wife from whom he can have 'healthy' children.

Alternatively both parents can take the baby to a monk or Kruu (traditional doctor) to perform a substitution ritual - to change the child's name or ceremonially 'donate' the child to the monk. (Trans Psychological Organization, 1997:160-1) The monk then becomes the 'parent' and gives the child back to the mother to care for it.

Some healers make a steam bath for the child to inhale that literally or metaphorically stinks to repel the preceding mother.

Various ingredients are used but one involves the upper shell of the turtle, Trionix Ornatus which symbolizes how the child, like the turtle, starts out with a 'soft shell' which only becomes hard and protective on maturity.

The world view of the mother is such that occurrences that happen to the young child can be attributed to the previous birth mother being angry with the way the child is being brought up. As such, many mothers, for example, are encouraged not to be seen to be either too affectionate or too aggressive towards the child in case it creates jealousy or anger in the previous birth mother. If a child smiles before 3 months old it can be interpreted as a signal that it can see its preceding mother. Where she is jealous or angry she might again try to 'take the child back'.

It is also a way of explaining seizures such as febrile convulsions and epilepsy where the mother is literally shaking the baby to try to take it back to her world (mdai daem). This phenomenon can affect children up to 12 years old and is called skan.

## Virginity and sexual 'misconduct'

A Khmer proverb says "not to ripen before it turns green" urges young unmarried females not to have sex before marriage. There is no equivalent proverb for young men. (Tarr 1996:51)

Ancestral spirits were also thought to discourage such forms of sexual activity and would punish those involved. Spirits of females who have died while still virgins, whether by suicide, accident or violence or the spirits of women who died in childbirth are considered the most malevolent of spirits. It is interesting to note that male spirits are not considered to be malevolent. (Tarr, 1996)

Traditional texts in Buddhism include a negative image of young women in the form of Mara who tries to seduce the Buddha with worldly pleasures in the form of sexual pleasures of his daughters, which the Buddha chooses to renounce. This accentuates the belief that the Buddha disapproves of both pre-marital and extramarital sex. (Tarr, 1996)

Although this may have been known by Buddhist monks, most Buddhist texts would not have been known by most lay-people.

Classical literature contains many examples of young females seducing or being seduced by male figures and then their lives ending in tragedy such as in the Nan Kaki, emphasizing the importance of sexual purity of girls. A popular proverb is "if you keep the fermented fish carefully, it will not attract flies, just as if you keep your daughters carefully they can be safeguarded against sexual predators" (Tarr 1996:51).

Traditionally, young men would spend several weeks as a novice at the local temple and monastery. During this time they were forbidden to have sexual relations and if they were found to have sexual emissions while sleeping they would be asked by the abbot to leave the monastery and live in the bush for one day to three months. Far fewer boys enter the monkhood today than in the past or in neighbouring Thailand.

Women were/are prohibited from ordination as monks (bikkunis), but can become nuns. Their main purpose is to serve the monks. In the status hierarchy, monks are above men, men are above women but men are also higher in status than nuns.

Although Buddhism is based on the Confucian philosophy of Hsiao where there is love within the family, both love of parents for their children and of children for their parents, in SE Asia there is a reciprocal obligation of children to their parents which can lead some parents to believe that this obligation can extend to being sold or working in exploitive ways if necessary, to assist the family.

A poem which is known to many Cambodians entitled Cbab Srey (Code for Women), was previously taught in temples and schools and gives the duties and acceptable behaviour for a good Cambodian girl and later wife.

For virgin girls 'the code' says that they should walk so their hips do not swing, sit modestly, never 'laugh foolishly', keep her hair up because if she leaves it down it is like "a cat hiding its claws". This contrasts and provides a double standard with the male who is drawn to women as 'ants are to sugar' and "cannot help himself but to be engaged in sexual misconduct" (Tarr, 1996).

Advice for married women from Cbab Srey, includes "respect and fear the wishes of your husband and take his advice to heart", "If your husband gives you an order don't hesitate a moment in responding", "Avoid posing yourself as equal to your husband", "Never tattle to your parents anything negative about your husband or this will cause the village to erupt", "never turn your back to your husband when he sleeps" and "have patience, prove your patience, never respond to his excessive anger".

**Whether these are still being taught in school is unclear.**

Prior to 1975 the marriage certificates ranked each spouse, indicating that men could have more than one wife, though this was uncommon. However, it was not uncommon for men to have a 'second wife' or 'secret wife' and this practice continues today. Females were never permitted to have more than one husband, (though mythology suggested that Soma, a princess in the 7th century practiced polyandry).

Previously it was believed that a child could contract gonorrhoea, syphilis or leprosy by transmission from a parent or ancestor. Eisenbruch, 1998: 511 suggests that "Cambodian men tweak the penis of a young boy as a sign of affection rather than sexual gratification". It is believed that after 4 or 5 such experiences the tubules of the penis swell and after several years the boy develops gonorrhoea.



Just as common is the belief that mango illness (syphilis) can cross from an affected father albeit in an attenuated form to his son and turned into 'priei' spirits of the boils. The medical explanation for this is that a father with syphilis can transmit it through the pregnant woman to the male fetus which can lead to miscarriage or if the child survives furunculosis boils. But even here the woman is seen to be partly responsible. One Khmer dictum says "women create the germ of syphilis, men spread it" (Eisenbruch, 1998: 514).

## Traditional Healing

Several traditional healing practices have continued to be used with both adults and children and have continued through different eras. One of these is the practice of coining where coins are rubbed on the skin. Another is pinching the skin. These processes can be very painful for children and this has led some consternation among health professionals in the West where refugees have been accused of child abuse.

In spite of the range of influences cited above, some of these beliefs are deep-rooted and still influence many rural families.

## French Colonial era

Although the French colonial era beautified the capital Phnom Penh so that it was labelled the 'Venice of the East', the influence this era had on most children is unclear. Some wealthy urban families must have benefited from the education and connections but the majority of rural families appear to have been largely unaffected and were jealous of the wide gulf developing between the wealthy urban dwellers and the poor rural dwellers. This discontentment is cited as one of the reasons why the Khmer Rouge could take control.

Norsworthy (2003) described the dehumanizing and culturally disruptive effects of male supremacist and patriarchal colonizers as important variables in understanding contemporary structural violence and the increased vulnerability of women as targets of abuse or assault.

Prior to independence there were few secular schools at village level. At the eve of independence only 21% of children at primary school were girls (Tarr, 1996).

## Independence

France gave independence to King Sihanouk in 1954 and the King has maintained some political influence over domestic affairs for the past 50 years. This was made possible by the international support for Cambodia's political independence in the post-war era of decolonization but also the traditional belief of the sacred dharmaraja ("righteous ruler") and 'cakravarti' (universal God King who 'sets rolling the wheel of Buddhist law').

While Thailand was more involved in modernization at this time, Sihanouk did promote education and was responsible for establishing the first secular university, but Tarr (1996) suggests Cambodia was still less developed than many other countries of the region on the eve of the civil war. Ninety-five percent of the population were still rural peasants (today they still constitute 85% of the population). Only the few urban middle classes had access to things that were not 'Cambodian'.



Meanwhile for the majority of the rural population, the culture remained relatively consistent. Ebihara (1974) in her research in a Cambodian village in the 1960s and 70s found that after the age of 4 or 5 years children were considered to be increasingly self-sufficient, contributing to family production. However, instead of increasing their status, strict discipline was described as common with children after the age of 4 or 5 years. However, in contrast she found that during the first couple of years of life children were given constant attention.

This change in attitude towards children from infant to child appears to be quite marked when adults start to impose a strict discipline. Whilst there is a danger in assuming similarities across cultures it is interesting to note similar patterns in Hong Kong (Tang & Davis, 1996) indicating that this may be a wider persistent Asian phenomenon.

Ebihara (1974) also found that unmarried females were kept under surveillance and chaperoned in a way that unmarried males were not. She argued that personal desire and romantic love were considered secondary to familial responsibility. This is still considered to be the norm today for many parents and children (see later - sexual relationships).

## Lon Nol era

Under Sihanouk, the country broke off relations with the US and allowed North Vietnamese guerrillas to set up bases in the north. The US began a secret bombing campaign against these bases in 1969, though Cambodia remained 'neutral' in the war.

During the Vietnamese war in the late 1960s, the country was heavily shelled by the Americans and many Cambodian families and children became displaced people within their own country. Phnom Penh became congested with internal refugees. Little has been written about how this time impacted children but some biographies written by those who were children at that time do exist as a prequel to their experiences during Pol Pot.

Sihanouk was deposed in a coup in 1970 by General Lon Nol. Sihanouk, exiled in China, forged an alliance with the rural communist guerrilla movement, the Khmer Rouge. The Cambodian army was locked in a struggle with two enemies - the North Vietnamese and the Khmer Rouge rebels - and gradually lost territory to both.

Lon Nol saw an end to monarchy at the time but the republican regime still promoted Buddhism as an important pillar of society.

Tarr (1996) suggests that at this time Sihanouk denounced Lon Nol's republic as undermining traditional Cambodian culture as he highlighted cultural practices of young people who overturned traditional dress, entertained multiple sex partners, challenged the hierarchical structures of society, spent too much money on



imported goods, bribed teachers to pass exams and spent too little time studying.

Despite US backing, Lon Nol's regime was overthrown in 1975 as the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh under the leadership of Pol Pot. Sihanouk briefly became head of state, before resigning. Pol Pot was made Prime Minister. Thus began the infamous genocide.

### Khmer Rouge era

Lyrics of the song "Children of the New Kampuchea" stated: "We the children have the great fortune to live the rest of our time in precious harmony under the affectionate care of the Kampuchean revolution, immense, most clear and shining."



However, during the next 3 years seven months and twenty four days an economic and social experiment was introduced, based on China's "Great Leap Forward" of the 1950s, to return to "Year Zero". The cities were evacuated and urban dwellers were forced to become collectivized agricultural workers in the countryside. Villagers ate from a common kitchen, though food was meagre and labour was organized in quasi-military teams.

Although, all inter-generational relations had previously been "hierarchically ordered along the elder-younger dimension" (Ovensen et al., 1996), a reversal of this Cambodian norm that occurred during the Pol Pot Maoist era was the reversal of this hierarchical relationship.

Khmer Rouge soldiers were often children whom no one dared to question. Photographs of both child Khmer Rouge soldiers and child victims can be found in the Toul Sleng Genocide Museum which was previously the site of torture by the same soldiers. Youth were "rewarded with authority and position in the belief (by the Khmer Rouge authorities) that they were more politically reliable and trustworthy". (Bit, 1991:47) However, there were also periodic purges of the Khmer Rouge cadres attributed by Hinton, "due to the instability and impermanence of the patron-client relations embedded in Cambodian culture". (Hinton, 2005)

Furthermore, traditional relationships between parents and children were deliberately broken down and children were taught to report on their own parents. The rice pot, the emblem of the family unit which families would eat from, was deliberately smashed. "Systematic means of transferring to the political organization the bonds of economic interdependence, loyalty and emotional support, which (had previously) formed the core function of the family unit, were crucial to assuming the degree of socio-political control" (Bit, 1991:46).

All religious expression was forbidden. Monks were beheaded, Muslims were forced to eat pork, Christians were killed and traditional rituals were forbidden.

In many areas of the country, children over seven years were removed from parents to live under the supervision of strangers and the demands of the labour schedule and limitations on travel meant that family members had little, if any, opportunity to meet up. When these children became adults they were described by Bit, himself a refugee, (1991) as having 'no respect for traditional beliefs'.

During this time there were forced marriages and reports of sexual abuse in secret. The Khmer Rouge sought to restrict the sexual behaviour of the whole population. If you were deviant to this notion then you were considered to be counter-revolutionary. Tarr (1994:13) suggests that people accused of sexual transgressions were paraded in public before their 'disappearance'.

Although it was a relatively short time, the three and a half years between 1975 and 1979 contained in it a genocide that killed up to 20% of the population. A high proportion of children therefore experienced multiple traumas. These things, including threats, torture, execution, forced labour, disappearance and imprisonment, happened to both children and adults and they may have experienced them or been witness to them happening to close relatives or peers.

Political violence in varying forms has occurred in Cambodia for the past 40 years. Children's lives have been affected directly and indirectly as a result of this. The population pyramids of the past 40 years demonstrate how the loss of young children, men and elders at that time has had an effect on the demography of the country, even now.

### **Vietnamese era/Thai Refugee camps**

After Pol Pot from 1979 until 1992 the traditional enemies of Cambodia, the Vietnamese, invaded and the Peoples Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) was established. Many people closer to the Thai border, even though they were weak and sometimes starving, fled across the border into what became the refugee camps. Research

with children by Mollica et al. (1993) at that time indicates that this experience was sometimes as equally traumatic as the time of the Khmer Rouge, in camps that by definition were meant to be a 'refuge'. There was rape of women and children by Thai soldiers (Task Force 80) who were meant to be guarding the camps and also shelling of the camps from the Vietnamese backed Government in Cambodia.

Getting into the camps was risky too because of landmines and significantly few young children arrived with their parents because of a range of reasons including severe malnutrition and that the journey was hazardous with malaria and land-mines. Some children who had been separated



from their families became street children within the camp until unaccompanied child centres were created. Teenage boys who had been soldiers and who had their limbs destroyed by landmines were abandoned in centres in the camps.

However, even 'normal' children with families living in the Site 2 refugee camp (where the researcher also worked) endured psychological stress comparable with that seen in adolescents receiving clinical care in a Western context (Mollica, et al, 1997). Somatic complaints, social withdrawal, attention problems, depression and anxiety were common. Culturally social withdrawal and social passivity were/are more often expressed than anger and aggression in SE Asia children. Girls were also engaged in 'socially deviant behaviour' not the norm for their culture.

Children often complained of physical somatic complaints such as headaches and dizziness which are believed to be cultural expressions of emotional distress and are often the chief complaints of more serious psychiatric illness. Nightmares were common. (Eth & Pynoos, 1985)

Violence factors such as the frequent shelling of the refugee camp had a major negative impact on the psychological well-being of the camp's adolescent population (Mollica et al, 1997: 1104).

Meanwhile in Cambodia itself, Vietnamese occupation imposed a second form of communism more reminiscent of that in Eastern Europe. Tarr (1996) suggests that the PRK sought to normalize social relationships within society. Family life was restored and households based on kinship were revived. However, many families had lost members especially men and young children and not all survivors returned to their places of residence.

A 'friendship' statue can be seen in Phnom Penh, ironically not far from the Royal Palace, where the loyal communist family can be seen, eyes forward, holding guns in their hands and the clearly fierce determination to keep the philosophy and goals of the party in their hearts. But after the traumas of Maoism and the fact that the Vietnamese were traditional enemies, it is unclear how much people really were prepared to truly accept this belief for themselves. In both communist regimes people have said that it was necessary to keep a low profile to survive.

During the Vietnamese occupation adolescent boys were forced to join the Vietnamese army to repel the opposition in the border camps and where Khmer Rouge still had strongholds. They were also used by the Vietnamese to plant and harvest the annual rice crop, clear the jungle and minefields. Boys learnt to avoid soldiers, work in the fields but hide in the jungle to avoid being captured.

Schools were re-opened in Phnom Penh and elsewhere in Cambodia, after having been closed for the whole Pol Pot period, even though few teachers had survived.

However very little entertainment was available to young people apart from coffee shops showing popular Chinese videos (Tarr, 1993).

After Pol Pot, few doctors or teachers survived. Nevertheless, and this is not often remembered, an infrastructure for health and education was set up by the Vietnamese and many Cambodians were appointed as health workers and teachers. The top down



approach meant that clinics and schools did function and, although records are hard to find, this must have improved the health and education of children who had received little of either under the Khmer Rouge. However, little data is available on this or other research about children at this time.

Many parents of today were children in the time of the brutal genocidal Pol Pot regime when many witnessed torture and killing of relatives. How does this affect their parenting? Does exposure to such violence precipitate more brutal forms of domestic violence? Are the effects of traumas passed down from one generation to another? Research from the Holocaust seems to indicate that they are. At the same time current research is indicating that the long term effects do not effect social functioning and that tremendous resilience is developed.

A relatively small number of refugees did manage to get to the States, France, Canada, New Zealand and Australia and it is here that most of the research has been conducted on the long term effects of trauma on young people. A number of studies have been conducted to understand the long-term effect of past exposure to political 'violence' on the mental health of children and adolescents of refugee children and their parents who got to the West. Many experienced various forms of post traumatic stress syndrome. However, Rousseau et al. (2003) suggest that although traumatic family experiences may still influence the lives of young Khmer refugees as they enter adulthood, the results of their longitudinal study suggest that family trauma experienced before birth may have a 'steeling effect' and other studies reporting long term persistence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) have found good social adjustment in spite of symptoms observed Sack, Seeley & Clarke, (1997) Less research has been done on those 'left behind' in Cambodia or those who repatriated back into Cambodia. It is not clear how the challenges of adjusting to a third country and the prejudices experienced there would compare to the challenges of living in Cambodia post-Pol Pot.

## The UNTAC era

At the end of the cold war in Europe, ongoing support of the international politics between America, China and Russia in SE Asia ceased and in 1992 following the Paris Peace Accord, the United

Nations facilitated a process of returning refugees from the border with Thailand. Many children who had been born in the camps and had never been outside of its boundaries saw paddy fields and water buffalo for the first time, which is normally universally familiar to Cambodian children. Whilst in the boundaries of the camps, with support from UNHCR (or the equivalent administration United Nations Border Relief Operation), the children's nutritional, health and educational needs were met but as they returned to Cambodia they had to re-adjust to a relatively poorly resourced health and education system.

It was not until the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement (hereafter PPA) in 1991 that the concept of human rights received serious attention in Cambodia. In Cambodia itself the tight hold of a strict communist Government decreased and motivation to maintain nationwide health and education infrastructures decreased. However, the Government agreed for the United Nations to invest millions of dollars into an election process and thus was the start of a mixed economy and the investment of international organizations and funds.

Compared to the anti-religious stance of the two communist regimes religious freedom was also allowed.

During the Vietnamese occupation, Cambodia had continued to be isolated from the West. Oxfam among others had lobbied the country for Development Aid from the West but very little had been forthcoming. In affect Cambodia missed out on years of the development revolution that was reaching most of the developing world. Then in 1992 with the UN support, millions of dollars were given to re-build the country. However, the amount of this money specifically ear-marked to benefit children's needs is questionable. Nevertheless, hundreds of international NGOs took the opportunity of coming into Cambodia.

The UNTAC soldiers have sometimes been accused of single-handedly bringing HIV AIDS to Cambodia in spite of the sophisticated trafficking that was already going on between Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. Nevertheless, UNTAC soldiers were positioned throughout the country to supervise the democratic process and as they had a lot of money at their disposal then much of this was injected into the sex industry.

UNTAC also introduced a number of laws, many based on an established Western legal framework, but did not necessarily adequately consider the cultural context.

After the elections King Sihanouk, as head of State, proclaimed it would be a democratic society operating a free market economic system.

As a result Phnom Penh has experienced greater levels of economic development and many people including young people have migrated to Phnom Penh, attracted by economic and educational opportunities.

In 1995 according to the National Institute of Statistics (p31) young people less than 26 years made up 55% of the population.

## Human Rights/Child Rights

The introduction of human rights as a concept for the Cambodian public came in the form of education about citizenship during the United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAC) era between 1992-3. The UN Declaration on Human Rights was explained simply to adults in preparation to vote.

In October 1992, the Royal Government of Cambodia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). UNICEF state that the Rights of the Child are enshrined in the Constitution but although Cambodia has ratified the CRC it still has some way before it can be said to be fully implemented.

## Education

The recovery of Cambodia post Pol Pot has been slow. A significant contributing factor to the recovery however, has been the education of university and school teachers and therefore in turn the education of youth and children, following the decimation of the educated elite during the Pol Pot Khmer Rouge era. This cannot be underestimated.

Girls account for 45% of primary school attendees, 35% of upper secondary school and less than a fifth of students in tertiary education (MOESYS, 1998). Traditionally girls stay home to take care of household and child rearing tasks.

Even now, 'free education for all school-children' promoted by UNESCO will not be possible for sometime due to lack of resources and commitment. Many rural schools function only part time and the grades children can take are limited. This is compounded by the Government who pay insufficient wages to teachers so they also need a second job to survive. Alternatively they need to charge fees to children which reduces accessibility to the very poor.

In a society with a proportionately high number of children in the population, the cost to the Government of any health, education and social needs are proportionately more expensive.

Whilst researchers in the West are considering whether school should be valued economically as 'work' for children, the value of education by the Cambodian Government is questionable, when comparatively so little is invested into it. Governments generally recognize that they need to prepare children for the future economy of a country but this is a long term investment and immediate needs of the country appear to take precedence.

## Child soldiers

Although the Khmer Rouge has been disbanded now, there were still many demobilized children who were active soldiers until relatively recently. Boyden and Gibbs (1997) suggest that many Cambodians have consequently been left with a "residual fear of children". It is unclear how they came to this conclusion but if it is true then it may be of major importance in considering the power differentials between adults and children and whether it could lead to increased violence.

## Landmines

A form of war violence affecting children after the war has ended is landmines and unexploded ordnances (UXOs). Cambodia is one of the most severely landmine and UXO affected countries in the world. Several years of aerial bombing, together with widespread use of landmines by combatants, had a devastating impact on the country. In 2002, 98 percent of mine casualties were civilian. Access for civilians living in rural areas to essential resources and facilities such as water, roads, bridges, and cultivable land is restricted and hazardous. All of these have an affect on children's lives.

The Level One Survey (sometimes called a Landmine Impact Survey, LIS), issued in May 2002, reported that 6,422 villages in an area of 4,466 million square meters were affected; mines or UXOs may contaminate 2.5 percent of the country's surface area. The survey estimated that 5.1 million people were at risk. About 1,640 villages, approximately twelve percent of all villages, have a high contamination of landmines and UXOs. According to the Cambodia Mine/UXO Victim Information System (CMVIS), special report, 834 new landmine and UXO casualties were reported in Cambodia: 145 people were killed and 689 injured; 506 were men, 52 were women and 276 were children; 817 were civilians.

The effects of structural violence on children cannot be separated from the effects of interpersonal violence on children. Men who go to war leave many wives without a support structure. Children are orphaned. Men return from war, sometimes traumatized from the violence they have seen, with an increased level of tolerance to violence. This may lead to increased domestic violence.

## Child Labour

Exploitive child labour is seen to be a major issue facing Cambodia. The Ministry of Planning socio-economic survey in 1997 found 16% of children and adolescents between 5 and 17 years were working, most of them in agriculture. In the 15-19 age group, 63.9% of girls compared with 43.8% of boys were working, indicating that girls enter the labour force earlier and therefore leave school earlier to do so.

According to World Vision there are an estimated 616,023 working children aged between 5-17 years and 2,000 street children in Phnom Penh. Another 15,000 children spend more than 6 hours a day scavenging and begging. An increasing number of children are also involved in domestic labour though it is difficult to estimate how many as this is more hidden. It is not clear in which of these occupations children are more prone to violence. However, although school children often also have other occupations, the above groups would probably not be included in this research study.

In rural areas most children will be expected to play a significant part in the family economy as they have done for hundreds of years, usually through farming rice.

However, although they support the family, they are also exposed to the negative health effects of work. For example, according to Guarcelloe, Lyon and Rosati (2004) children working in agriculture are 12 percentage points more likely to suffer injuries than those working in the manufacturing industry. A child working in manufacturing must put in 40 hours more per week than a child in agriculture to reach the same (40 percent) level of risk. However, agriculture is likely to have less monitoring and safety mechanisms in place.

## Violence in the workplace

In Phnom Penh, the biggest industry by far is the garment industry. Whilst certain regulations are in place in an attempt to ensure that the exploitation of young people is minimized there continue to be serious concerns. Different NGOs working in Cambodia have the opportunity to work with young people working in the factories but in order to continue to work with them they must be discreet about what they are aware of. As birth registration has been insufficient until very recently, determining age is not possible, so young people whose age is often difficult to ascertain, do work for long hours in arduous conditions. There are reports of physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Nishigaya (2002) suggests that low socioeconomic status of girls, due to low education and meagre factory wages, and a high dependency rate at their rural households and/or with obligations as daughters to provide for the family determine their entry into sex work. At the location of sex work they are subjected to physical violence, alcohol and drug use, both self-taken and forced. This leads to a high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

It is sometimes assumed in the West that children historically who were contributing to the family economy achieved a certain status (Oldham, 1994), implying that they might be less vulnerable to abuse and more valued in their opinions. More research is needed to indicate whether this is true geographically in developing countries at the present time but until then we cannot make that assumption.



Even previously considered innocuous occupations of rural children in Cambodia such as collecting firewood and water are now considered dangerous in some areas because of landmines. Boyden and Gibbs (1997:100) have suggested this may cause tension for parents to be more protective and have more control over children at a time when children need to be increasingly more responsible and independent to survive in an increasingly competitive society.

In a society where adults have been afraid to communicate for fear of consequences especially during the two Communist regimes, parents may discourage children from speaking out or standing out in any way. This is a disadvantage in an increasingly competitive society as it could prevent initiative.

In public spheres, men continue to be portrayed as leaders, politicians and professionals whereas women are depicted as homemakers, child care providers and domestic workers. These images are reinforced in the media. This reinforces patriarchy and the belief that being born as a woman is 'due to bad 'karma' in a previous life'.

Due to the effects of globalization and rapid industrialization, the traditional routes for girls to earn money within the village or to contribute to the welfare of the family by working in the fields are shrinking.

## **Commoditisation of children**

As a result, there is increasing reporting of what Non-Government Organisations are calling 'commoditisation' of children, for example, into sexual slavery or begging 'rings' through trafficking across borders. In this case children are 'valuable' commodities that need protecting so that they are not 'damaged goods' but this is not the kind of child protection that is being suggested here.

## **Drugs and alcohol**

Although Cambodia is close to the infamous drug trafficking golden triangle, it has until recently not had a big drug problem but more recently, with the influx of money available to the increasing middle-classes, drugs are more readily available and this is changing the youth culture.

Although more research is needed to demonstrate a link between drugs or alcohol and violence in youth in the Cambodian context it is well researched in the West. Youth who drink or take drugs are more likely to be violent towards their peers and towards adults.

## **Boxing**

In a 'macho' culture that values physical strength in boys and men, a select group of boys are encouraged to be involved in kick boxing, which has both religious, status and economic value to those involved especially the managers. This is another culturally endorsed activity, this time involving boys, which is rarely discussed in child protection literature. However, it is known to cause head injuries.

## **Media**

As well as the increase in popularity of kick boxing in the arena, it is also a popular form of entertainment on the television. Martial arts also continue to be popular. An increasing number of pornographic videos are available and there are no legal restrictions to them being sold to minors. Everything is available, including material not available in adult stores in the West, including violent rape.

## Advertising

When the researcher first came into Cambodia in 1990, there was virtually no advertising for any products. In 2005, the massive influx of advertising is everywhere in urban areas. Much of this is targeting youth and parents including advertising cigarettes in a way that explicitly appeals to youth, advertising baby milk in a way that discourages breast-feeding as well as the ubiquitous soft drinks which are known to destroy children's teeth.

## Sexual behaviour of youth

According to the EC/UNFPA (2002) study of 150 young people most girls drop out of school at puberty which "might reflect parental attempts to control girls sexuality, as the virginity of girls is deemed as essential for marriage".

Sexual behaviour among youth is also changing from more traditional to more 'permissive' especially in urban areas. This can lead to an increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

As one young man from Prey Veng said in the EC/UNFPA (2002) study, "We want to be different! We want to have hair or shave our heads, we want to listen to our kinds of music and watch sexy videos. We want people to know that we are different from children and adults".

However, the research by EC/UNFPA (2002:21) also indicates that girls continue to feel the pressure by family and neighbours of... "going against what Cambodian culture expects of a young woman". At the same time girls were afraid of rape/assault.



What Cambodian culture expects is summed up in the Khmer proverb "men are gold, women are cloth" which indicates that whilst gold (men) can be dropped in the mud and washed clean, once cloth (women) are 'soiled' they are spoiled.

Young people in the EC/UNFPA study felt that parents were too strict with them, especially daughters and that restriction of freedom was a source of conflict between generations. A number of children also commented on how a broken heart can lead to personal turmoil and even suicide.

The DFID/USAID/PSI report (2002) "Sweetheart Relationships in Cambodia", a study using focus group discussions and peer ethnographic review, included male and female students and described a range of different terms used in modern Cambodia for sweetheart relationships which usually meant a non-commercial, non-marital sexual relationship - 45 terms used to describe female partners and 64 terms for men partners.

While male university students are not representative of most men, even elite men, in Cambodia, they reported often having simultaneous multiple partners including paid partners, casual partners and sweethearts. Condom use was inconsistent whilst students self assessment of risk was extremely low. This report also discussed the common occurrence of 'bauk' or gang rape of sex workers or 'srey kalip' (modern girl). This often involves verbal and physical violence (DFID et al, 2002:30-31). None of the male students appeared to find anything wrong in this practice.

Research with parents in the EC/UNFPA study said they were afraid of their children. They were described as "having little exposure to the current societal forces that are pushing and pulling their own children away from them". As a result parents were said to "restrict their children's movements or scare them away from the unknown."

In 1998 Cambodia had the most serious HIV/AIDS epidemic outside of sub-Saharan Africa with a prevalence of 3.3% among 15-49 year olds (NCHADS,1999).

These changes appear to be increasing anxiety among parents and creating intergenerational tensions (EC/UNFPA, 2002).

## Sexual exploitation

For other children they are vulnerable to being sexually exploited and trafficked. This report will demonstrate that trafficking does not exclusively mean sexual exploitation but is of major concern to the majority of children. Children who are sexually exploited are more vulnerable to violence by customers and pimps.

## HIV AIDS

According to UNICEF, Cambodia still has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Asia. The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Cambodia fell from 3.9 per cent in 1997 to 2.6 per cent in 2002, but there has been a substantial increase in the proportion of husband-to-wife transmission and mother-to-child transmission. In addition there are an estimated 30,000 AIDS orphans below 15 years of age. The relationship between HIV AIDS and violence is insufficiently researched in the Cambodian context but if violence is more prevalent in the most vulnerable groups then children and youth who are less likely to be able to defend themselves will also be in no position to negotiate condom use for example and would therefore be more vulnerable to HIV AIDS.

## Orphans

Traditionally orphans were cared for by monks in the monastery or by relatives. Paul (1995) suggests that orphaned and abandoned children have traditionally been cared for by the extended family but that they were often expected to work in exchange for care. In this case the "line between protection and exploitation are very fine". Girls are seen to be more useful in the home so they are less likely to be abandoned, but is violence and exploitation in the home then more likely to be hidden? Could orphaned children be more likely to experience violence than other children? Recent incidents involving residential centres in Cambodia have indicated both sexual and physical abuse do occur.

## Conclusion

Understanding the culture and history of Cambodia and how it has influenced child raising, violence, sexual behaviour, gender and attitude to children is important for all organizations working with children and insufficient research has been done for us to have a full picture. However, this brief overview gives some understandings of why the situation with Cambodian children is as it is though those who work with children will be amazed at just how resilient children are in spite of this complicated and often traumatic heritag.





# WHAT IS

## the current Evidence of Sexual exploitation and Trafficking of Children and Violence by and to Children in Cambodia?



The UNCRC definition of a minor is someone under 18 years.

### Introduction

Little research has been conducted on various forms of child abuse and even fewer on the children's own perceptions.

### I. Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children

In Cambodia reporting about trafficking has tended to focus on sexual exploitation of children but very little research has been done on other forms of trafficking. This survey indicates that selling of children is widespread and that children can identify a number of other reasons that children are sold. Much more anthropological research is needed to identify the reasons children are sold and the exploitive situations in which they then find themselves.

Even if we only look at sexual exploitation, the actual numbers of children being sexually exploited is controversial. The covert nature of sexual exploitation means that it is not easy to ascertain the numbers and so figures tend to be based on estimates anyway. Steinfatt, Baker and Beesey (2002) estimated the number of sex workers in Cambodia in 2002 as 20,829 with 5,250 in Phnom Penh. However a study by Steinfatt in 2003 estimated that across Cambodia there were 5,317 sex workers in direct or indirect sex work establishments. A fifth (20.2%) of these were classified as 'trafficked', 876 by their indentured status and only 198 as underaged.

The Cambodia National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey of 9,388 young people aged 11 - 18 years old found that less than 2% reported having sex and, of the nine children surveyed who admitted to having been forced to have sex, they were all out of school. However, whilst the data from this survey is rich, the methodology used of interviewing may have led to much under-reporting.

In the same survey, although less than 2% of the 9,388 young people interviewed admitted to sexual activity, 33% of all young people said they personally know young men who take part in gang rapes. Most of those who admitted to sexual activity in the past 12 months were out of school. Of the 148 children who admitted to sexual activity, 23 young people said they had forced someone else to have sex. These were mainly young people in school. Nine said they had been forced to have sex. These were mainly young people out of school.

Sharma and Bose (2003) in their report on 'Violence prevention in South-east Asia: A Challenge for Public Health' say that in 2000, about 13,000 young children aged 5 to 14 years killed themselves in South East Asia and 8,000 children of the same age were killed by other people. In the same year and region 16,000 young people aged between 15 and 29 years died due to violence. The causes are not clear.

The Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (LICADHO) and The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC) have published reports on their investigations on child rape, but not all organisations have made their research/findings available to others. These figures do not differentiate between children who have been sexually exploited/trafficked and abused by tourists/expatriates and those who have been abused by locals but it is assumed it is far more of the latter.

In 2003 alone ADHOC received 356 complaints about rape but suggested that "this is only a small portion of all the rape crimes committed in Cambodia during the year". Nevertheless, 75% of rapes reported to ADHOC in 2002 were minors; 22% were 15-17 years, 30% were 11-14 years, 18% were 7-10 year olds and 5% were 4-6 year olds.

In 2002, 91.6% of the rape victims in LICADHO's investigations were 18 years old or younger, 29.2% were 12 years or younger, while 6% were 5 years old or younger. In 2003, 77.8% of victims were less than 18 years old, 41.1% were 12 years old or younger while 8.7% were 5 years old or younger.

A significant number of perpetrators were also minors;

8% were 15-17 years old and 2% were younger than 14 years (reported to ADHOC, 2002).

ADHOC report that 23% of rape crimes reported to them in 2002 were in the victims' house whilst 55% took place whilst the victims went to work at a place far away from home.

ADHOC and LICADHO's research is based on the experience of victims but this can give a distorted view of the reality for the 'normal' child in Cambodia. What does the 'normal' child experience? What have normal children seen or heard about children in their community? What do they think would help prevent the situation and then help the victim and even the perpetrator?

A study by Raghda Saba, a clinical psychologist in partnership with the University of Phnom Penh's Psychology Department found in 1999 that of the 400 children aged 10-12 years from randomly selected schools in Phnom Penh, 49% had heard of an incidence of rape, 8% had witnessed a rape and 1% had experienced a rape.

More details on child rape is available in the first report 'Stop Violence Against Children'.

In a quantitative study of 580 young people aged 13-28 years from 24 'sangkat' (district) across Phnom Penh several questions were given about 'bauk' - "the practice of one or two students hiring a woman for the night and then taking her back to a guesthouse where several more men are waiting". (PSI, 2002) 34% of boys and 14.5% of girls at school said they knew others involved in 'bauk'. Disturbingly, only 13% recognised 'bauk' as rape or being wrong because the woman had 'consented' to having sex and was a prostitute.

## II. Bullying and Gang Violence

There is no known research on bullying in Cambodia but the 'Cambodia National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey' (2004) stated that 2.5% of young people said they were threatened with weapons over the past 12 months but 8% of children said they carried a knife, stick, club or other weapon over the past 30 days. However this was more prevalent with children out of school (11%) compared to in school (5%). Ten per cent of young people in the survey who attended school were involved in fighting over the previous year. The ratio in the survey for those out of school was

16% which indicates that violence may be more of a problem for children outside of school.

There is no known research specifically done on bullying in school. The above figures are not clear whether the violence actually occurred in school or out of school for the school goers.

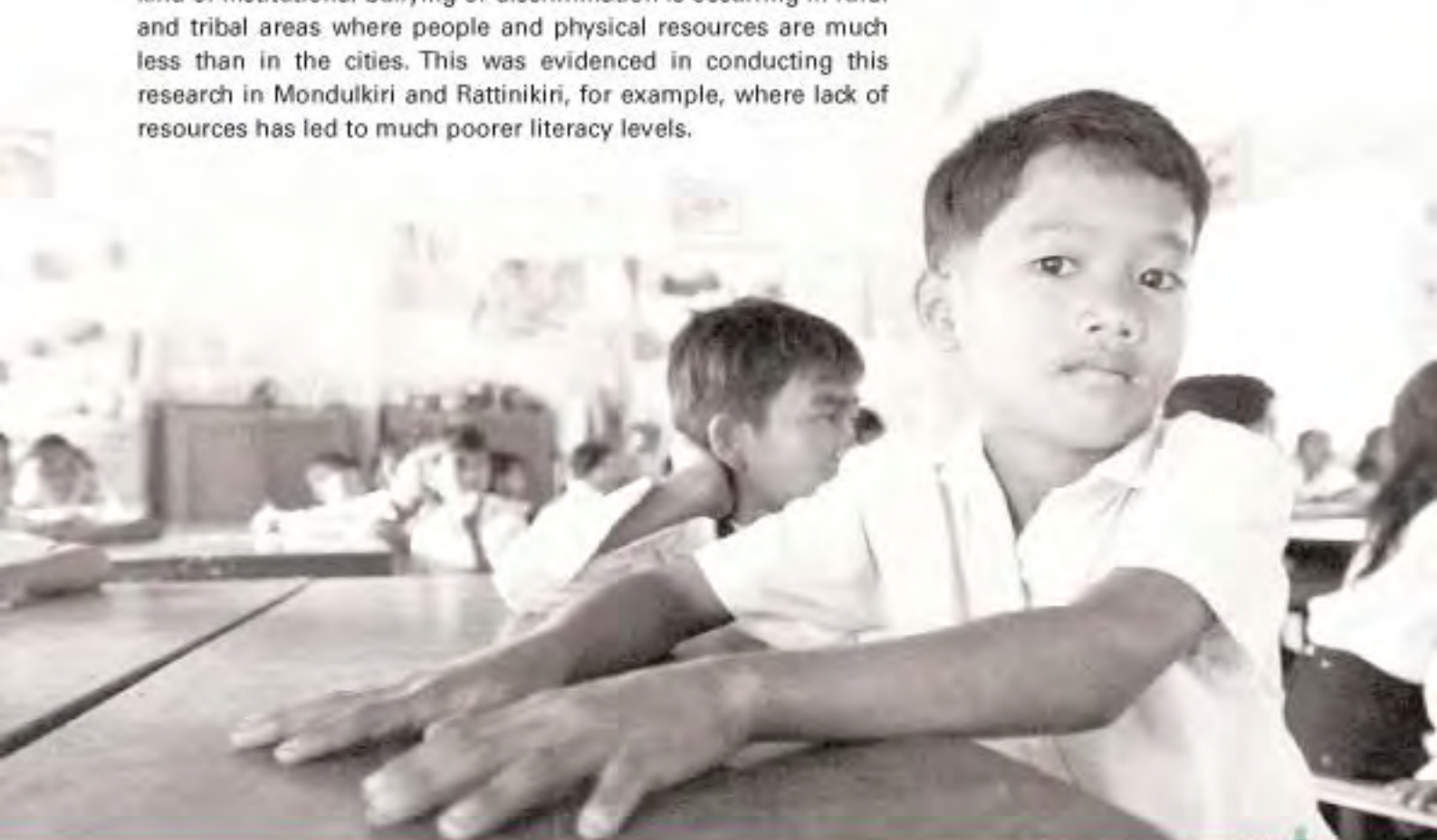
Bullying may be seen by adults as minor compared with sexual abuse and trafficking but to many children it can be intolerable for them to experience discrimination and bullying by their peers day after day. This is further compounded where discrimination and bullying also occur by teachers. This research focuses on children's viewpoints of bullying by other children. More research is needed to establish if children feel they are bullied or discriminated against by teachers.

The first report of 'Stop Violence Against Us!' included corporal punishment in schools. Whilst this is ostensibly to discipline children, children of a particular social class, ethnicity or tribe may experience more regular or more severe punishments than other children, a more subtle form of discrimination/bullying by teachers. More research is needed to substantiate this.

Child to child bullying may also be seen as not important compared to access of education to all Cambodian children but a kind of institutional bullying or discrimination is occurring in rural and tribal areas where people and physical resources are much less than in the cities. This was evidenced in conducting this research in Mondulhiri and Rattinikiri, for example, where lack of resources has led to much poorer literacy levels.

Politicians and teachers must remember they are important role models for children. If children see discriminatory practices they will repeat this towards their peers and perhaps adults.

Although the research looked at any form of child to adult violence many children in the focus groups assumed it was 'gang violence'. In many schools both teachers and children described to us how gang violence is increasing, even to where gangs were causing problems in the school playground. More research is needed to establish the extent of this and how it can be dealt with either by teachers or police to minimise disruption to children's education.





# HOW DOES

## Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation, Being Bullied and Being a Bully affect Children?



A study on 10 Cambodian girls by Nhong Hema (2004) found that the children experienced four aspects of trauma following rape:

### I. Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

**R**esearch indicates that children who are sexually abused can experience an overwhelming sense of pain, sadness, despair, confusion and anger (Carandang, 1996). They also harbour feelings of betrayal and mistrust particularly of men (but if they have been sold then those who sold them as well can include women). They felt negative feelings towards their mothers and also their fathers. Their feelings were often turned inward so that they took it in and kept their feelings to themselves. They were often plagued with feelings of guilt and blamed themselves for the abuse. They felt irreparably damaged. Some children said they felt they had been killed and that there was no reason to live.

- a) traumatic sexualization; a negative view of men and sexual relationship.
- b) a sense of betrayal which is especially significant if this is a person whom the child expects to provide care and protection.
- c) stigmatization where the survivor feels ashamed at losing her virginity and blames herself for the abuse. The child isolates herself, becomes an alcohol/drug abuser, mutilates herself or attempts suicide.
- d) powerlessness. She feels she cannot do anything about her situation. She cannot solve anything. This is perpetuated when she was unable to convince others that the abuse had occurred.

The COSECAM report (Hudd, S, 2003) 'Sold Like Chickens' describes the experiences of 17 girls who had come out of brothels. They described how they were afraid of being beaten, the effects of the drugs given to them, of getting pregnant and of getting AIDS. They were confused about what was happening to them, experienced despair, hopelessness, that they had no future and would never be happy again, felt sad, suicidal, helpless, stupid, pessimistic, alone, discriminated against, afraid of giving their family a bad name, missing their parents, ashamed to go back to their village and sorry about their loss of virginity.

The World Vision report 'Regaining Honour' (Gray L, Gourley S and Paul D, 1995) included a description of the situation for 10 boys who had previously been involved in prostitution. Most of the boys felt that prostitution was something dishonourable but was a way of making money. They were also afraid of health risks (especially AIDS) although mental illness and 'damage to the nervous system' was also mentioned. They were also afraid of being looked down on if they were found out by family and friends. One boy said he considered himself to be the 'worst child in the family'.



## II. Being Bullied/ Being the Bully

- *Physical Health Consequences*

abdominal injuries, brain injuries, bruises, cuts, broken bones, eye damage, chronic pain, disability, gastrointestinal problems.

- *Psychological and behavioural problems*

poor school performance, poor relationships, alcohol/drug abuse, delinquent and violent behaviour, development delays, depression, eating and sleep disorders, feelings of shame and guilt, poor relationship development, phobias and panic disorders, poor self esteem, post traumatic stress disorder, psychosomatic disorders, smoking, suicidal behaviour and self harm, unsafe sexual behaviour.

Dr. Robin Harr of Arizona State University says that the immediate and long term effects of both sexual abuse and/or violence is enhanced depending on

- a) ...what type of abuse or neglect.
- b) ...how often it happens.
- c) ...how severe it is.
- d) ...child's stage of development when abuse occurs.
- e) ... the relationship of the abuser to the child.

According to [www.bullyonline.org/schoolbully](http://www.bullyonline.org/schoolbully) once bullying starts, many children will side with, or appear to side with, the bully because they know that otherwise they themselves will be bullied. The bully is a deeply unpopular child with whom other children associate, not through friendship, but through fear. Children (and adults) who are bullied tend to be imaginative, creative, caring, empathic, tolerant and responsible. Children (and adults) who bully are unimaginative, uncaring, aggressive, emotionally immature, inadequate (especially in social skills) and irresponsible.

The child who learns to bully at school and who is not disciplined then goes on to be the bully in the workplace and the child who is bullied at school also goes on to be a likely target of bullying in the workplace.

People who are likely to be bullied have a considerable learning capability and thus have a greater capacity to modify their behaviour as an adult. People who are bullies or prone to be bullies have limited learning capacity (especially in interpersonal and behavioural skills) and will therefore have a tendency to exhibit bullying behaviour as adults. Serial bullies may have socio-pathic tendencies which include a lack of insight into their behaviour and its effect on others. It is therefore better for children to learn not to bully early on.



# WHAT IS

## considered to be Culturally Appropriate/Inappropriate touch/forms of “violence”?



One area that needs further consideration is what is considered to be culturally appropriate and inappropriate 'touch' between adults and children. For example, holding hands between men is considered to be acceptable in Cambodia but in other cultures this might be considered as sexual in nature.

Regarding children the researcher has observed the following:

- a) Babies being touched or kissed on the genitals as infants, apparently to sooth them when they were upset.
- b) Boys at age 2-3 years being teased by men pulling down their shorts and exposing them to ridicule, then tugging on the penis.

- c) Hugging children in an affectionate way does not appear to be common after children have become toddlers.
- d) Adults grabbing the genital area of a child to check if a penis is present for those whose gender may be uncertain, e.g. if girls have short hair or boys have feminine facial features, is considered acceptable.
- e) Certain methods of medical treatment such as 'coining' are painful and might be considered violent in some cultures but are considered therapeutic in Cambodia.
- f) Many adults (teachers and parents) believe that beating children is 'normal' and necessary to teach, control and discipline them to ensure they don't become delinquents. Children are seen by many parents as something they own and have rights over. They relinquish these rights to teachers during school time.
- g) People don't feel they should intervene in another family's 'arguments'. This feeling extends even to the police.
- h) Suffering is valued over bringing shame and dishonour to yourself or your family. Children are expected to endure hardship rather than seek help from outside of the family.

This is not the place for value judgements but in attempting to consider the issue objectively the researcher would like to suggest that the following is considered:

- i) It is not always easy to discern the motivation of the adult. Whilst many adults may have no sexual motivation or a sadistic nature, others may have, so how can children be protected from the latter?
- ii) Sexual and verbal teasing can be harmful to the child's self esteem and healthy sexual development. What is in the child's best interest?
- iii) Violence can affect children's health, self esteem and development. At what point is it unacceptable?

- iv) Would it be culturally acceptable to do the same level of violence to an adult? Is it "acceptable"/"allowed" because children do not have the physical strength to respond in the same way and/or because their opinions have less value?

More anthropological research is needed to understand this further in the cultural context.

Many parents/grandparents of today were children/parents in the time of the brutal genocidal Pol Pot regime where many witnessed torture and killing of relatives. How does this affect their parenting? Does exposure to such general violence and abuse precipitate more violence and rape? There does not appear to be any research yet conducted on this, though it would be interesting to compare it with research conducted with parents and children in other post-genocidal situations such as Rwanda.

There is a danger of blaming everything on Pol Pot, but while the level of violence cannot be separated from the fact that Cambodia has only recently emerged from 30 years of war and later civil unrest, the trend to become more materialistic, the effects of increased access to images on the media through globalisation, and a move towards urbanisation might be equally significant factors.





# WHAT IS

## the current Policy & Legal Framework in Cambodia?



**T**his section is not exhaustive and is changing rapidly. Up to date information can be obtained from child rights organizations specialising in the different areas of trafficking, sexual exploitation, education and juvenile justice e.g. ADHOC, Legal Aid Cambodia, Protection of Juvenile Justice ([pjj@online.com.kh](mailto:pjj@online.com.kh)) and Legal Support for Children and Women ([info@lscw.org](mailto:info@lscw.org)).

In October 1992, the Royal Government of Cambodia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). UNICEF state that the Rights of the Child are enshrined in the Constitution but although Cambodia has ratified the CRC it still has some way before it can be said to be fully implemented.

Article 2 obliges all state members to guarantee the rights of the child without discrimination based on race, sex, colour, language, political view, birth origin and situation of children.

Article 3 says that "In all activities related to children, whether instances of public or private social affairs, administrative authorities, judiciary or legislature, the best interest of the child shall be considered to be a primary factor".

Article 5 says "No one should be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

Also Article 19 says "State Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement."

Article 34 says "States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent: (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials."



The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW, 1993) states the following:

- Article 1 defines gender based violence as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, physiological harm or suffering to women, including threats or such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether or occurring in private or public spheres"
- It recognises that gender violence is rooted historically in unequal power relations
- It recognises that it occurs in the family, community and is perpetrated by the state through non-management of the issue

It puts a duty on the state:

- Not to invoke religion or customs to justify violence against women
- To set standards to prevent prostitution
- To set standards to prevent, prosecute and punish perpetrators of violence against women, whether it occurs in private or public
- To change laws, create national plans of action, train members of the criminal justice system, engage in research and collect detailed statistics on issues of violence against women

The Royal Government of Cambodia/UNICEF's 2001-5 document 'Investing in Children'- Master Plan of Operations says that the goals are that "Youth and adolescents acquire life skills, express their views and lead meaningful and secure lives". In order to reach these goals the aim is the "development of child protection networks at regional, national, provincial and village levels", "the completion of the policy and legal framework for child protection and improvement in the enforcement of laws and regulations, especially with regard to child abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking" and to "increase the awareness and skills of individuals and families to adopt behaviours, leading to better child survival, care, development, protection and participation."

This also mirrors the commitment of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing (September 1995) to "Prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls" and both the World Congress on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1996 and Yokohama, Japan in 2001 in which Cambodia played an active part.

In 2002 the Royal Government of Cambodia adopted a national five year plan against trafficking and sexual exploitation of children. The plan is disseminated to relevant Government institutions and interested Government institutions and interested stakeholders.

A "Say Yes for children" campaign was launched in 2004 with 3 key priorities; 'Educate Every Child', 'Leave No Child Out' and 'Fight HIV AIDS'.

The Ministry of Education 'Internal Regulations of General Knowledge for Primary and for Secondary Schools' give advice on discipline and the newly developed Education Law includes major sections on appropriate discipline of children. Appropriate non-violent discipline in schools is important especially when dealing with children who bully because it models non-violent solutions for dealing with violence.

At the National Consultative Meeting on Rights based Education in Cambodia on 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> February 2005 organized by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNESCO and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OCHR) it was stated that only 48.2% of children 'survive' education to Grade 6. Much of the meeting was spent exploring recommendations for the new Education Law and could

improve access and availability to all children regardless of poverty, gender and ethnic origin. This provides a potentially good model for children when they see teachers not discriminating against children because they don't have sufficient money to pay the required 'fee' to enter the class-room or take exams.

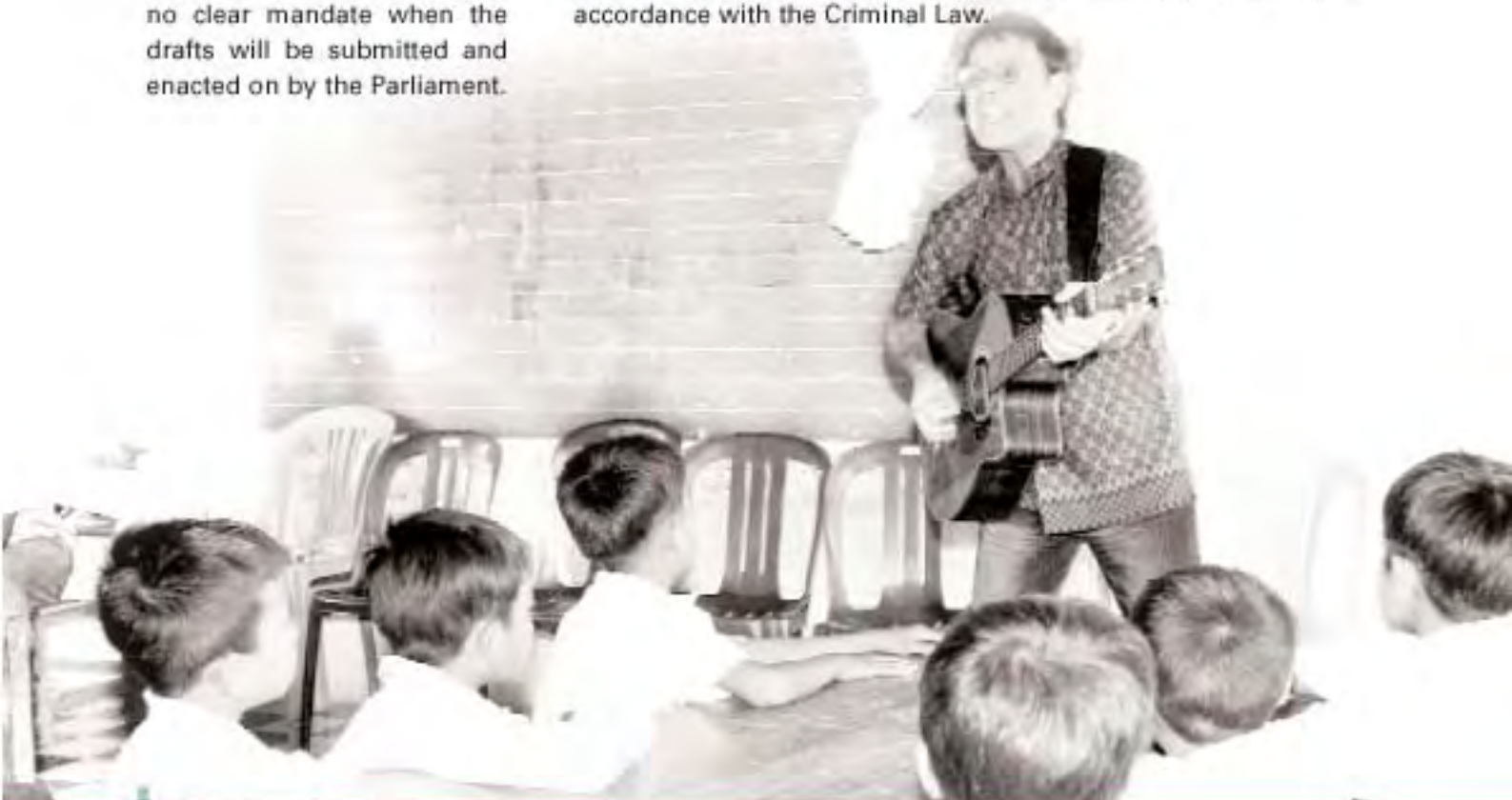
According to the Save Children Norway Bamboo Shoots (May 2005) The Cambodian National Council for Children (CNCC) and the Ministry of Justice have officially declared that they finalised the draft on 'Justice for Children' and that they intend to establish a separate juvenile court, but this subject still remains doubtful among interested parties. The development of a Criminal Code, Penal Code and new Civil Code are under way. There is no clear mandate when the drafts will be submitted and enacted on by the Parliament.

Meanwhile the Government reports say that the arrest and detention of minors has increased but the legal system does not yet provide adequate care for children in detention or custody. There are reports of children being detained without due process, of children being detained with adults in the same cell and of children being beaten, tormented or maltreated.

So this issue is of importance to a wide range of Government Ministries. This year (2005) the Government also has to report to the United Nations on how Cambodia is moving further towards achieving the rights of the child as proposed in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as well as the UN report regarding Violence and Children.

According to the NGO 'Protection of Juvenile Justice' "illegal acts committed both by and against children are growing" but no figures are given.

Article 14 of the Criminal Law provides that children under the age of 13 years should not be temporarily detained, and that children between 13 - 18 years old shall not be temporarily confined in prison for more than a period of a month, the exception being for those minors with a crime or misdemeanour for which the period of detention may be doubled. However, according to PJJ "there are a great number of children confined to prison for a longer period whilst they await trial". Also there are no instructions regarding children's arrest, custody and detention despite the fact that a period of custody for children has been clearly defined in accordance with the Criminal Law.





# WHY ARE

## Children's Views important to understand



**T**he UN Convention on the Rights of the Child confirms children's rights to express their views freely in all matters that affect them (Article 12). This was reiterated at the 'World Congress on Commercial Exploitation of Children' in Stockholm, Sweden (1996) and Yokohama, Japan (2001). It is hoped that this kind of research will make organizational decision making on children's issues more relevant and appropriate as children's voices are heard.

Most children in this survey would normally have no access to policy makers at any level. In many ways to policy makers in Cambodia they do not exist. However, this survey has demonstrated that children are very articulate and, if given the chance to speak out, understand well the causes and effects of violence and many potential ways to deal with it. When children feel listened to and heard their self esteem is built up and they can truly be participatory citizens.

Article 47 of the Royal Cambodian Constitution says that "citizens shall be free to express their views". Article 41 says that citizens have the right to freedom of expression.

In the Cambodian's Government report to the UN submitted June 1998 ([www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/80256404004ff315c125638800542a65?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/80256404004ff315c125638800542a65?OpenDocument)) the Government suggest that there are some opportunities for children to express their views but "...children cannot exercise this right fully because custom does not allow them to challenge decisions taken by adults or to be present at discussions between adults".

The report went on to say that the Government had "not adopted any measure which prohibits children from exercising the right to express their views. Nevertheless," it said, "children cannot fully exercise this right (because) in Cambodian society, parents or guardians are habitually heavy-handed and do not allow children to talk a great deal. Because of such oppression, children lack courage, initiative and determination in exercising their rights".

This research gives children the right to express their opinion in a format that is accessible to decision-makers. At the same time it will be useful to use authentic children's 'voices' backed up with statistical data on prevalence.

In a society where adults have been afraid to communicate for fear of consequences especially during the two Communist regimes, Cambodian children's opinions may be able to reveal much that is 'hidden' in adult responses. Boyden and Gibbs (1997:205) suggest "a carefully planned process of consultation with Cambodian children, rather than investigations of Cambodian children could provide the most appropriate basis for future planning..."

Since then, research of children in Cambodia has increasingly recognized the importance of children's opinions starting with Physicians for Human Rights 'Commercial Sexual exploitation of Women and



Children in Cambodia'(1997), World Vision's 'Crying out; children and communities speak out' (Dorning, 2002) and 'Regaining Honour'(Gray L, Gourley S and Paul D, 1995), COSECAM's 'Sold Like Chickens' (Hudd, 2003), the Child Welfare Group's 'A Preliminary Study into the Accessibility of Minors to Pornography' (CWG, 2003) and 'Tricked into the Trade: Cambodia trafficked Girls Speak Out!'(Lawrence, 2004).

There needs to be a shift in the way we view children so that they are not just 'beneficiaries' of adult interventions but also those who can shape their futures. Whilst adults decide what they want to hear and how they want to hear it then they won't be ready for face to face discussions with children.

However, in a comparative study of children across E. Asia and the Pacific by UNICEF and Research International Asia (Thailand) in May 2001, it was cited that Cambodian children compared to children in other countries expressed more frequently that their opinion was not valued both in society and in the home. If children believe that their opinions are not valued then how does this affect research? Do they need more convincing that adults are genuinely interested in what they have to say? How can this be achieved?

One would expect that this very situation would inevitably have an effect on conducting research and therefore the results. How can children's opinions be collected, without them feeling intimidated, and in a way that useful information can be obtained? A number of creative methodologies have been developed over the past few years but do they produce the kind of information needed? Surveys are often looked down on but how else can quantitative information be obtained?

In this study it was decided to make the most of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This was primarily using role plays with focus group discussion to answer some 'why' questions and then secondarily using anonymous questionnaire surveys. The latter answered some of the prevalence questions with additional open-ended questions.

Adults listening carefully to what children have to say, and then putting it into a form that other adults can hear can act as a bridge. Nevertheless this bridge needs to be temporary only until we find better ways to adequately consult with children and take into consideration their opinions according to their age and ability. 'Victims Lobby Members of Parliament' (a project of the COSECAM Advocacy Unit) might be an example of such an approach where victims of trafficking and rape were given the opportunity to inform MPs and high level officials about their situation 'face to face'.

The Child Rights Foundation have also worked hard to involve children in advocacy efforts including their recent survey of 5,000 children, 'Children's Views on the Implementation of the UNCRC in Cambodia', which is also to be submitted to the UN Study on Violence Against Children.

During both National (March 2005, Phnom Penh) and Regional (Bangkok, June 2005) conferences of the UN Study on Violence against Children, Cambodian children were given an active role in being able to share their concerns to key stakeholders in Government, UN and NGOs but more creative ways of dialogue are needed where there is more active listening.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) also emphasises the need for children to have access to appropriate information. One of the outcomes of this research was to develop a 'Safe Children' karaoke video training project to be developed using key information gained from the project. This will enable key messages to focus on areas of concern that children have themselves expressed, together with information lacking in their responses.



# HOW WAS

## the research conducted?



**T**he research was primarily conducted to give a sample of Cambodian children an opportunity to express what they felt about the affect of violence on children.

### Preparatory phase:

A meeting with LICHADO in 2001 helped us to establish what were common types of violence against children. A Cambodian artist was invited to make line drawings of scenarios of children experiencing and acting violently for use in the first and second stages.

### The research was then conducted in three stages.

#### First Stage: Role Play Focus Groups

Each focus group of 5 boys and 5 girls aged 11-13 years was involved in a half day workshop. The day began with children's games to help the children relax. After introductions the children were shown a series of pictures that were drawn by a Cambodian artist illustrating different scenarios of violence against and by children. The pictures were as follows:

1. Children bullying a disabled child
2. Teacher beating a child
3. Drunk step-father beating a child
4. Child being sold/trafficked
5. Rape by adult of a child
6. Woman being robbed at gun-point by a teenager

Each picture was presented separately. In each group, the children themselves selected a leader and volunteer 'actors' who then acted out the scenario in a role play, of both before the incident on the picture and then the follow up. A video-tape recording was made of them acting out each scene and then after acting, the resulting video was viewed together and then discussed. An

audio-tape was made of their responses about what happened and what could have happened and what would have helped both to prevent the situation from occurring and after the situation had occurred. Children were assured that their individual responses would not be told to parents or NGO workers.

Using games, involving them in a role play and using a video recorder all helped children to relax or at least be less intimidated by the adults. The order of topics was also carefully chosen so that the more personal scenarios were only shown after children had a chance to 'trust' the facilitator. Children were told at the beginning that whilst it would be appreciated if they could all take part, if they felt uncomfortable at any point they could opt out. With 10 children in each focus group it wasn't difficult to leave it to the others.



## **Second Stage: Self-Written anonymous Questionnaire Survey**

In order to understand how representative the responses were in the focus groups it was decided to conduct an anonymous survey questionnaire with school children. It was hoped that this would also provide a more considered response to potential solutions.

Information from the discussions after the role plays in the first stage were then used in developing a questionnaire survey using the same line drawings. The anonymous self administered questionnaire surveys were conducted in schools.

After 18 months of negotiation the Ministry of Education agreed to support the project and allocated Khin Sokhum, an official from the ministry to be involved in securing official permission from each Provincial Education Office and to accompany the researcher.

Five schools were selected from each of the 24 provinces and 10 students (5 boys and 5 girls) aged 13 and 14 years were selected by each provincial education office. 100 children were selected from 10 schools in Phnom Penh as this has a different demography than

the more typical rural areas in most provinces. Each provincial education office was requested to provide a representative sample of children.

Some children aged 13 and 14 years are in primary schools due to repetition of grades or inaccessibility of secondary schools in some provinces. In order to get a more representative sample we requested the provincial education office to provide children from primary (3 schools) and secondary (2 schools) and to ensure that they were of mixed ability, not just the clever children, including children with disability if they were available.

In fact, children as young as 12 and as old as 17 came to be surveyed so whilst the majority are 13 and 14, some are outside of this age range. This was partly because children were selected by teachers who used the age that was recorded when the child was registered which was not always the age the child themselves gave. The age that we used was the latter. Those who were 16 and 17 were excluded from the analysis.

Although classrooms were used, teachers were asked not to be present when children were responding. Some teachers needed to be reminded of this! Children were assured of individual confidentiality - that parents, teachers and others would not be given their papers to read and they did not need to put their names on the papers.

Most of the questions were multiple-choice but there were a number of open-ended questions as well. We were pleasantly surprised that most children completed most of these open-ended sections giving us some considerable additional data.

Ethically, to ensure that children did not feel intimidated they were informed at the beginning that whilst it would be appreciated if they were able to read and answer each question, that if they felt uncomfortable at any time then they could leave a question blank.

## **Third Stage: Presenting the Results to stakeholders**

The initial research analysis of Phase 1 was presented to the 2nd World Congress on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children at Yokohama in Japan in December 2001. It was also presented to Socio-cultural Research Congress at the Royal University of Phnom Penh in November 2002 and the ISPCAN 15th International Congress on Child Abuse & Neglect in Brisbane, Australia, 2003.

When the research analysis of Phase 2 was completed part of it was presented to children and adults at the Children's Forum and the Adults' Forum of the National 'Cambodia Speaks Out on Violence Against Children' conference on March 9th and 10th, 2005. This process enabled 15 groups of children from 10 different provinces to present to the Government their concerns about violence through making statements, drawing and drama. This research was also presented in hard copy at these forums.

This conference was a launch-pad for advocacy efforts of key stakeholders including Ministries of Education, Health and Social Affairs, Women's Affairs, Justice and Interior of the Royal Government of Cambodia and also UNICEF, UNESCO and the NGO community through the Child Welfare Group, ECPAT, COSECAM, Chab Dai coalition.

Presentations were also made to a select group of key Government stakeholders on invitation by the RGC Ministry of Social Affairs in June 2005 and also to the Child Welfare Group in June 2005. It was also used in preparation for the Regional UN Study conference on Violence Against Children held in June 2005. Part of this research was presented at these meetings too. All Regional consultations will contribute to the final report to the UN Secretary General.

The second phase report was also presented at the 6th ISPCAN Asian Regional Conference in Singapore in November 2005. Also the sections on sexual abuse and domestic violence were presented at the Socio-cultural Research Congress in November 2004 and the sections on corporal punishment and bullying at the Socio-cultural Research Congress at the Royal University of Phnom Penh in November 2005.

The first report is currently available for download in pdf file on the website [www.kone-kmeng.org](http://www.kone-kmeng.org) and the second report will follow shortly. Relevant sections were also posted on the [www.endcorporalpunishment.org](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org) website.

Furthermore, information from the research was also used to develop the teachers' training manuals for 2 'Safe Children' karaoke video training packs (one for children aged 7-11 years and one for youth 12-17 years) facilitated by Tearfund, produced by Resource Development International and largely funded by the British Embassy, launched in June 2005. All NGOs were/are invited to use this product and training has also been offered and accepted by the Ministry of Education to train teachers.

Further hard copies of this report and info on the Safe Children karaoke can be obtained from Chab Dai Coalition, PO Box 1185, Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA. E-mail: [info@chabdai.org](mailto:info@chabdai.org)



# WHAT ABOUT

## the Ethics of this kind of research?



It was important that in the research process we did not exploit the children further. The following are some of the ways we ensured that any stress or risk to children was minimised:

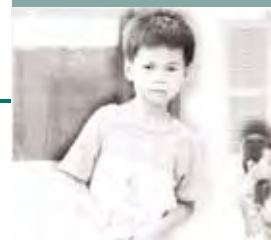
1. We started by playing games to help children relax.
2. It was unlikely that children would have been informed by their teachers why they were coming so we made it clear at the beginning the purpose of the research, the value of their input and that they were free not to answer any questions if they preferred.
3. All research staff had child protection screening and no research staff was left alone with children at any time.
4. Although sensitive information was asked, it was done in such a way that personalised questions were left until later in the questionnaire. Personalised questions were avoided in the focus groups.
5. If children did the survey in a school that was not their own they were escorted by teachers to ensure their safety.
6. Confidentiality was assured. Teachers were asked to wait outside the classroom.
7. Posters were given to each of the teachers accompanying the children giving a contact number of a child rights organisation (LICADHO or ADHOC). Where possible, children were informed of a local NGO who they could contact if they had concerns after the researchers had left. A child rights booklet was given to children on completion of the paper which also had a contact telephone number.
8. Children were given a snack after an hour and then lunch on completion of the survey after another hour.
9. Children were given enough money to cover their transport costs. For children not at school and in focus groups sufficient money was given to cover any money they might have earned.
10. Teachers gave consent but consent was not sought from parents. This was not because their opinion was not valued but the reality of getting consent was logistically impossible when the literacy rate of the adult population is limited. Also parents would not be familiar with the concept of receiving a letter from the school and giving permission.

Further information on ethics is included in the Laws & Mann (2004) 'So you want to involve Children in Research?' Save the Children Fund.



# WHAT ARE THE

## Limitations and Challenges of this kind of research?



### a) General

1. The research is with a combination of victims and non-victims, those who have witnessed, heard about or experienced sexual abuse in their community and those who have not. The results of both are considered to be significant because children know their own context and environment and can therefore make a significant contribution to the debate about what can be done to prevent violence in their communities and to support the victims afterwards.
2. Due to the workload of the researchers the study was conducted over a period of more than 3 years so it does not represent a snap-shot in time as many national surveys are able to do. The first stage was conducted mainly in 2002 and the second stage in 2003 and 2004.
3. More explicit questions on the nature of the abuse were avoided as these might have been psychologically harder for the child victim to respond to without the kind of psychological backup not always available. Questions were not asked on who did the violence and why and where they occurred as this could have been more traumatic.
4. As one of the outcomes of the research is to plan training on preventive measures, it might have been better to have been more detailed in what precautions might have been taken to avoid rape but time did not allow this.
6. The primary researcher is English speaking with limited Cambodian language. This means that translation was necessary for the focus groups and some information could therefore be lost in translation. In one of the focus groups the only way to conduct research with a tribal group was to have translation from Cambodian to the tribal language so this increased the potential for misunderstanding. However it was felt important to at least try to get information from this minority group.
7. Even though a tape recorder and digital recorder were used to record group interviews, getting adequate quality tape recordings of the focus groups proved much harder than expected in the noisy outside environments of Cambodia, so some information when transferring information onto the transcripts was lost/incomplete.

### b) Limitations Specific to the First Stage - Role Play Focus Groups

5. Children are not a homogenous group. Focus groups have been conducted with tribal children and children in border areas and more are planned with Cham and ethnic Vietnamese groups. More anthropological research is needed to draw out the differences between the different groups.

## c) Limitations Specific to the Second Stage - Questionnaire Survey

8. Although the school research was supposed to be of 13 and 14 year old school children a number of children came from outside of this range. However it was felt that the opinions of 12 and 15 years old were still useful so they were included rather than discarded. The age differential is more significant for those researching young people that need to differentiate between over 18 years old and under 18 year olds as this is the age that they are considered by the UNCRC to be a child/adult. However in our research the data from twelve 16 year olds and one 17 year old was removed.
9. Although we asked the provincial education office in each province to get a representative sample of school children, children were usually selected from schools within 10 km. of the provincial town. This means that children's opinions in deeper rural areas were not obtained. However, some provinces are very rural close to the town.
10. The school environment was familiar but for some children it may also have been intimidating and uncomfortable for them to answer personal questions. However, children were present when teachers were asked to leave the classrooms and wait outside to avoid any of them looking over the shoulders of children to see their responses. This sometimes needed to be re-enforced but was the reason we conducted the research ourselves rather than leaving it to teachers.
11. Whilst some children in the focus groups said nothing, no questionnaires were completely unanswered except where the child was illiterate. This happened in only one province where the teachers did not understand that literacy was a requirement. In this case, children who had completed the questionnaire then helped the 11 children who had not. Whilst this was not conducive to confidentiality and may have affected the responses about themselves, the children who helped appeared to be very respectful towards those who were not literate. They were asked to respond with the responses of the children they were responding to and not their own.
12. Having a self administered questionnaire assumes a certain level of literacy. It is possible that illiterate children and those no longer at school at ages 13 and 14 years may be more susceptible to violence. More research is needed with children not at school but then representativeness is harder to achieve.
13. Children were usually seated in a similar way to the way that they would be at school - in pairs. They were requested not to talk together but as this was not an examination and we wanted them to relax and not feel intimidated this was almost impossible to enforce. As a result, some of the open ended questions have identical results which could indicate that results were copied. However, this does not necessarily mean that answers were not what the respondent themselves thought.
14. A sample of 50 children was selected from 5 different schools in each province rather than exact proportional representation where the smaller provinces would have had a smaller number. However, Phnom Penh had a sample of 100 children to take into consideration its differing demography.





# WHO WERE

## the children selected for the role play focus group?



### Focus Groups of 5 boys and 5 girls were selected from 7 communities

- a) An urban slum community in Phnom Penh city. The children were selected by a project worker of 'Servants to Asia's Urban Poor', a partner NGO working in the area.
- b) A rural community in Kampot Province. The children were selected by 'Cambodian Association for Development of Farmers and the Poor' (CADFP) a partner NGO working in the area.
- c) A provincial town community in Kompong Cham Province. The children were selected by 'CRM Innerchange', a partner NGO working in the area.
- d) A border town on the Thai-Cambodia border - Pailin. The children were selected by Cambodian Hope Organization (CHO), a partner NGO working in the area.
- e) A border town on the Vietnam-Cambodian border - Svay Rieng. The children were selected by LICADHO, a child rights NGO with a branch working in this area.
- f) A tribal area in Ratanakiri Province. The children were selected by an NGO working there.
- g) An ethnically Vietnamese group of children from an area at high risk of trafficking on the outskirts of Phnom Penh. Selected by CAMA organization.

Children are not homogenous (all the same). It is outside the scope of this report to describe the differences here.

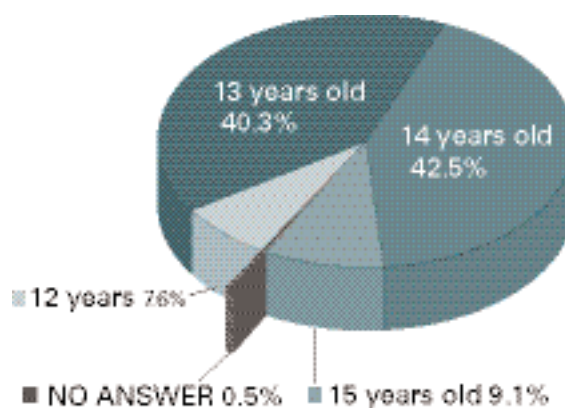
One more focus group is planned with a Cham group.

# WHO WERE

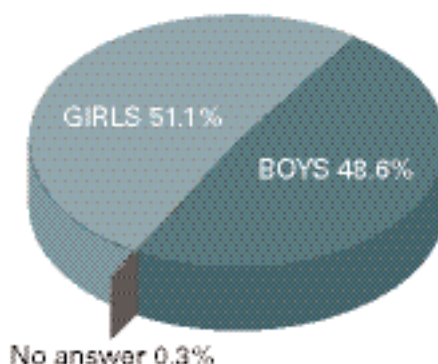
## the Children selected for the Questionnaire Survey?

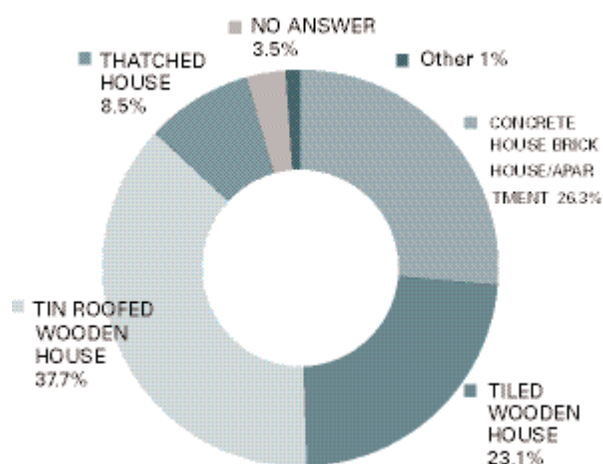
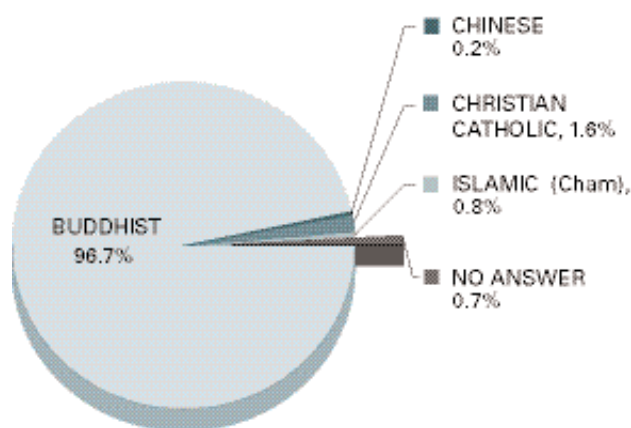
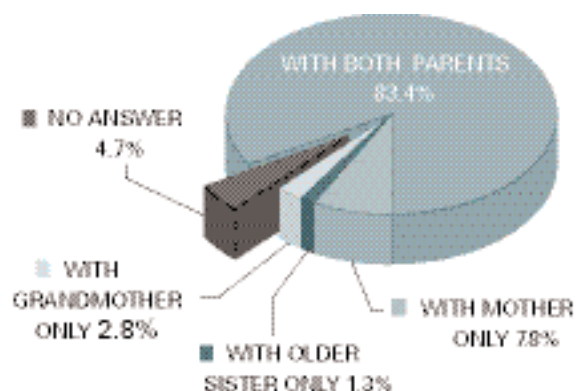


The majority of children are aged 13 and 14 years but we did not want to waste data from other children who had come long distances to take part in the survey so we included 12 and 15 year olds. Children were both pre and post pubescent. However we did exclude twelve 16 year olds and one 17 year old.



The research team requested the Ministry of Education to ask schools to provide equal numbers of boys and girls but slightly more girls attended. In fact the gender ratio in much of Cambodia is 85-95 males per 100 females. (Mekong River Commission, 2003)





83.4% of children indicated they had both parents. 11.9% indicated they were from female-headed households, which is a lot less than the 25.7% in the General Population census of 1998. However, this could indicate that children still in school at 12-15 years are less likely to need to leave school and to work to support the family compared to children out of school but more research is needed to verify this.





# RESULTS 1

## PART

**Children's perceptions**  
of Trafficking of Children





# WHAT ARE

## Children's Perceptions of Trafficking/Selling of Children



### D1. Results of the Focus Groups

These are direct quotes from children from different focus groups.

#### Why are children sold by adults?

"So they can get more money because they are in debt."  
"Because she is very poor and does not have money to buy rice for her living."  
"Because of poverty and the need to feed the other children."  
"She does bad deed and loves money."  
"Some parents are so poor and ..they sold their children to pay their debts."  
"They are disgusting people (who sell women)."

#### What is the child being trafficked to?

"To work as a waitress in a restaurant or a maid but it could be prostitution."  
"Sell to

the brothel." "Sell to the coffee shops to make coffee, waiter, serving at table and washing dishes."  
"To work as servant, to work in karaoke (bar)."  
"For the garment factory to work as a tailor."  
"I knew one house that sold 6 month baby to someone else."  
"My aunt was trafficked to Thailand. After drinking coffee she became unconscious. She was locked in a house in Thailand and there she ...cut open the back door and ran away and told everyone in the village about this."  
"A family who had no money sold the daughter to an American. The American attempted to rape her in a hotel but the police came in time and rescued her."

#### Who is involved?

"Aunt, uncle, foster mother."  
"At school we heard about another child who was sold by their mother."  
"Sometimes our friends persuade us to sell someone. Sometimes the parents sell their kids."  
"City people come to rural area and attempt to buy girls by telling their parents that they will bring girls to Phnom Penh to work in garment factory...but the parent didn't know that he bought their daughter to work as a prostitute."  
"Two of my friends sold (themselves) voluntarily - one was 17 years, the other 16 years. One lived with her grandma who had lots of debts. So she sold herself to earn money for her grandma. Her grandma insisted she do so."

#### How does it happen?

"Use 'unconscious' medicine, tell a lie, use more money, threaten and sometimes force the girl in the car."

#### How to stop selling of children?

"Educate the people about child trafficking and the tricks related to this issue."  
"Ask police to come and arrest or stop those traffickers. Tell the Government to take action to stop traffickers to sell the girls."  
"Close all karaoke (bars) and brothels."  
"Must tell the village chief to go down and inform the parents not to sell their children

to work in the coffee shop." "Some took disabled children from their parents to beg for money in Vietnam. Then whipped them for not getting (enough) money." "His close relative was almost trafficked but fortunately her teacher rescued her." "If we have debts we must work with both hands to pay them off gradually." "Inform religious leader in order to provide education to parent and everyone about trafficking."

### **Do parents have the right to sell their children?**

"Even the wild cruel animal never eats their kids." Some said "yes" some said "no". "Yes because the parents work hard to give birth and (the child has) a reciprocal obligation (to them)." "Some mothers have the right. Others do not." "They gave birth to them and took care of them." "Parents have no right to sell their children and some parents are illegal to sell their children for making money or using the children to earn money for themselves."

### **When do parents have the right to sell children?**

"When they are poor and have no job." "Even if the parent is very poor and full of debt they do not have the right to sell their children."

### **Why did some parents not sell their children even if their family is very poor?**

"Because they love them." "We need to explain to the parents to understand all forms of trafficking because some parents they don't know clearly about trafficking and they can easily fall into the trick of some people."

### **Do parents who sell their children not love their children?**

"They love their children but they love money more than the child."

### **What about the traffickers?**

"Need to arrest and punish according to the Government law." "Inform the village leader or police to take action to arrest the traffickers."

### **What about the victims?**

"We should take the girls from the brothel and complain to the police to arrest the people who sold the girl. If she has been in the brothel a long time we ask the Government to explain to her and

provide the support such as rice, materials, money etc." "Complain to the police." "Use the money to pay and bring them back home." "Find job for her that she can do such as tailor, work in restaurant, washing clothes, look after children etc." "Take them to women's centre."

### **How can selling children be prevented?**

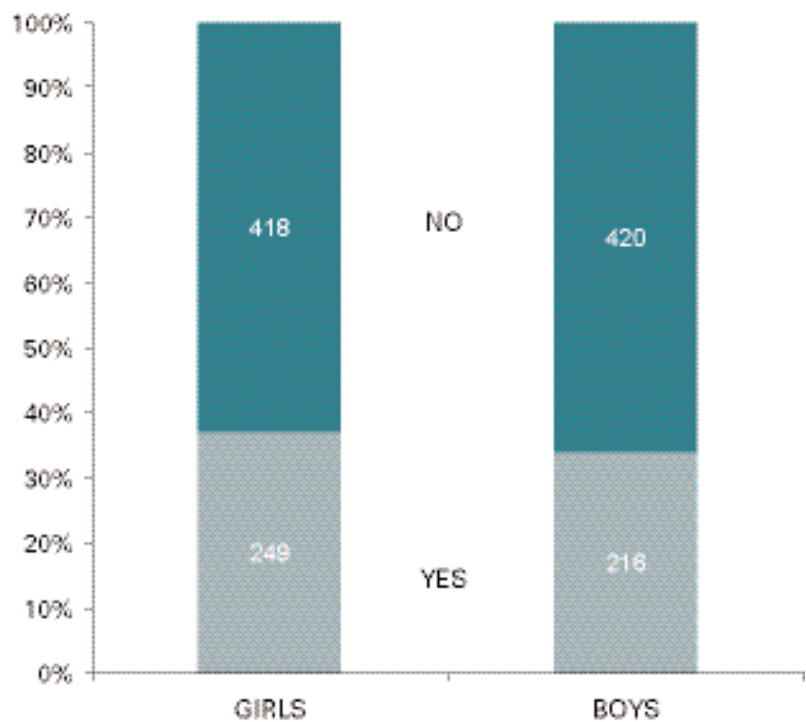
"The teacher should give instructions to the students and teach them to understand the way the trafficker uses to trick the girls. The NGOs who are working related to this issue should come to the community and work to deal with this kind of problem." "Take her to the district leader so they can teach her about child rights and human rights and teach her to understand peace." "Inform the community about trafficking." "Help find the job for the poor family, provide support money."

## **Results of the Questionnaire Survey:**

It is important to read the section on limitations beforehand so that you can make an informed decision about whether you agree with the data.

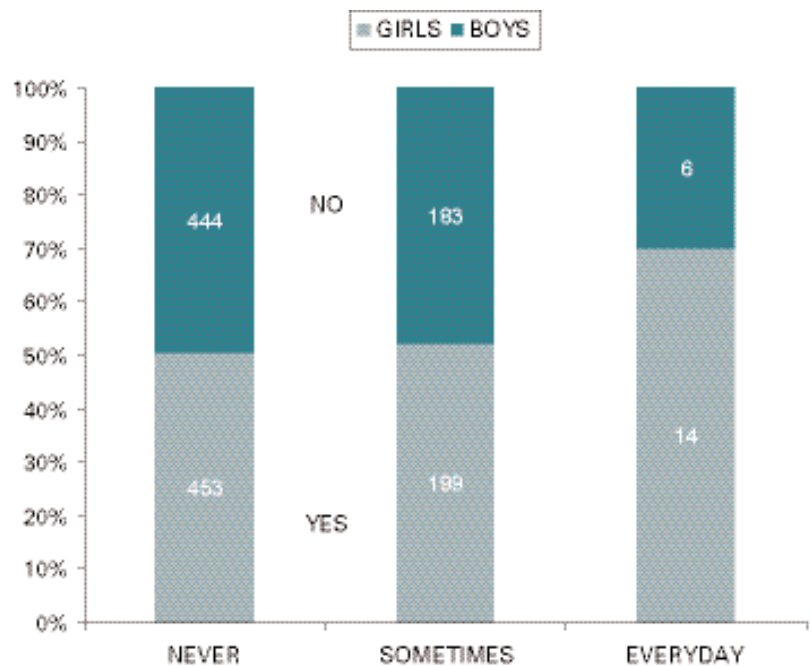
## 1.1. Have you seen or heard of children being sold in your community?

The number of children who said they had seen or heard of children being sold in their community was similar: 37.3% of girls and 34.0% of boys.



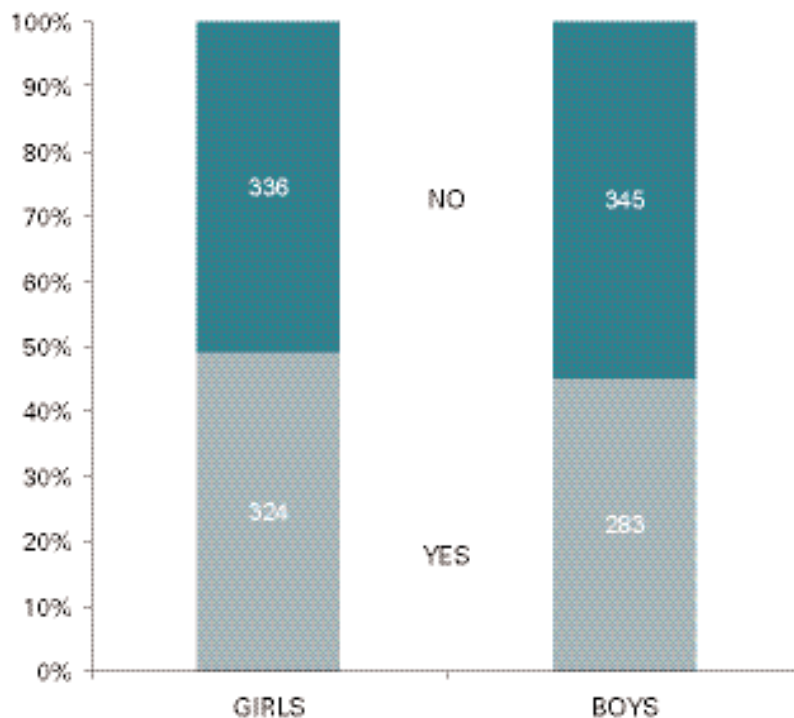
## 1.2 How frequently are children being sold?

This indicates that nearly 30% of children felt that selling children happened in their community 'sometimes', rather than everyday or never.



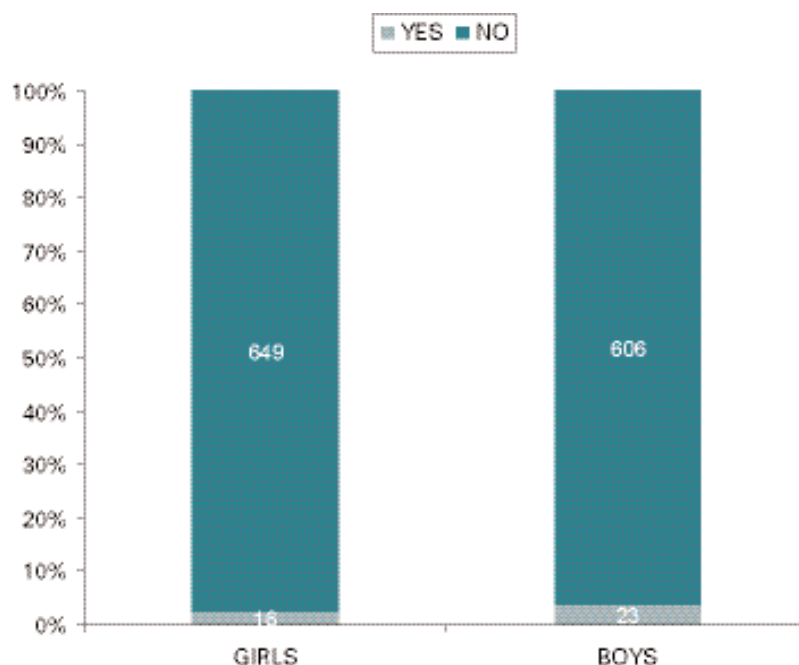


### 1.3. Do you know a child who has been sold by adult? By gender



It is not clear why there is a discrepancy in percentages between question 1 and 3 in this section. You would expect the score in 1 to be higher than 3. It may be that in the questionnaire, question 3 came later in the survey and may have been when more children felt more relaxed and able to respond. However, if they are accurate these figures are disturbing indicating that nearly half of all children know a child who has been sold by an adult.

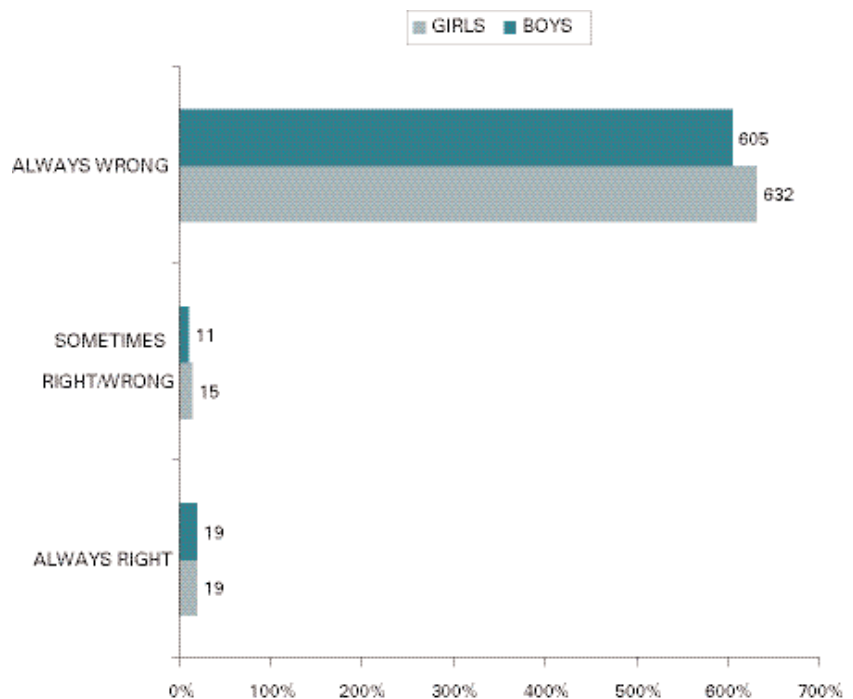
### 1.4. Have you ever been sold by an adult?



Assuming that children who are not at school are more likely to have been sold and that those who had been at school and had been sold and not returned would not be surveyed, this figure of 2.4% of girls and 3.7% of boys is still of concern. It would be interesting to know what forms of trafficking these figures represent but this is outside the scope of this survey.

## 1.5. Do you think children being sold is...?

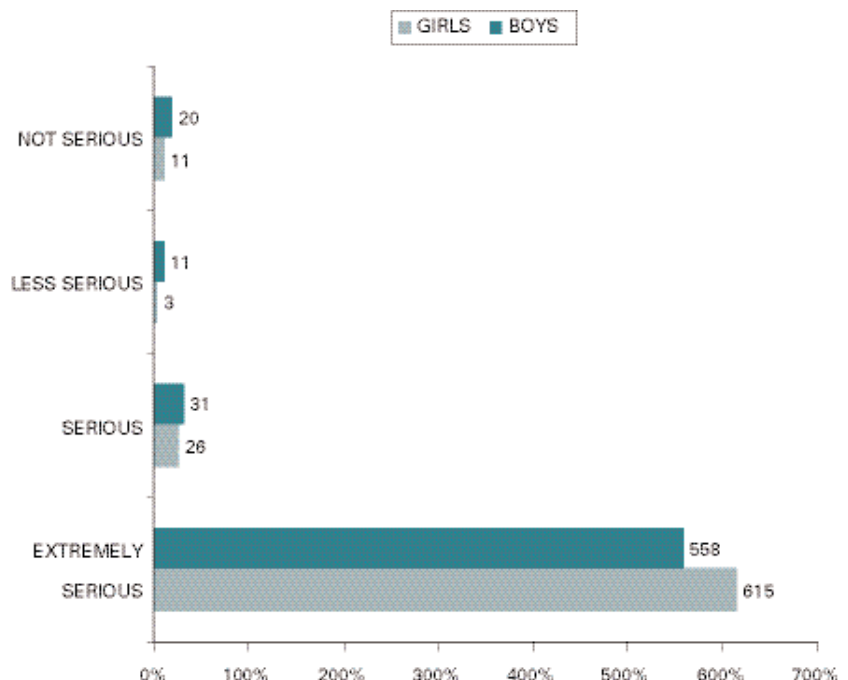
The focus groups indicated the tension that children seem to have of knowing that it was wrong to sell children but feeling that children had a reciprocal obligation to their parents. Although most children feel that it is wrong (95%) there is still about 5% who believe it is always right or sometimes right/sometimes wrong.



## 1.6. How serious is it for children to be trafficked by an adult?

The response to question 5 is re-iterated in this question where 9 of children say it is extremely serious and a further 4.5% that it is serious for children to be trafficked by an adult.

It is interesting to compare this with the attitudes of 58 children (25 girls and 33 boys) interviewed by World Vision (Buon Rith N, Yit V and Gray L, 2001) in high risk of sexual exploitation tourist areas. Most of these children (91.3%) said they disliked sex tourism, while 8.7% said they liked sex tourism because it was an easy way to obtain money for food.



## 1.7. How can children be helped after they have been sold?

(open ended question)

How?	GIRLS	BOYS	Total	Count
1. Public awareness raising	32.0%	35.4%	33.7%	441
2. Deal with traffickers (report/inform police, village chief and local authority to arrest the traffickers, to apprehend and prosecute)	32.9%	30.7%	31.8%	417
3. Rescue the trafficked child	23.2%	23%	23.1%	303
4. Close brothel/end trafficking, eliminate sexual trade	14.3%	14.4%	14.4%	188
5. Physical support to victim (materials, money and medical)	4.8%	5.8%	5.3%	69
6. Emotional support to victim	4.5%	4.2%	4.4%	57
7. Educate children	5.5%	3.3%	4.4%	58
8. Strengthen and enforce the law	1.3%	0.5%	0.9%	12
9. Other	1.0%	0.8%	0.9%	12
10. No response	7.6%	7%	7.3%	96

## How can children be helped after they have been sold?

Direct Quotations from  
Children themselves

### 1. Public awareness raising (33.7%)

- a). By advising the parents to love their children and to prevent their children from being trafficked.
- b). By involving the community leader and community to advise the parents not to sell their children and to understand the consequences of doing so. Also by closing down any bar in the provinces and cities.
- c). By advising the parents not to be manipulated by any strangers into thinking their children will get a good job.
- d). By advising everyone not to give any information to the traffickers, when they show up at the fabric factory to request for any children.
- e). By not allowing anyone to degrade the sold children because they were forced to work as prostitutes.
- f). By involving the community, authority, and government to educate the public to be aware of child trafficking, and by closing down any brothel houses.
- g). By advising everyone not to allow the children to work as prostitutes.

- h). By advising the child traffickers to understand about children's rights and for them to do the right thing.
- i). By writing a notice to any authority office to oppose the sex trade business.

### 2. Deal with traffickers: (report/inform police, village chief and local authority to arrest the traffickers, to apprehend and prosecute). (31.8%)

- a). By informing the authority to arrest the child traffickers for their mistakes, so our country will not have any chaos.
- b). By apprehending the child traffickers and prosecuting them accordingly to the laws.
- c). By reporting to the authority to intervene so the traffickers do not sell the children.
- d). The sold children can be helped by informing and asking police for assistance.
- e). By apprehending the child traffickers, or by arresting the brothel owner and prosecuting them.
- f). By informing the authority to investigate and resolve the problem regarding any trafficking of children.
- g). By intervening the parents from selling the children and reporting the incident to the authority and community leader.

### 3. Rescue the trafficked child (23.1%)

- a). By reporting to the authority to rescue the sold children.
- b). By obtaining money to rescue the sold children back, and by reporting to the authority to arrest the child trafficker.
- c). By seeking for any positive solution to help children who are sold.
- d). Help sold children by informing police to rescue those children. Tell police not to be in corruption with the brothel owner.
- e). By involving the authority or any helpful organization to rescue the trafficked children from the brothels.

### 4. Close brothel, ending trafficking, eliminate sexual trade (14.4%)

- a). By ending any trafficking of children, because children have equal rights.
- b). By ending the brothel houses and stopping any prostitution from going on.

- c). By creating a group of authorities to investigate any trafficking of children.
- d). By prohibiting the parents from selling the children to anyone.

### **5. Physical support to victim (materials, money and medical) (5.3%)**

- a). By supporting the victim with positive materials such as, clothes, some food to consume, and providing them education.
- b). Help sold children by helping to find jobs for them. Provide security and protection in the villages.
- c). Help the sold children by providing a budget to their parents and family. Also by explaining to them that selling children is illegal.
- d). By allowing any organization to support and provide the sold children's families with education and special skills to work.

### **6. Emotional support to victim (4.4%)**

- a). Help sold children by advising them not to be scared, encourage them not to be emotionally damaged or unhappy.
- b). By motivating the sold children to have confidence, and by not allowing anyone to discriminate the victim.
- c). Those sold children can be helped by telling them not to think too much about the bad things that happened to them, encourage them to face their problems. Help them to resolve their problems so those things won't happen again.

### **7. Educate the children (4.4%)**

- a). By advising the children not to believe any stranger who comes from far away, for them to be cautious of strangers. They must notify their parents, neighbours, and relatives whenever any stranger asks to live with them.
- b). By advising the sold children not to be manipulated into thinking they will get good jobs to work.

- c). By advising any children not to go out at night, and by having the community leader tell or inform the parents not to sell their children.
- d). By advising the children to understand about the trick and trade of the traffickers.

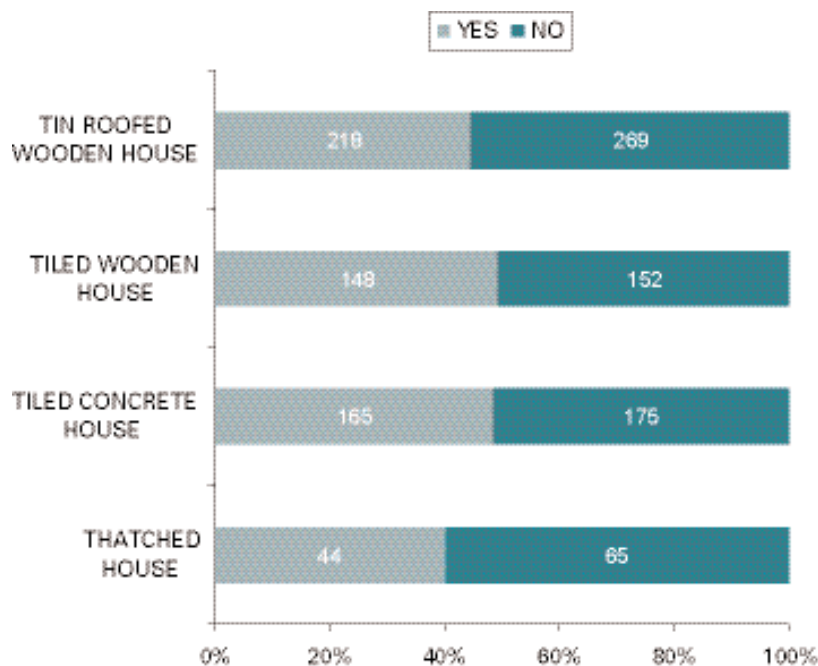
### **8. Strengthen and enforce the law (0.9%)**

- a). By investigating the traffickers selling the children, and reporting to the authority to enforce a strict law to arrest the traffickers.
- b). By creating a law to prevent any prostitution from happening and by educating the sold children thoroughly.
- c). By involving the government to enforce a strict law against the child traffickers and by reporting to the authority to intervene in any trafficking of children.
- d). By enforcing a strict law to prevent anyone from trafficking children.



### 1.8. Do you know a child who has been sold by an adult? By Socio economic groupings (Housing)

Children from poorer families who live in tin roofed wooden houses appear to be a little less aware of children who are trafficked than more wealthy families who live in a tiled concrete or wooden house. It is not clear whether this is because they are more informed.



**1.9. Do you know a child who has been sold by an adult?**  
(By Province)

More research is needed to see whether the figures in the map represent areas where trafficking is more likely to occur.



# RESULTS 2

## PART

**Children's perceptions**  
of bullying





# CHILDREN'S

## Perceptions of Bullying



### E1. Results of the Focus Groups

These are direct quotes from children from different focus groups.

#### a) Why are children bullied?

"Poverty." "They need money, they are weak in their studies, they are too passive, poverty, fighting." "Children with foolish brains (learning difficulties)." "Khmer children bully Vietnamese children and some Cham children bully Khmer children but this is some children with bad characters and they want to do bad things to other children." "Conflict in the family especially with their parents." (Unclear whether this refers to the family of the child who is the bully or being bullied). "Some children (bullies) don't have parents and they dislike or are

jealous (of children) because they have parents." "They are not properly dressed." "They have ragged clothes." "They don't want to look at the children (injured) by a landmine." "I myself was bullied (as a disabled child). Everyday I go to school and someone shouts at me "What do you go to school for?" Sometimes my teacher gets angry as I come late but other teachers understand my situation. Some teachers said "What do you study for?" But some encouraged me to study hard".

#### b) How are children bullied?

"They are threatened and beaten by hand and (kicked) by feet. They are bullied and when they fall down others also laugh at them."

#### c) How can bullying be prevented?

"Remind them they should not look down on other people, good discipline, not to complain to the other." "Provide education for those who go out and cause problems and bully others who are weaker. Help the one who is disabled." "The teacher should advise the bully must not do this again." "The teacher must give instruction not to do something bad. They should try not to treat the disabled child badly. The teacher should tell those children they must try to study hard." "Tell the teacher but sometimes they may be afraid because if they tell the teacher those bad people will beat them up again the teacher will discipline them." "The teacher will beat them (the bullies) up, make them clean the school area, stand on one leg, clean the toilet or kneel down on the (spiky) skin of the durian fruit." "Help to support money and training materials at the school because they lack materials." "They should ask children to love each other and be united." "The teacher must be a good example."

#### d) If the problem persists then what?

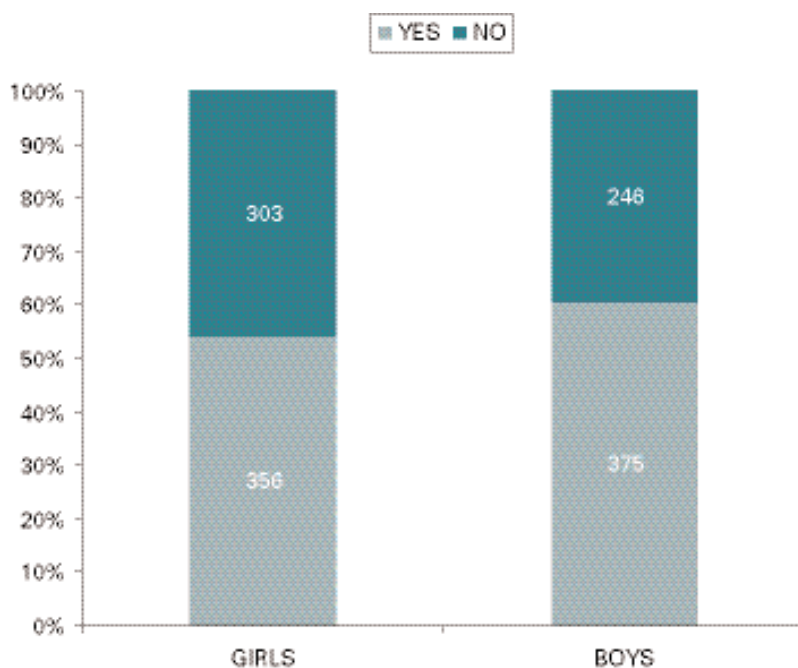
"Beat them (the bullies), take them to the school director or stop them learning in school."

#### e) Do bullies really say sorry (as portrayed in role play)?

"Yes, they are proud to." Others said "they don't" and others "it happens sometimes".

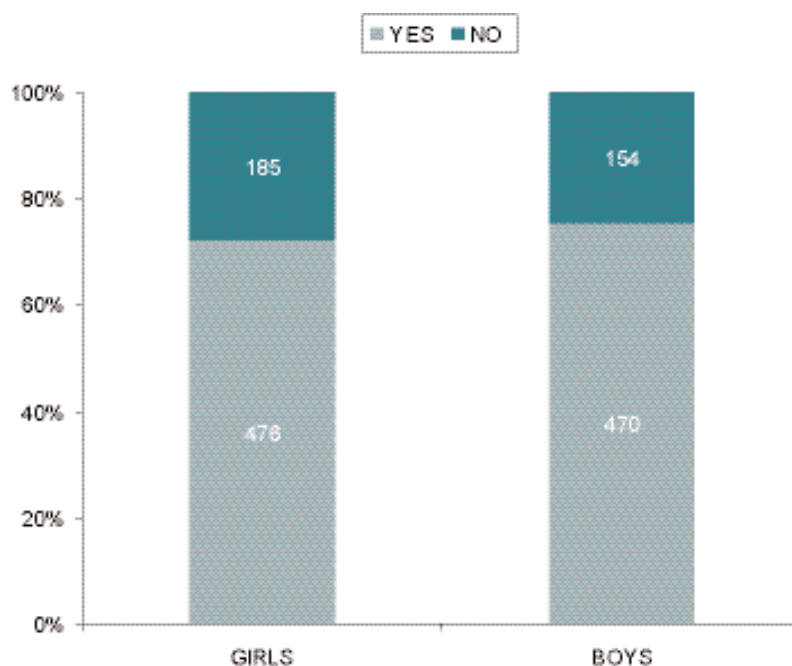
## E2. Results of Questionnaire Survey:

### 2.1. Have you heard of any children who have been bullied by other children at your school?



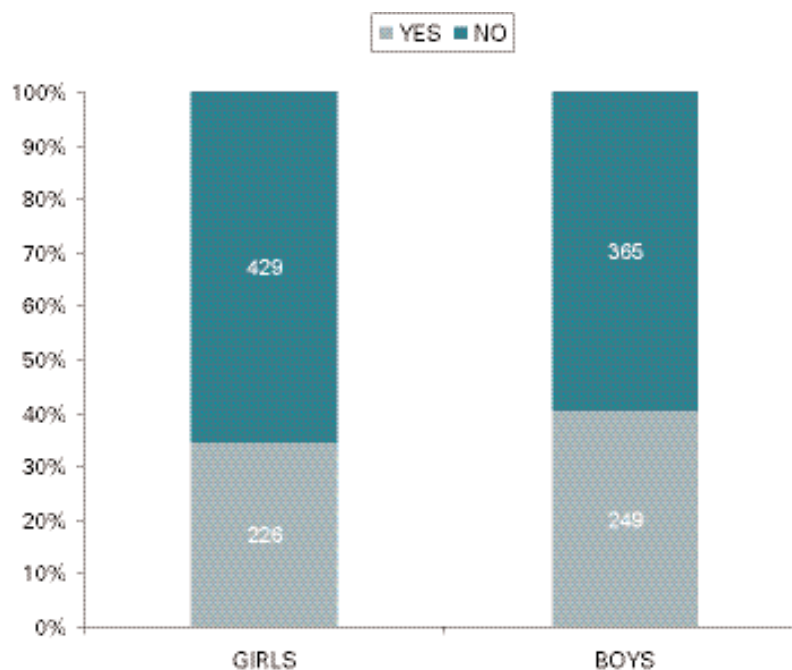
## 2.2. Have you ever seen other children teased or mistreated?

Again you would expect these responses to be less than question 1 because you would think that they are less likely to see other children being bullied than seen/heard of it but it could be because the question is placed later in the survey and the children may feel more relaxed and able to respond. Nevertheless, either response indicates a high level of child to child teasing seen by the children in the survey



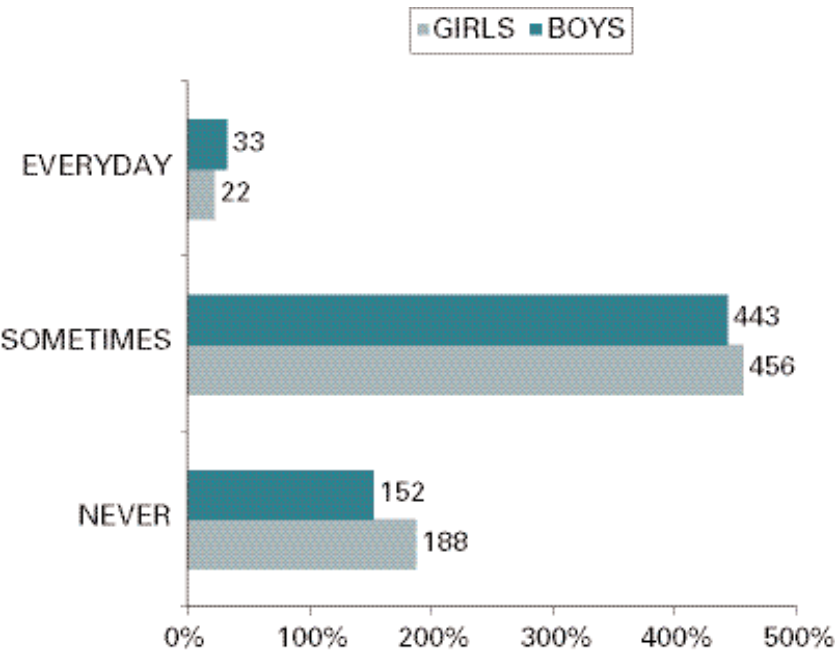
## 2.3. Have you ever been bullied by other children because you were different?

These figures are more significant because they indicate what the children themselves have experienced. 34.5% of girls and 40.6% of boys say they have been bullied by other children because they were 'different'. The gender difference is not large but it is interesting that boys say they have been more bullied than girls.



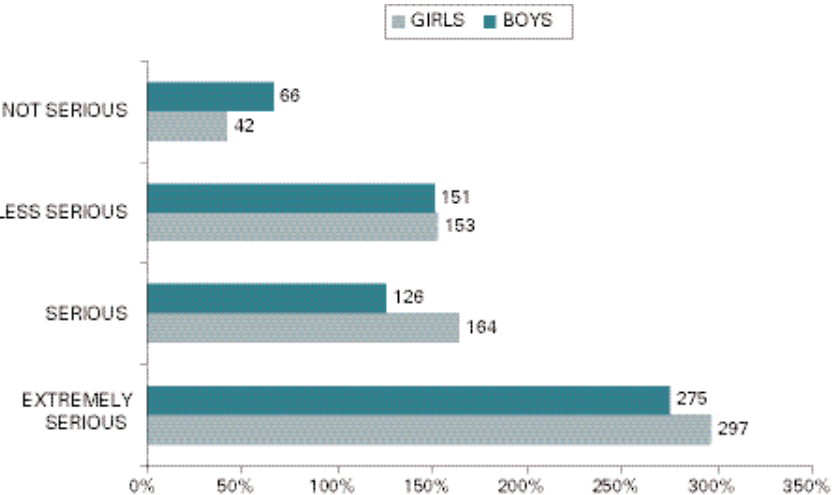


## 2.4. How frequently are children bullied by other children at your school or community?



This indicates that children say they are bullied sometimes around 70% say rather than everyday (4%) or never (26%)

## 2.5. How serious is children being bullied by children?



Even though children had an opportunity to respond to this question in addition to what might be considered more serious forms of violence, a significant number (45%) still described bullying as 'extremely serious'. More research is needed to indicate the physical and emotional effects of bullying on Cambodian children and to see if it leads to suicide as it does in other cultures. In the meantime, adults need to take this form of violence seriously.

## 2.6. What reasons are children bullied by other children?

Children state that poverty is the reason that children are most often bullied (39.7%) compared to disability (25.3%), gender (7.7%), ethnicity (5.9%) or religious belief (5.4%).

Reasons		GIRLS	BOYS	TOTAL
Disability	%	26.2%	24.4%	25.3%
	Count	322	300	622/1227
Poverty	%	41.4%	38.1%	39.7%
	Count	508	467	975/1227
Gender	%	8.7%	6.8%	7.7%
	Count	107	83	190/1227
Ethnicity	%	5.8%	6.1%	5.9%
	Count	71	75	146/1227
Religious belief	%	4.6%	6.1%	5.4%
	Count	57	75	132/1227
Other	%	40.0%	34.0%	37.0%
	Count	491	417	908/1227

## 2.7 How can the children who have been bullied be helped?

Open ended question

How?	GIRLS	BOYS	Total	Count
1. Educate bullies	62.1%	58.4%	60.3%	790
2. Emotional support to bullied child	13.3%	11%	12.1%	159
3. Dealing with bullies through local authorities (inform to police, village chief and commune leader and NGOs to take action)	9.7%	11.9%	10.8%	141
4. Physical support to victim/victim's family (provide money, materials).	7.2%	9.7%	8.4%	110
5. Inform bully's parents or relatives to intervene	7.2%	8.6%	7.9%	103
6. Bullying prevention			9.8%	128
7. Reconcile the bullies and bullied	4.8%	4.1%	4.4%	58
8. Enforce the law and create more school rules	0.1%	0.6%	0.4%	5
9. No response/Other response	9.8%	9.5%	9.7%	127

## How can children who have been bullied be helped?

(Direct Quotation from children themselves)

### 1. Educate the bullies (60.3%)

- a). By advising those bully children to do positive things and to respect everyone equally.
- b). By advising those bully children to understand about children's rights and for them to treat everyone equally.
- c). They can help the victimized children by explaining to the bullies about the consequences of violence.
- d). By advising or disciplining the bullied children to struggle their whole lives, not to commit any wrongful act, and for them not to be unproductive.
- e). By advising bully children to understand that what they are doing will affect the victim's mental state of mind. For instance, they are afraid of going to school, afraid of talking, and afraid to play with anyone.

### 2. Emotional support to bullied (12.1%)

- a). By advising those victims not to lose hope because of the bullied children's problem, but have confidence to build their self-esteem again.
- b). Help victimized children by encouraging those children to be strong and for others to take care of them.
- c). By motivating the children to get education, so they will get high ranking jobs in the future.
- d). By encouraging the victims to have self-esteem when they are harmed or threatened, and for the victims not to approach those bullies.
- e). By motivating the bullied children to have confidence and by supporting them in as many positive ways as they can.

### 3. Deal with bullies through local authorities: (inform police, village chief and commune leader and NGOs to take action) (10.8%)

- a). By allowing the community leader and children's right organization to find many solutions to resolve the problem.
- b). Victimized children can be helped by asking the village leader or police for assistance.
- c). By allowing the teachers to ask the bully children why they bullied, or by prosecuting them for their mistakes.

- d). By involving the police to arrest the bully children to advise them not to do any wrongful act again, and to beat them a little bit.

- e). By involving the parents and authority to arrest the bullied children, and by taking them to any counselling office for providing them some positive advice.

### 4. Physical support to victim/victim's family: (provide money, materials) (8.4%)

- a). By sending them to the orphan centre or bring the child to live with them.
- b). By providing the children a good place to live, by supporting them with clothes, and seeking a job for them to work.
- c). By providing the bullied children with positive materials, money, and education. Also, the parents must provide their children with love and comfort.

### 5. Inform bully's parents or relatives or neighbours to intervene (7.9%).

- a). By informing the parents or community leaders to intervene so that the children do not argue with each other again.
- b). By going to tell the neighbour to help stop them.

## 6. Bullying prevention: (not allow anybody to harm children, protect the children and not allow the children to talk to the bullies) (9.8%)

- a). By intervening the bullied children not to harm or threaten any other children.
- b). Help victimized children by protecting them from those who abuse children. Advise and educate those bad children.
- c). By advising the bully children not to associate with bad friends and for them not to abuse drugs.

- d). By not allowing any older kids to bully any children at all.

## 7. Reconcile the bullies and bullied (4.4%)

- a). By reconciling the bully children and the victims, by not discriminating against any religion, and by motivating them to have self-esteem.
- b). Victimized children can be helped by telling them not to fight each other. Advise them not to argue; explain to them about realizing and correcting their mistakes.
- c). By advising them to forgive each other and for them to treat each other as equally as possible.

## 8. Enforce the law and create more school rules (0.4%)

- a). Help victim children by creating and enforcing strict rules to prevent violence and abuse on children.
- b). By enforcing a law against those bullies.

## 2.8 How can the bullies be helped?

(Open ended questions)

How?	GIRLS	BOYS	Total	Count
1. 'Negative' advice to bullies (not to harm another again, not to break the law, not to discriminate or violate others' rights)	74.4%	69.6%	72.1%	944
2. 'Positive' advice to bullies (encourage, build their spirit, take care)	19.4%	18.6%	19%	249
3. Deal with bullies through local authority (inform police, village chief and commune leader and NGOs to take action and send the bullies to correction centre)	13.3%	15.5%	14.4%	188
4. Bullying prevention (not allow anybody to harm children, protect the children and not allow the children to talk to the bullies)	4.6%	4.7%	4.7%	61
5. Inform bully's parents and relatives to intervene	4.8%	3.9%	4.4%	57
6. Enforce the law and create more school rules	0%	0.2%	0.2%	3
7. Other	0.1%	0.6%	0.4%	5
8. No response	6%	6.9%	6.4%	84
TOTAL				1591

## How can the bullies be helped?

(Direct Quotation from children themselves)

### 1. Negative advice to bullies (not to harm another again, not against the law, not to discriminate or violate others' rights).

- a). By allowing the neighbours to advise those bullies not to threaten or harm any innocent children.
- b). Help bullied children by educating them about not using violence in the society. Explain to them about the good and bad results.
- c). By advising the bullied children not to discriminate anyone because they are also human beings.
- d). By advising the bullied children not to harm anyone, not to associate with any group of gangs, not to abuse drugs and for them to study harder in school.
- e). By advising the bullied children not to commit any sexual act with children.

### 2. Positive advice to bullies (encourage, build their spirit and take care)

- a). By providing those bullied children with positive words not to discriminate against any ethnicity and for them to love and respect everyone equally.
- b). By supporting the bullied children with positive materials and by providing them education.
- c). Help bullied children by encouraging and telling them to realize their mistakes.
- d). By advising them to know about the problem of abusing drugs, because it can make them to do the wrong thing.

### 3. Bullying prevention: (not allow anybody to harm children, protect the children and not allow the children to talk to the bullies.

- a). By advising the children not to associate with any bad person, because they will mislead them into doing negative activities such as harming other people, threatening people for money and getting into arguments.
- b). By not allowing them to threaten any children and advising them to do the right thing.
- c). By organizing a group of people to prevent anyone from bullying another children.

### 5. Deal with bullies through local authority:

(inform police, village chief and commune leader and NGOs to take action and send the bullies to correction centre).

- a). By reporting to the authority or community leaders to arrest the bullied children.
- b). By disciplining the bully children to do the right thing. If they don't abide, they must be taken to a counselling centre for advice.
- c). By apprehending the bully children and intimidating them to stop harming other people again.

### 6. Inform the bully's parents and relatives to intervene.

- a). By intervening the bully children not to harm or threaten other children.
- b). By allowing the eye witness to intervene to stop the bully children from harming anyone regardless if they are in different religions from one another.
- c). By informing the parents to advise the bully children to do the right thing.

### 7. Enforce the law and create more school rules

- a). By reporting to the Ministry of education, youth, and sports to enforce a strict rule upon all the schools to end any threat or harm upon the children.



## 2.9 What can the school and community do to put an end to this kind of bullying of children?

How?	GIRLS	BOYS	Total	Count
1. Educate children about children's rights	63.6%	61%	62.4%	817
2. Protect children from harm	18.5%	20.7%	19.5%	256
3. Enforce the law/rules	5.8%	8.5%	7.1%	93
4. Arrest/prosecute the bullies	5.1%	4.1%	4.6%	60
5. Punish bullies	4.6%	3.8%	4.2%	55
6. Inform bullies' parent	3%	3.4%	3.2%	42
7. Not allow gangs to enter schools	1%	1.4%	1.2%	16
8. Others	1.2%	1.9%	1.5%	20
9. No response	11.7%	11.4%	11.5%	151
TOTAL				1510

### Direct quotations from the children themselves:

#### 1. Educate children about children's rights (62.4%)

- a). By involving the school or community to advise the bully children not to harm any children, and by advising the children not to become a bad person.
- b). By allowing the school or community to advise every child to have strong unity among each other.

- c). By advising those bully children to respect each other and for them not to use violence upon children.
- d). Bullying can be prevented by educating the bullies about the rights of children.

#### 2. Protect children from any harm (19.5%)

- a). Bullying can be prevented by having an authority figure or a group of teenagers around for security in the schools, villages and communities.
- b). By allowing the school or community to put an end to the threat upon anybody. Also, the school or community must not permit any threatening behaviour at all.
- c). By cooperating together to end any harm or threat upon children.
- d). A school or community should take action to prevent threatening behaviour and explain to people that threatening is against the law.
- e). By creating any helpful agency to protect the children's rights from being harmed or threatened and taking the bullied children to there for help.

### 3. Enforce the law/rules (7.1%)

- a). By involving the school or community to enforce a strict law upon the bully children not to harm any other children.
- b). By enforcing a strict law against anybody harming children.
- c). Create and enforce strict rules for those children who bully others.
- d). By creating a rule to prevent violation of children's rights.
- e). By involving the school or community to post any prohibiting signs on the wall of school, and by advising everyone to treat everybody equally.

### 4. Arrest/prosecute the bullies (4.6%)

- a). By the school or community asking the victim about the problem. Then, they must report to the authority to apprehend the bully children and discipline them.
- b). By involving the school or community to end any group of gangs, and by not allowing anyone to harm the children, even though they are poor.
- c). By taking the bully children to the counselling centre and by punishing or sending them to prison, so they will not commit any wrongful act again.

### 5. Punish bullies (4.2%)

- a). By allowing the parents and principal of that school to discipline those bully children to come to school accordingly to the schedule.
- b). By disciplining those bully children regardless whether their family has power or not.
- c). By punishing the disobedient students who run around the school and not permitting them to come to school for 1 to 3 days.

### 6. Inform bullies' parent (3.2%)

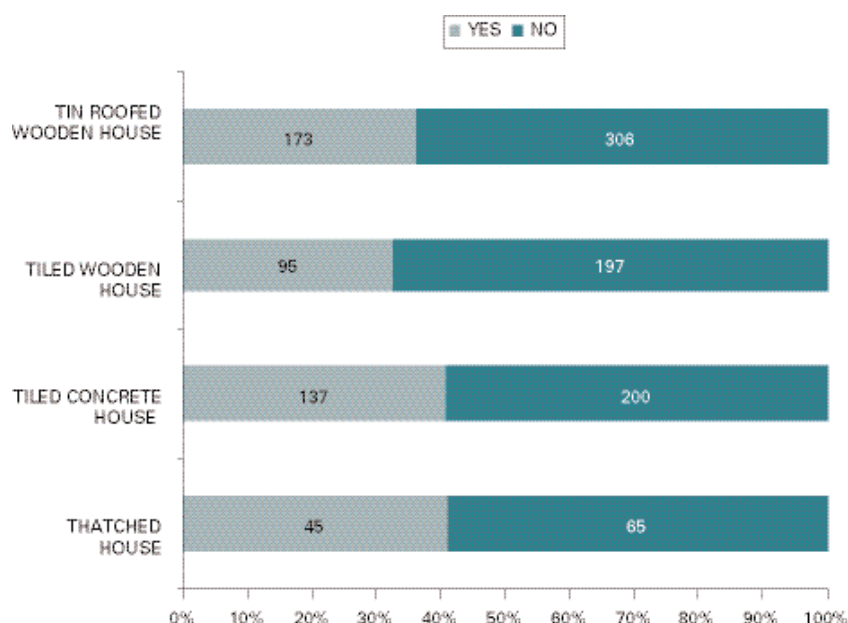
- a). By informing the parents to advise their children not to harm or threaten any other children, and for them to respect children's rights.
- b). Bullying can be prevented by informing their parents about what they are doing to others. Encourage and advise them to do the right things.

### 7. Not allow gangs to enter schools (1.2%)

- a). By involving the school's principal in not allowing the group of 'big brothers' to come into the school.
- b). By allowing the school or community to prevent any gambling, any drugs and any gangsters to be around.
- c). We should have the same uniform at school and if there are some who have a different uniform from our school, we should go to inform the teacher to talk clearly with them. We should tell the teacher to stop the children who are fighting.

**2.10. Have you ever being bullied by other children because you were different? By socio-economic status (housing)**

This seems to indicate that the poorer families in tin roofed wooden houses when compared to those in tiled houses are more likely to be bullied which fits with the focus group work which indicated the poor are bullied because they are poor. However, this does not explain why those in thatched houses have the less percentage of reporting bullying. Are the poorest children more fatalistic and less likely to complain?



## 2.11. Have you ever been bullied by other children because you were different? By province



# RESULTS 3

## PART

**Children's perceptions**  
of violence from child to adult





# CHILDREN'S



## Perceptions of violence form child to adult

### Results of the Focus Groups These are direct quotes from children

#### Why do children act violently against adults?

"Because the number of people is increasing. The people get poor and don't have a job." "Nothing to eat and they want to steal something." "For money, some just for fun." "They are keen to get rich." "Because he has bad friends." "They are persuaded by their friends, they don't listen to their parents, and they want to have more money." "Because parents do not give advice or the children do not listen to their parents...the boys spent the money on gambling, so afterwards they are afraid of coming home and they become robbers. Many people here gamble and when they lose the game they steal

from the people." "Some children leave home and become street children because they have no-one to look after them and be responsible for them so that is the reason that makes them rob or misuse drugs."

#### Who does it happen to?

"Mostly happens to around 15, 16, 18 and 20 year olds." "15 - 30 year olds."

#### How do they do it?

"They rob as a group." "This happens very often." "This happened in my community to a Vietnamese lady by the gang. One was arrested and one escaped." "A gang, sometimes two of them, sometimes an individual." "A gang of 6 Vietnamese and one Khmer guy stole the buffaloes to sell to Vietnam."

#### How can it be prevented?

"Give instruction and educate peers but if they do not listen they still remain a thief." "Parents, teachers, Government, villagers, police and local authorities should give instructions." "There needs to be love in the family so they do not commit violence to the children because this may lead them to run away from home and accompany such bad friends." "Teach them to get more knowledge in order to stop them from robbing and teach them about what is legal and illegal. Tell them not to make friendships with bad friends." "Take him to the Department of Education to correct him." "Their teachers or parents should tell them not to do bad deeds. Don't be a play-boy." "They need to change their hearts not to do it again." "Friends need to provide instruction, kids should learn to stop gambling and ... do not rob." "The Government should eliminate the drug business." "Prohibition on selling drugs or gambling." "The police (should) arrest them every day." "The Government should provide support to the gang."



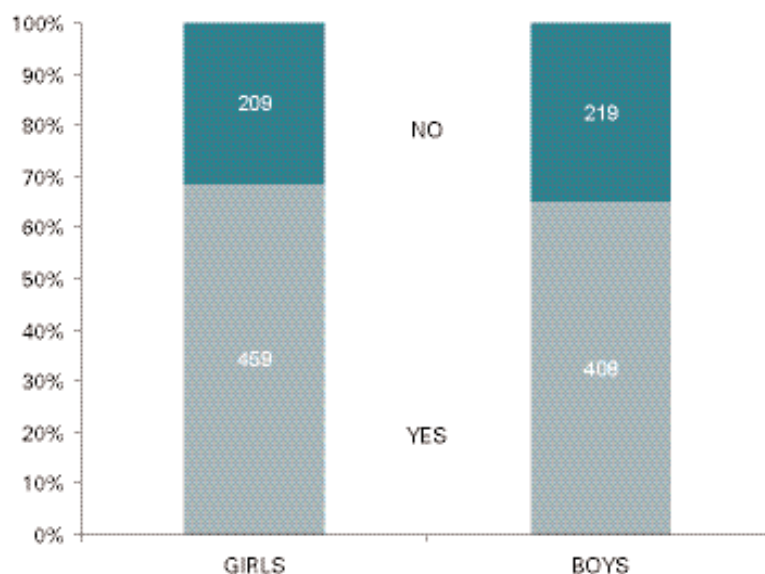
"Support money, food, materials." "Don't have more children (birth spacing)." "We need to provide the education to them since they were young." "Need to be careful. Don't show off as a rich person, don't go out at night, and avoid the place that is quiet." "The Buddhist monk can lead them not to do bad deeds, but instead lead them to good deeds. Christ Jesus can do the same." "Pray and give instruction to the people with a bad heart and ask them to know about good deeds and bad deeds and that killing is not right." "Police need to work as a group to guard the village in order to keep the people safe." "Police and village leaders need to make good security." "Police need to guard the quiet places." "Police can help but sometimes the police are corrupt, they get the bribe from the robber who always gets out of the prison." "Keep in prison for a few years to change them." "Put him in prison or kill him." "Put him in prison for life. Kill him."

## What happens after the robber is caught?

"Police will arrest. Can sniff glue like the gangster. Can become the robber." "Keep in prison, ask questions and ask 'why do you rob?...and how many times do you rob?'" "We need to blame them and put them in prison for years." "We should help to find the job for them." "Sometimes the gang members beat their parents."

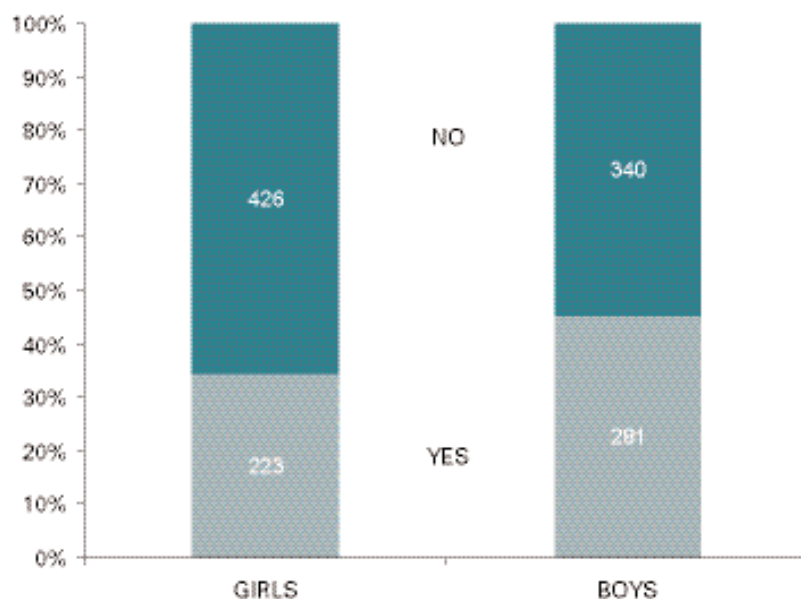
## Results of the Questionnaire Survey:

### 3.1. Have you ever heard of a teenager robbing an adult?



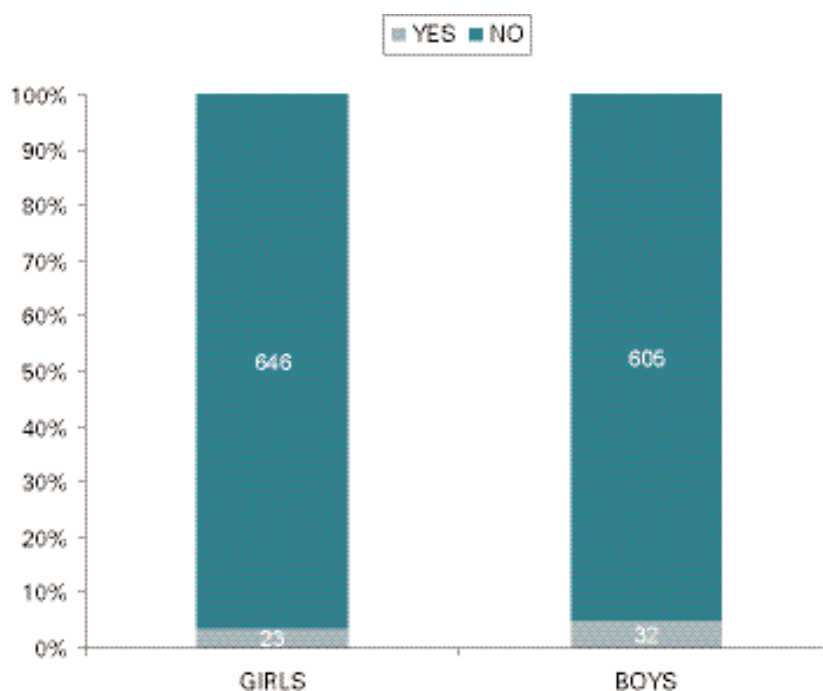
A high percentage of children had heard of a teenager robbing an adult (67%).

### 3.2. Have you ever seen an adult being robbed by a child?

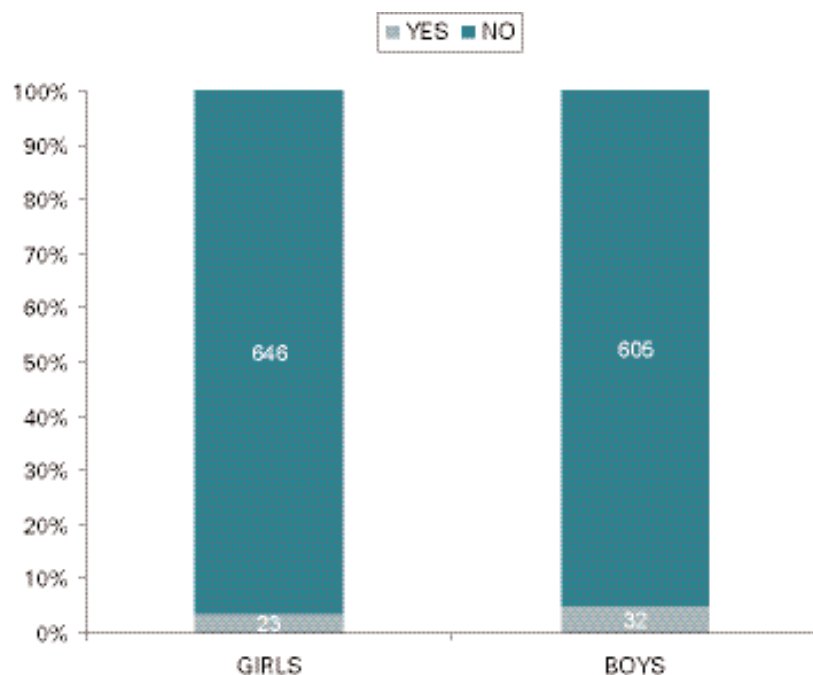


### 3.3. Have you ever robbed an adult with violence?

Although very few children admitted to this it is interesting to note that 3.4% of girls compared to 5% of boys admitted to robbing an adult with violence.

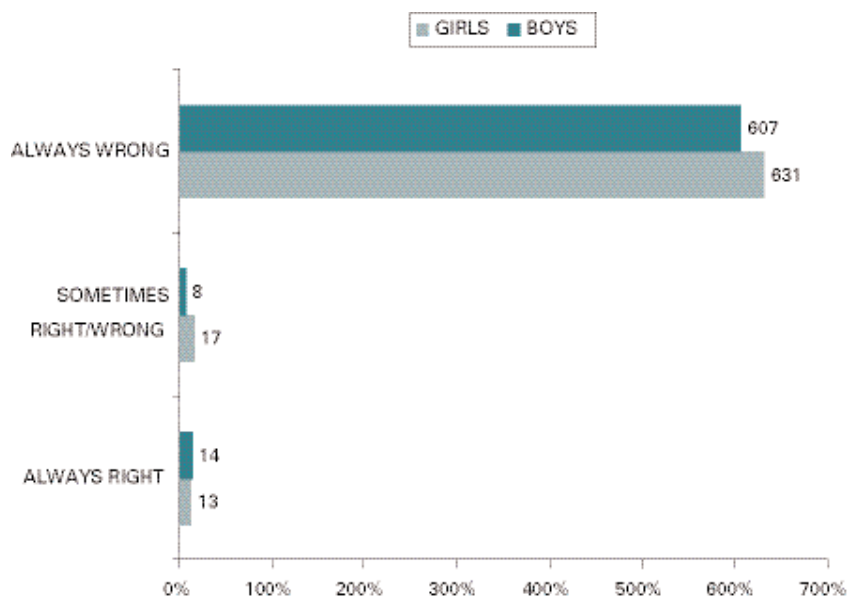


### 3.4. How frequently are adults robbed with violence by children in your community?



A high percentage of children (66%) said that it sometimes happened in their community compared to never (30%) or everyday (4%).

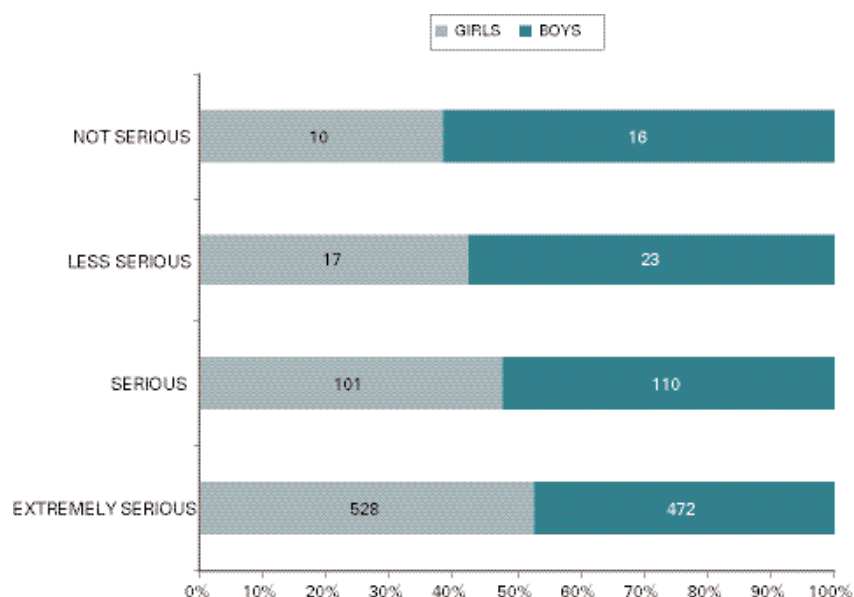
### 3.5. Do you think robbery of adults by children is right or wrong?



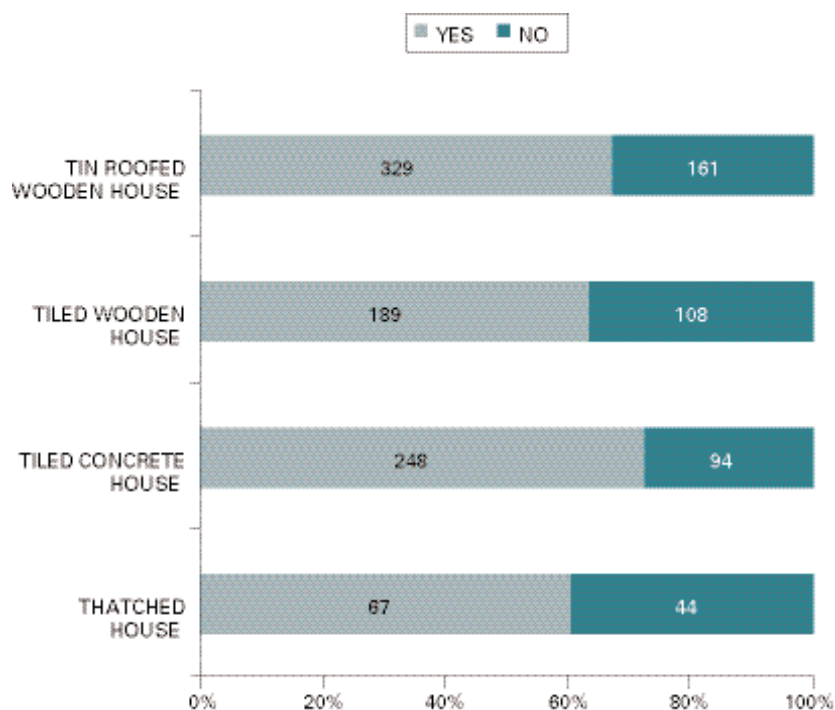
Nearly all children felt that it was wrong (96%). Only 2% felt it was always right.

### 3.6. How serious is teenage violence against adults?

Most children (78.3%) felt it was extremely serious. Only 5.1% considering it to be less serious or not serious.



### 3.7. Have you heard of a teenager robbing an adult? By socio-economic status based on housing



### 3.8. Who can help a child that is part of gang?

Able to Choose more than one response

Housing type	Count	%
Police	1097	83.8%
Parents	869	66.4%
Village chief	748	57.1%
Relative	431	32.9%
Neighbour	348	26.6%
Friends	335	25.6%
Religious leader	74	5.7%

### 3.9. Who can help the adult?

Able to Choose more than one response

Housing type	Count	%
Police	1096	84.0%
Village chief	817	62.6%
Relative	654	50.1%
Neighbour	619	47.4%
Friends	392	30.0%
Religious leader	71	5.4%



### 3.10 Why do teenagers use violence when robbing adults?

(Open ended question)

Why?	GIRLS	BOYS	Total %	Count
1. Need money/want money to satisfy their needs	44.4%	43.3%	43.9%	575
2. Drugs/alcohol addicted	24.4%	22.1%	23.3%	305
3. Criminal behaviour/vicious /commit crime for fun	17.6%	16.4%	17.0%	223
4. No family/expelled from home/no support from parent	8.6%	10.8%	9.7%	127
5. Want to have sex with victim/girl	8.5%	10.2%	9.3%	122
6. Result of gambling	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	51
7. Animosity with victim	2.4%	1.7%	1.5%	20
8. No job/lazy to work	1.3%	1.9%	1.5%	20
9. Other	13.7%	13.1%	13.4%	176
10. No response	8.5%	8.8%	8.6%	113
TOTAL				1736

#### Direct quotations from children:

##### 1. Need money, want money to satisfy their needs (43.9%)

- a). They want to satisfy their needs, and they want the victim's money.
- b). They know that the victim has lots of valuable possessions.
- c). They want the victim's valuable possessions to fulfill their needs.
- d). They cannot support themselves, so they rob the victim for money.
- e). They are poor and hungry and that is the reason why they rob and harm people.

##### 2. Drugs/alcohol addicted (23.3%)

- a). They have no money and so they rob the victim to support their drugs and alcohol addiction.
- b). They are so young and addicted to drugs.
- c). They want money to consume alcohol, cigarettes and drugs.

##### 3. Criminal behaviour/vicious/commit crime for fun (17.0%)

- a). Because they have committed crime before.
- b). Because they think that what they are doing is fun.
- c). Because they were forced to commit crime and their families are financially unstable.
- d). Because they enjoy using violence.
- e). Because they are associated with gangsters and so they rob.
- f). Because they know that the female victims can't defend themselves.
- g). Because they are selfish, and they don't care about anyone.
- h). Because they used violence before among their families.

#### **4. No family/expelled from home/no support from parent (9.7%)**

- a). Teenagers do these things because they are poor and their parents do not acknowledge them.
- b). Because they have no relatives, parents and places to live.
- c). Because they never listen to their parents and are expelled from the house. Also, they only listen to their gang leader.
- d). Because they are parentless and uneducated and they lack of money to buy drugs.
- e). Teenage thugs commit acts of violence and robbery because they don't have any support from anyone and they are homeless.
- f). Because they never had anyone to provide love or their parents never pay much attention to them.

#### **5. Want to have sex with the victim/girl (9.3%)**

- a). Because they want to rape the victim and they want the victim's money.
- b). Teenage thugs do those bad things because they want to rape and harm women.
- c). Because they want to rape the victim and they want to sell the victim to the brothel owners.

#### **6. Result from gambling (3.9%)**

- a). They lost money gambling and their parents never provide them with some money.
- b). They have no money to gamble and they owed the debts.
- c). They lost gambling and they have no money to go gambling, so they robbed for the victim's money.

#### **7. Animosity with victim (1.8%)**

- a). Because they had animosity with the victim and they have no money.
- b). Robberies and violent acts are committed by those teenage thugs because they want to get revenge on others.

#### **8. No job/lazy to work (1.5%)**

- a). Because they lack skills to work and so they robbed for money to spend.
- b). Because they have no money and they are lazy to go to work.
- c). Because they are uneducated and unemployed.
- d). Teenage thugs do those things because they don't have any jobs and their parents abandoned them.

### 3.11 How can those teenagers be helped?

(Open ended question)

What happens?	GIRLS	BOYS	Total %	Count
1. Positive advice to teenagers (encourage them not to rob again, make them think about their future, educate them to do the right thing, obey the law and get education)	49.6%	53.2%	51.4%	673
2. Negative advice to teenagers (do not gamble, do not use drugs)	39.3%	37.7%	38.5%	505
3. Deal with gang members (report to police, send them to hospital, apprehend, prosecute, arrest, send them to jail and punishment including compensation)	20.3%	17.4%	18.9%	247
4. Send them to a counselling centre	4.3%	3.3%	3.8%	50
5. Educate gang members' parent (to take care and good control of their children)	1%	0.6%	0.8%	11
6. Support gang members' family	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	9
7. Strengthen and enforce the law	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	5
8. Eliminate drugs and weapon use	0.3%	0%	0.2%	2
9. Other	0.7%	1.9%	1.3%	17
10. No response	8.9%	8.3%	8.6%	113
TOTAL				1632

## Direct quotations from children:

### 1. Positive advice to teenagers:

(encourage them not to rob again, make them think about their future, educate them to do the right thing, obey the law and get education)

- a). By advising them not to commit crime again, and for them to think about their future.
- b). By motivating those thugs to get education and for them to respect the law.

- c). By advising those thugs to understand about children's rights and the problem of using violence.
- d). By advising those thugs to respect women's rights because everyone regards them as our mother in the world.
- e). Advise and tell them about their mistakes. Help to tell them to change their ways.

### 2. Negative advice to those teenagers

(Do not gamble, do not use drugs)

- a). By advising those thugs not to gamble, not to abuse drugs and not to rob anyone.
- b). Explain to those teenagers that they must not bully or do bad things to the girls.
- c). By advising those thugs not to use any violence upon or harm anyone, because it is against the law.
- d). By advising those thugs not to be gangsters, and not to commit a crime at once.

### **3. Deal with gang members**

(Report to police, send them to hospital, apprehend, prosecute, arrest, and send them to jail and punishment including compensation)

- a). By taking the victim to the hospital, apprehending those thugs and prosecuting them.
- b). By reporting to the authority to arrest those thugs to advise them not to commit any crime again.
- c). By informing the authority or community leader to warn those thugs to behave, and if they don't abide by the law they will be arrested and sent to prison.

### **4. Educate the gang members' parents:**

(to take care and good control to their children)

- a). By advising the parents to enroll their children in school, and by warning them not to do the wrong thing again.
- b). By involving the family to provide love to those thugs.
- c). By taking care of them and not allowing them to be alone.

### **5. Eliminate drugs and weapon use**

- a). By eliminating drugs and the use of weapons.
- b). By ending any distributing of drugs, because it will make people become bad persons, and by involving the parents to advise their children to avoid abusing drugs.

### **6. Support gang members' family**

- a). By supporting those thugs' families and for them not to abuse drugs.
- b). By saving and supporting those thugs with some positive materials.

### **7. Strengthen and enforce the law**

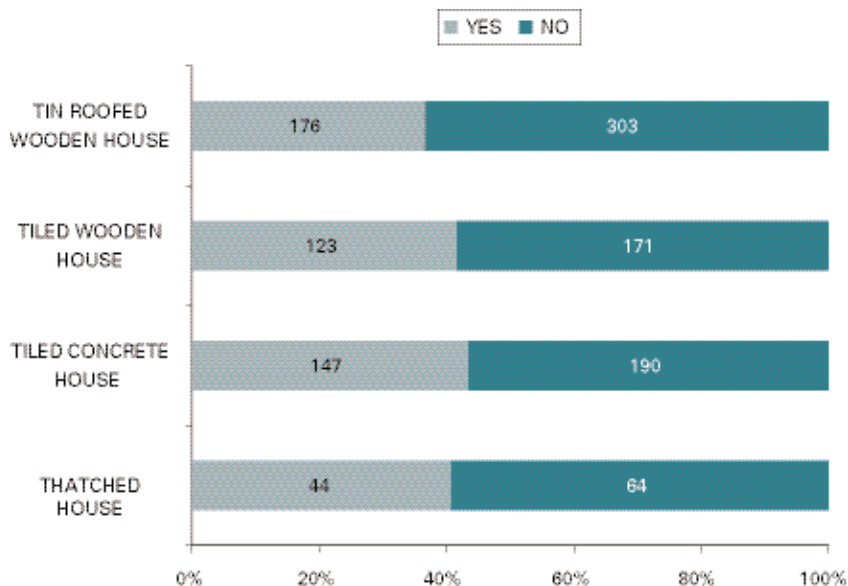
- a). By ending any robbing in the community.
- b). By enforcing a strict law upon those thugs and by advising them not to commit crime.

### **8. Send them to a counselling centre**

- a). By taking those thugs to the orphanage centre for advice, so there is no chaos in the community.
- b). By taking those thugs to any counselling centre for positive advice.
- c). By having a facility that can detain those thugs.

### 3.12 Have you ever seen an adult being robbed?

(According to Socio-economic status)



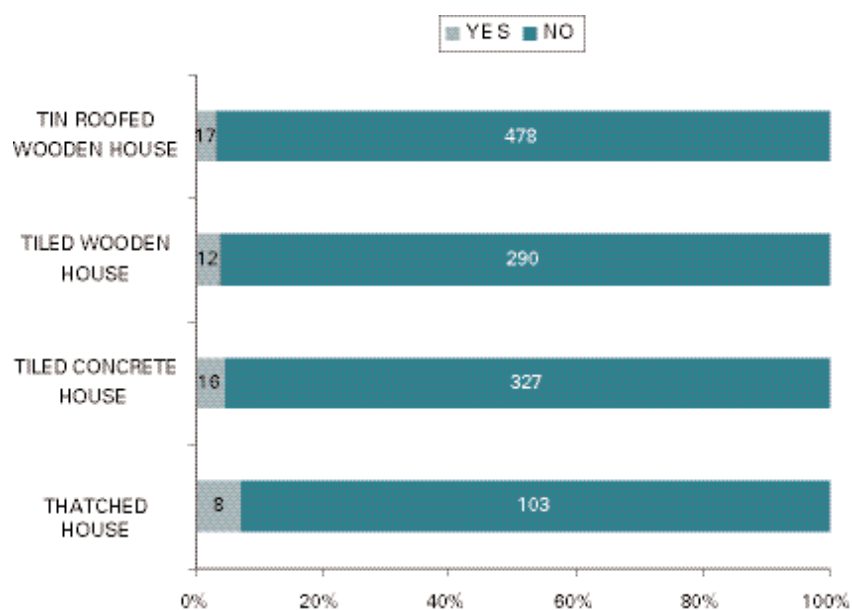
### 3.13. Have you ever seen an adult being robbed by a child?

(By Province)





### 3.14. Have you ever robbed an adult using violence? (Socio-cultural differences by Housing)



### 3.15. Have you ever robbed an adult with violence? (By Province)





# CONCLUSIONS







# CONCLUSIONS



**C**hildren were often optimistic that in situations of violence advocates, e.g. police, teachers, village leaders and relatives, would intervene. This puts the responsibility clearly onto adults to justify their confidence in us.

The evidence so far suggests that children's views give a disturbing picture of the power differential between children and adults, where children are passive victims that struggle to articulate their concerns at an individual level with the people who commit violence against them, as well as the decision makers.

How can children be empowered to protect themselves and how can we put in place policies and provide education to protect them against adults that can and do act violently towards them? Is it too much responsibility to expect them to be actors in the process? Alternatively are we as adults disempowering them by saying that we need to act on their behalf?

How can we break the cycle of violence where children see violence being committed by adults? How can we promote non-violent alternatives to resolving conflict?

## **Some General Recommendations regarding violence and children**

- Adults and children need to explore alternative non-violent ways of conflict resolution if the 'cycle of violence' is to be reduced.
- Adults must be good role models in the way they deal with other adults and children - prejudice and bullying is unacceptable - from parents and teachers at local to Government levels.
- Many children saw bullying as a serious concern. This must be addressed by schools as a primary way to addressing violence in children's lives.
- Children themselves have emphasized that adults must take their responsibilities seriously and the education of the potential and actual perpetrators is important. Children often had a tremendous faith in the police and village chiefs which needs to be justified.
- Adults (and children) must see children who are sold as victims but not as those whose lives are destroyed - there may be emotional scarring but there is a future.
- There needs to be more focus on boys as victims as well as perpetrators.
- Children must be challenged that they are not victims of circumstances but that change is possible.
- Children must be helped to find ways to challenge their elders if adults are being abusive towards them, their peers or others.



## Some recommendations to the Government

- The Ministries of Justice and Interior in collaboration with IOs and NGOs must strengthen and implement laws regarding rape, trafficking and violence against children. Focus must be on seriously dealing with the perpetrators and preventing them from re-offending through seriously dealing with complaints and prosecution of offenders.
- The Ministries of Justice and Interior must treat rape and sexual exploitation as a criminal not a civil matter. Rape must not be resolved through purely financial negotiation as is sometimes the case and traffickers must be jailed.
- The Ministry of Interior must continue to provide in-service training for police including women trained in dealing with girl victims of trafficking.
- The Ministry of Interior must collaborate with the Ministry of Education to ensure there is no gang violence in schools and that drugs and alcohol are forbidden in schools.
- The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice must collaborate to find adequate solutions for minors that avoid children being placed in jails with adults. Juvenile courts must be developed and there should be special treatment for children in trouble with the law.
- The Ministry of Interior must ensure parents are informed if children are arrested.
- The Ministry of Interior should ensure that corporal punishment should not be used at any stage against children from arrest to prison or juvenile detention centres. Measures should also be taken to ensure sexual abuse does not occur. Vocational training should be provided to young offenders so that they can gain skills and quickly re-integrate on release.
- The Ministries of Education, Women's Affairs and Social Affairs in collaboration with Non-Government Organisations and International Organizations must facilitate creative training programmes in non-violence for children, taking into consideration their perceptions and misconceptions.
- The Ministry of Education must identify teachers who can be trained in each school whom children can trust and talk to about issues surrounding their concerns about bullying, violence, and rape and trafficking.
- The Ministry of Education must implement national and local child protection policies to protect children from physical and sexual abuse by other youth and staff.
- The Ministry of Education must strengthen its education for teachers about non-violent discipline and encourage teachers to take appropriate firm action when children are being bullied.
- The Ministry of Education must implement a strict policy of non-discrimination between teachers and children and between children and children to ensure that children who are poor or of different ethnic identity are not bullied or receive unfair treatment.
- The Ministry of Health must include rape and domestic violence in their list of public health concerns.
- The Ministry of Health must provide in-service training for all health sector professionals, including medical staff, mental health staff and traditional health practitioners, in recording reported cases and in the treatment and referral of victims of violence and rape/sexual exploitation.
- The Ministry of Health must actively involve public information materials and improve communication between health, legal women's groups and other service providers.

## Some Recommendations to Non Government Organizations, International Organizations and policy makers

- Every NGO and IO must have an active and regularly reviewed Child Protection Policy that is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure children are not at risk of violence or sexual abuse whilst in contact with the adults in the organization.
- More psychological support and counselling services must be provided for victims of rape and domestic violence.
- This research demonstrates that the needs of boys who are sexually abused or trafficked must be considered. At present very few NGOs have the resources to deal with boys who have been sexually abused or exploited but this survey illustrates that boys are as much in need of support as girls.
- Prevention strategies must include educating the perpetrators and the potential perpetrators as well as the victims. This includes education about the dangers of pornography especially violent and child pornography.
- Child rape and pornography must not be seen to be a taboo topic with children when so many are exposed to it in different forms. Topics must be addressed in a language that children understand, using methods that are appropriate.
- Children must receive non-violent self protection training including how to identify and inform a safe adult.
- Children must be educated about the effects of bullying and ways of resisting bullies.
- Parent classes must include awareness of the dangers and consequences of trafficking, sexual abuse, bullying and gang violence. This could include use of the UNICEF flipcharts on child battering, domestic violence and child rape.

## Some Recommendations to researchers/practitioners

- Children must be given the chance to make a contribution to policy and planning.
- Some researchers suggest questionnaire surveys with children are not useful but this survey has demonstrated that much useful data can be obtained especially when used in collaboration with qualitative methods.
- A similar survey could be used in other countries in the region and beyond to determine prevalence and perceptions as a base line especially where research has not been conducted.

- The use of drama is a positive and fun way of exploring children's perceptions and a tool to encourage dialogue.
- More exploration is needed to explore whether drama can be used in developing children's resilience to situations and drawing out their optimism and ideas of moving forward after abuse has occurred.
- More child friendly research methodologies are needed in general.

Children are looking for a world that is free of rape and violence and those of us in positions of authority need to explore ways in which this can be achieved by taking our responsibilities seriously and involving children in the process.

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# APPENDIX:

## CHILDREN'S POINT OF VIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

We would like to thank all children who help us by filling out this questionnaire. This is not a test, but we really want to know your point of view.

We hope that this survey will be helpful for adults who wish to help children. We will keep your answer confidential and we will not divulge any of this to your teachers or parents.

Please fill out this questionnaire with the best of your abilities and tick the appropriate box or write down the answer you think is right.

### Part I:

1. Are you a boy or a girl? Boy ☐ Girl ☐



13

14

2. How old are you? 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐

3. What kind of family are you from? (Please choose only one answer)



With Parents ☐ with Mother only ☐ with Grandma only ☐ with older sister ☐

Please specify if you live with other people who are not mentioned in the above pictures:

4. What is your religion? (Please choose only one answer)



Buddhism ☐ Islam (Cham) ☐ Christian/Catholic ☐ Chinese religion ☐

Please specify if you believe in another religion not mentioned above: -----

5. Which kind of house do you live in? (Please choose only one answer)



Thatched house    Tin roofed wooden house    Tiled wooden house    Tile concrete house  
with wooden 1<sup>st</sup> floor

Please write or draw if you live in other kinds of house that are not shown in the pictures:

## A. Children are being bullied by children



1. Have you heard of children being bullied by other children at your school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. How frequently are children bullied by other children at your school or community?  
(Please choose only one answer)

a). Never happens ☐ b). Sometimes happens ☐ c). Happens everyday ☐

3. What other reasons are the children bullied by other children? (You can choose more than one answer)

a). Disable ☐ b). Poor ☐ c). Gender ☐ d). Ethnicity ☐ e). Religion ☐  
f). Other, please specify .....

4. Do you think bullying is...? (Please choose only one answer)

a). Always right ☐ b). Sometimes right/ Sometimes wrong ☐ c). Always Wrong ☐

5. Who can help the child who has been bullied? (You can choose more than one answer)

a). Parents ☐ b). Neighbor ☐ c). Village leader ☐ d). Religious leader ☐

e). Relatives ☐ f). Teachers ☐ g). Friends ☐ h). Other, please specify -----

-----

6. How can they help those children?

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7. Who can correct children who bully or mistreat other children? (You can choose more than one answer)

a). Parents ☐ b). Neighbors ☐ c). Village Chief ☐ d). Police ☐

e). Head of Religion ☐ f). Teachers ☐ g). Relatives ☐ h.) Friends ☐

i). Other, please specify -----

8. How can they help those children?

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9. What should the school or community do to put an end to these kinds of bullying of children?

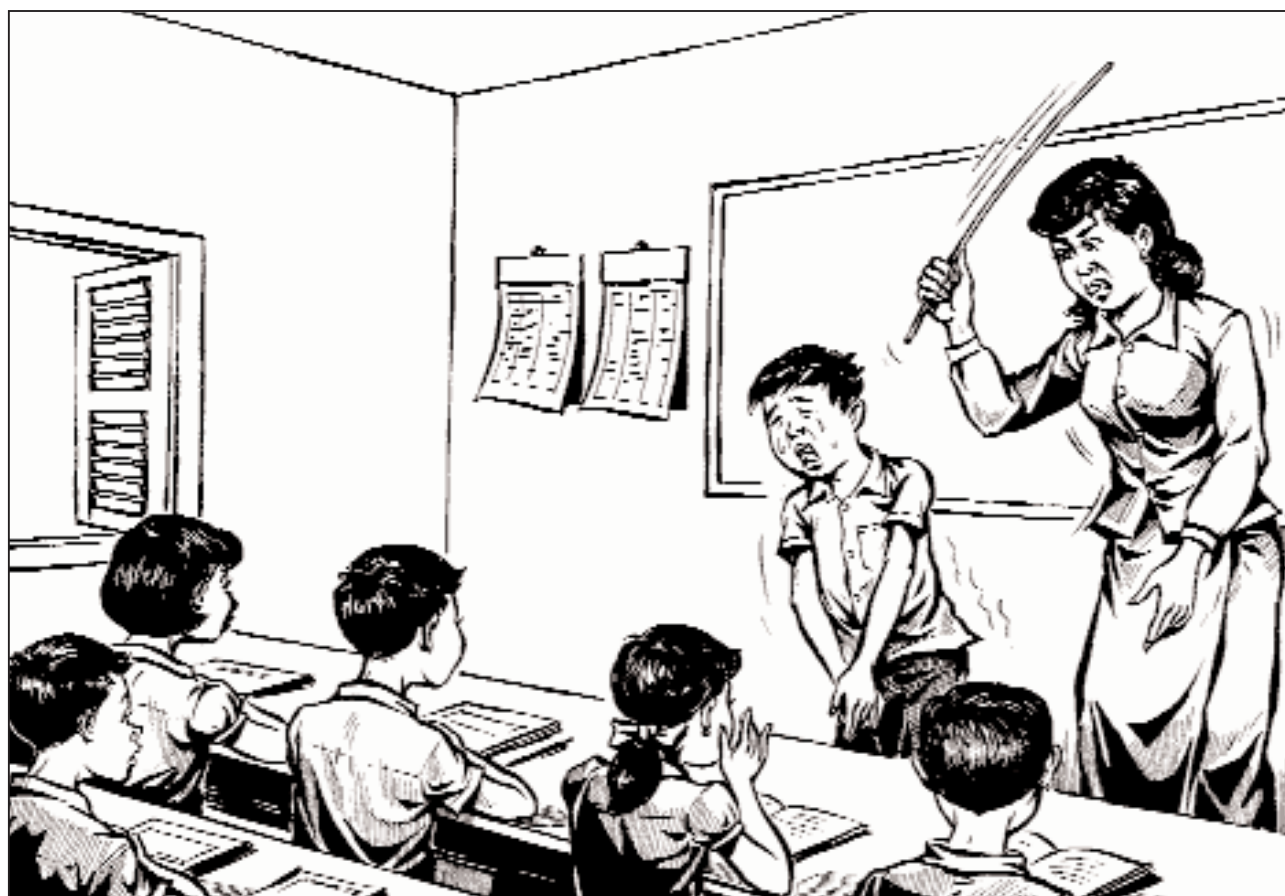
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## B. Teacher is beating a student



1. Have you heard a child being beaten by teachers at school? Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Normally, what kind of punishments does teacher use and how? (You can choose more than one answer)
  - a). Beat with stick ☐ b). Beat with hand ☐ c). Make error and give advice ☐
  - d). Other punishments, please specify -----
3. How frequently does beating of students happen in your school? (Please choose only one answer)
  - a). Never happens ☐ b). Sometimes happens ☐ c). Happens every day ☐



4. Do you think the beating a child is ...? (Please choose only one answer)
- a). Always right ☐ b). Sometimes right/ Sometimes wrong ☐ c). Always wrong ☐
5. What kind of punishment should the teacher use? (You can choose more than one answer)
- a). Beat with stick ☐ b). Beat with hand ☐ c). Make the error known and give advice ☐ d). Other punishments, please specify -----
6. If you think that teachers should beat a child in which cases?
- a). When students are not obedient Yes ☐ No ☐
- b). When students are lazy Yes ☐ No ☐
- c). When students is late Yes ☐ No ☐
- d). When students disturbs teachers Yes ☐ No ☐
- e). When students is not clever Yes ☐ No ☐
- f). Others, please specify:-----  
-----
7. How can teachers correct their disobedient students?  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

### C. The drunken father is beating his children



1. Have you heard of parents beating their children in your community?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. How frequently do parents beat their children in your community? (Please choose only one answer)

a). Never ☐ b). Sometimes ☐ c). Every day ☐

3. Do you think beating a child is...? (Please choose only one answer)

a). Always right ☐ b). Sometimes right/ sometimes wrong ☐ c). Always wrong ☐

4. Who should stop this action? (You can choose more than one answer)

a). Parents ☐ b). Relatives ☐ c). Neighbors ☐ d). Police ☐

e). Village Leader ☐ f). Religious leader ☐ g). Friends ☐

h). Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

5. After that who else can help the child? (You can choose more than one answer)

- a). Parents ☐ b). Relatives ☐ c). Neighbors ☐ d). Police ☐  
e). Village Leader ☐ f). Teacher ☐ g). Religious leader ☐ h). Friends ☐

h). Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

6. How can they help the children?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. After that who can help the parent? (You can choose more than one answer)

- a). Mother/Father ☐ b). Relatives ☐ c). Neighbor ☐ d). Police ☐  
e). Village Leader ☐ f). Religious leader ☐ g). Friends ☐

h). others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

8. How can they help the parent?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Additional questions

- |    |  |                              |                             |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. | a). Have you ever seen other children teased or mistreated?                  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
|    | b). Have you ever been bullied by other children because you were different? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | a). Have you ever seen other children being beaten by their teacher?         | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
|    | b). Have you ever been beaten by your teacher?                               | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | a). Have you ever seen other children being beaten by their parent?          | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | b). Have you very been beaten by your parents?                               | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

## **Part II:**

### **D. Child trafficking**



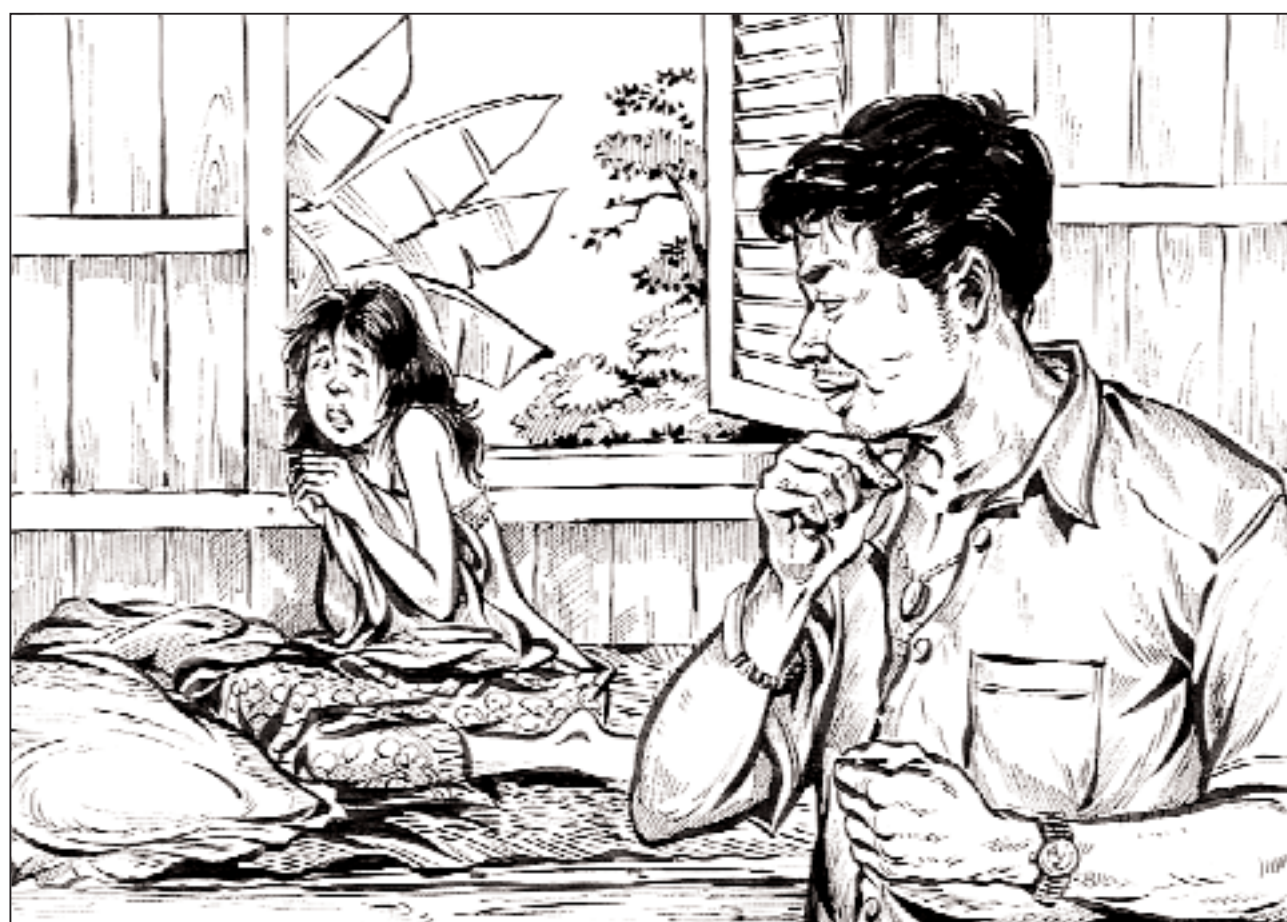
1. Have you seen or heard of children being sold in your community? Yes ☐ No ☐
2. How frequently does this happen in your community? (Please choose only one answer)  
a). Never happens ☐ b). Sometimes happens ☐ c). Happens every day ☐
3. Do you think child being sold is ...? (Please choose only one answer)  
a). Always right ☐ b). Sometimes right/Sometimes wrong ☐ c). Always wrong ☐
4. Why are children being sold?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



5. Who should help children who are sold? (You can choose more than one answer)
- a). Parents ☐ b). Relative ☐ c). Neighbors ☐ d). Police ☐ e). Village leader ☐
- f). Head of Religion ☐ g). Friends ☐ g). Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. How can they help children being sold?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## E. Sexual abuse on children at domicile





1. Have you heard about children being rape in your community? Yes ☐ No ☐
2. What kind of children who are raped by the adult?
  - a). Girl ☐ b). Boy ☐ c). Both boy and girl ☐
3. How frequently does rape of children by adults happen in your community? (Please choose only one answer)
  - a). Never happens ☐ b). Sometimes happens ☐ c). Happens every day ☐
4. Do you think the rape of children by adult...? (Please choose only one answer)
  - a). Always right ☐ b). Sometimes right/ Sometimes wrong ☐ c). Sometime wrong ☐
5. What happens to a children's situation after they have been raped?
 

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6. Who can help the children after they have been raped? (You can choose more than one answer)
  - a). Parents ☐ b). Neighbors ☐ c). Police ☐ d). Village leader ☐
  - e). Doctors ☐ f). Friends ☐ g).Religious leader ☐ h).Relatives ☐
  - i). Others:-----
8. How can they help?
 

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9. Who can help to change adults who have committed child rape? (You can choose more than one answer)
  - a). Parents ☐ b). Neighbors ☐ c). Police ☐ d). Village leader ☐
  - e). Doctors ☐ f). Friends ☐ g).Religious leader ☐ h).Relatives ☐
  - i). Others:-----

10. Can a child who has been raped ever get married?

Yes ☐ No ☐

11. How can rape be prevented?

.....

.....

.....

.....

## F. A teenager robs a woman



1. Have you heard of robberies of adults by teenagers using violence in your community?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. How frequently does this happen in your community? (Please choose only one answer)

a). Never happens ☐ b). Sometimes happens ☐ c). Happens every day ☐

3. Do you think a robbery by teenage gangs is...? (Please choose only one answer)
- a). Always right ☐ b). Sometimes right/ Sometimes wrong ☐ c). Always wrong ☐
4. Why do teenagers do robbery of adult with violence?
- 
- 
- 
- 
5. Who can correct those teenagers? (You can choose more than one answer)
- a). Parents ☐ b). Neighbors ☐ c). Police ☐ d). Village leader ☐ e). Doctors ☐
- f). Friends ☐ g). Religious leader ☐ h). Relatives ☐
- i). Others:-----
6. How can they help those teenagers?
- 
- 
- 
- 
7. Who can help the victims? (You can choose more than one answer)
- a). Relative ☐ b). Neighbors ☐ c). Police ☐ d). Village leader ☐
- e). Religious leader ☐ f). Friends ☐ g). Others, please specify -----

#### **Additional questions:**

1. a). Do you know a child who have been sold? Yes ☐ No ☐
- b). Have you ever been sold by an adult? Yes ☐ No ☐
- a). Do you know any children who have been rape by an adult? Yes ☐ No ☐
- b). Have you ever witnesses a rape of another child by an adult? Yes ☐ No ☐

- c). Have you ever been raped by an adult? Yes ☐ No ☐
- d). Have you ever been sexually touch by an adult on the genitals? Yes ☐ No ☐
- (i) Before aged 9 years Yes ☐ No ☐
- (i). After 9 years Yes ☐ No ☐
- a). Have you ever seen an adult being robbed with violence? Yes ☐ No ☐
- b). Have you ever robbed an adult at gunpoint? Yes ☐ No ☐

2. In your opinion how serious are these types of violence? (Please choose only one answer)

A. Child being bullied by other children

- 1). Extremely serious ☐ 2). Serious ☐ 3). Less serious ☐ Not serious ☐

B. Teacher beating the child

- 1). Extremely serious ☐ 2). Serious ☐ 3). Less serious ☐ Not serious ☐

C. parent beating child

- 1). Extremely serious ☐ 2). Serious ☐ 3). Less serious ☐ Not serious ☐

D. Children being trafficked

- 1). Extremely serious ☐ 2). Serious ☐ 3). Less serious ☐ Not serious ☐

E. Sexual abuse of the children

- 1). Extremely serious ☐ 2). Serious ☐ 3). Less serious ☐ Not serious ☐

F. Teenager using violence against adult in robbery

- 1). Extremely serious ☐ 2). Serious ☐ 3). Less serious ☐ Not serious ☐

3. If you have more time draw a picture another kind of violence against children not mentioned above then explain your picture.





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